![Huntingdonshire District Council logo]

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH)** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **WEDNESDAY, 1 APRIL 2026** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

AGENDA

APOLOGIES

1. **MINUTES** (Pages 5 - 10)

   To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) meeting held on 4th March 2026.

   Contact Officer: L Adams
   01480 388234

2. **MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

   To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary and other interests in relation to any Agenda item.

   Contact Officer: L Adams
   01480 388234

3. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 11 - 18)

   a) The Panel are to receive the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme and the notices of Key Executive decisions 1st April 2026 to 31st July 2026

   b) Members to discuss future planning of items for the Work Programme

   Contact Officer: L Adams
   01480 388234

4. **HOUSING STRATEGY REFRESH** (Pages 19 - 294)

    The committee is requested to consider the contents of this report and provide comments on the New Housing Strategy and Action Plan.

    Contact Officer: P Scott
    01480 388486

5. **GREAT OUSE VALLEY TRUST** (Pages 295 - 374)

    The Overview & Scrutiny Panel is invited to consider and comment on the Report.

    Contact Officer: H Robinson
    01480 388513

    24 day of March 2026

    Michelle Sacks

    Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests.

Further information on [Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests is available in the Council's Constitution](#)

Filming, Photography and Recording (including Live Streaming) at Council Meetings

This meeting will be filmed for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the Council's YouTube site. The whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are confidential or exempt items. If you make a representation to the meeting you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed. By entering the meeting you are also consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If you have any queries regarding the streaming of Council meetings, please contact Democratic Services on 01480 388169.

The District Council also permits filming, recording and the taking of photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. Arrangements for these activities should operate in accordance with [guidelines](#) agreed by the Council.

Please contact Miss Lauren Adams, Democratic Services Officer, Tel No. 01480 388234/e-mail Lauren.Adams@huntingdonshire.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee/Panel.

Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business**.**

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the District Council's website.

This page is intentionally left blank

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH) held in Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 4 March 2026.

PRESENT: Councillor C M Gleadow – Chair.

                       Councillors A Blackwell, J R Catmur, B S Chapman, S J Corney, I D Gardener, A R Jennings, R Martin, Dr M Pickering and C H Tevlin.

APOLOGY(IES):   Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors P Kadewere and S L Taylor and C H Tevlin.

59. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4th February 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

60. MEMBERS INTERESTS

Councillor Gardener declared an other registerable interest in minute 25/63 by virtue of being a Member of the Fire Authority, a Member for Cambridgeshire County Council and a Member of Grafham Parish Council.

Councillor Blackwell declared an other registerable interest in minute 25/63 by virtue of being a Member of Huntingdon Town Council.

Councillor Chapman declared an other registerable interest in minute 25/63 by virtue of being a Member of St Neots Town Council.

Councillor Martin declared an other registerable interest in minute 25/63 by virtue of being a Member for Cambridgeshire County Council.

Councillor Gleadow declared a non-registerable interest in minute 25/63 by virtue of being the Ward Member for St Ives and an other registerable interest in being a Member of the St Ives Fire station and a Member of One Leisure Shadow Cabinet.

Councillor Corney declared a non-registerable interest in minute 25/63 by virtue of being the Ward Member for Ramsey.

61. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme was presented to the Panel.

62.   **OUTSTANDING RESPONSES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Panel received and noted the responses received in relation to questions arising at previous meetings of the Panel.

Councillor Chapman reiterated that the missed green waste collections in St Neots should be reflected within the overall missed bin figures, given that this is a paid service.

63.   **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY FUNDING**

By means of a report by the Funding Project Manager of Strategic Growth (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), The Community Infrastructure Levy Funding Report was presented to the Panel.

Concern was raised that the proposed Youth building was being treated in the same way as a general community facility. He emphasised that young people require a dedicated space rather than hired rooms within other buildings, noting that no such provision currently exists in St Neots. He referenced the Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy—particularly its focus on Youth Provision—and considered the application to be well aligned with its objectives. It was further highlighted that the proposal would bring a unit vacant for three years back into use and that its town-centre location was preferable, as out of town sites could increase the risk of anti-social behaviour.

It was explained that the query in the report relates to current community facilities and their use needing a fuller explanation. The principle of youth space is recognised, and the Town Council were invited to work with the Implementation and Planning teams to explore and progress this project for a future round.

Support was expressed for the previous points raised, noting that the proposal represented a positive opportunity to bring a currently vacant unit back into productive use. It was emphasised that repurposing the unit for a community focused initiative would provide clear benefits to local residents.

It was noted that Section 4.9 (f) highlights the concern that this is a prime retail space. There are conflicts with Local Plan policy for prime retail spaces that would need to be investigated and Planning Permission granted for this project to be considered deliverable. Due to this this needs resolution first. To date there have been no discussions with the Planning Department about this and this is the first step needed to ensure deliverability.

The Panel were reminded that there was an error in the published paper and attention was drawn to the Supplement which had since been provided.

Queries around the scoring mechanism were raised by the Panel.

The scoring system is an indicative one at present. In Overview & Scrutiny 8th October 2025 Officers highlighted that scoring was being reviewed and Members were invited to volunteer by the Chair. No requests have been received to date. All applications are assessed against Legislation and CIL governance. It was explained that the Team would not be comfortable using it as the basis for approval or rejection of applications at this stage.

A Member commented on the application for the Huntingdon Sports and Health Hub, noting that while they welcomed the prospect of enhanced facilities, they had reservations about the level of expenditure involved, referencing other projects that they felt would be a worthy legacy for Huntingdonshire.

It was advised the amount of funding assigned to the project is to be agreed under delegated authority by the S151 Officer as per governance agreed at HDC Cabinet in February 2026.

The Executive Member highlighted additional projects currently in progress, citing as an example the work being undertaken by the Combined Authority on plans to enhance further education provision in St Neots. It was emphasised that the allocation of CIL funding was fundamentally based on the prioritisation of identified needs and projects.

It was remarked that St Neots has a significant youth population and the view was expressed that a dedicated facility would be of benefit to the community. He acknowledged the high cost associated with the proposed location and remarked that other retail sites had been used for development. It was commented that consideration of an alternative site would have been welcomed. It was also noted that the use of the Oast House has not been agreed yet.

The Panel was reminded of the importance of obtaining planning permission. Members were advised that broader discussions regarding the proposed location could be held with the Planning Department outside of the CIL process. It was noted that there was no objection to the concept itself; however, concerns remained regarding the process and the deliverability of the project at the location proposed.

The Panel were pleased to see the high number of approvals this round and asked if the next funding rounds dates had been agreed.

It was confirmed that the next dates would be post Elections.

Following the discussion, it was

RESOLVED

that the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel be passed to Cabinet for their consideration when making a decision upon the recommendations within the report.

64.   CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2025/26 (QUARTER 3)

By means of a report by the Business Intelligence and Performance Manager (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Corporate Performance 2025/26 Quarter 3 Report was presented to the Panel.

Further clarification was sought regarding the issues being experienced on Highways works and wondered if it was a coincidence that 3 sites had been affected.

The Panel were informed that Cambridgeshire County Council holds responsibility for the Section 278 Highways Agreement and therefore has authority to restrict when the developer may undertake works. Officers confirmed that the Council remains in regular dialogue with the developer, noting that it is in all parties' interests for the units to be delivered, marketed, and made available to residents as soon as possible. It was further reported that the three sites concerned fall within the same circumstances, and discussions have taken place with the County Council to explore whether any flexibility can be provided regarding the timing of works.

Satisfaction was expressed with the progress of the Disability Grant but disappointment was noted regarding the ongoing delays.

Concerns were raised regarding the Waste Performance Indicators, noting that achieving the target for PI19 may negatively impact the figures for PI20. It was further suggested that including tonnage per bin would provide useful contextual information.

This was noted as a welcome suggestion and something that the Team would like to take on board in the future.

Councillor Chapman requested his thanks be passed onto the Housing Department for their work with a resident in his ward. He went on to highlight concerns regarding homelessness and stated that data on the number of rough sleepers would provide a clearer understanding of the full extent of homelessness within the District.

It was noted that an annual count of rough sleepers is undertaken one night each year in November; however, it was acknowledged that this method does not provide an accurate reflection of the actual number of individuals sleeping rough. It was agreed that obtaining more comprehensive data would be beneficial.

Following a query regarding the use of stretch targets, the Panel was informed that stretch targets have historically played an important role in setting performance expectations. It was noted that, while such

targets can drive improved performance, overly challenging targets may have a demoralising effect. The importance of establishing achievable and realistic targets was therefore emphasised.

Clarification was sought on whether the fly-tipping figures included waste discarded from vehicles on the motorway and asked if this could be incorporated, noting that such waste detracts from the appearance of the District. It was emphasised that litter picking along the highway is a dangerous task and congratulated the people who carry out the work.

The Panel heard that this is not classed as Fly tipping but acknowledged that the problem appears to be getting worse again and is difficult to stay on top of.

The Committee welcomed the improved presentation of the reports, noting that they were now easier for the Panel to consider. Support was shown with the earlier observation that, although many Indicators are marked green, the report does not fully reflect all activity within the Organisation. It was suggested that providing additional information on the Amber and Red Indicators would aid understanding of the Council's overall position.

The Panel were thanked for their feedback on these reports.

Action 29 of the Progress Report was raised, the Panel seeking clarification on how performance could be improved, noting that no supporting metrics were provided in the report.

The Panel was informed that the Local Plan would be central to achieving this objective. Members were advised that the action comprised two key elements: firstly, the development of the guidance, and secondly, its subsequent implementation. It was noted that the guidance had now been produced and the rollout phase was underway. Officers expressed the expectation that, over time, this would support the delivery of higher-quality housing.

Following the discussion, it was

RESOLVED

that the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel be passed to Cabinet for their consideration when making a decision upon the recommendations within the report.

Chair

This page is intentionally left blank

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2025-26 - Performance and Growth

Forward Agendas

Meeting Date	Pre-Scrutiny	Scrutiny Review
1st April 2026	• Housing Strategy Refresh • Great Ouse Valley Trust	

Unscheduled Agenda Items

Item	Notes	Progress
Local Plans		
Parking Strategy Refresh		Under development, anticipated for inclusion in the democratic cycle in Spring 2026

O&S Topics Identified For Further Consideration

Subject	Brief	Status

Huntingdonshire Evening Economy	• Huntingdonshire's Evening Economy - supporting the night-time economy across our District • How HDC currently supports the evening economy across our market towns and rural areas (possibly across financial/business support, safety, growth, CCTV service, rural rates relief policies), as well as how we can influence our partners to provide further support for this strategic sector (including wider economic support, skills and employment).	More info and scoping requested from Cllrs

NOTICE OF EXECUTIVE KEY DECISIONS INCLUDING THOSE TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

Prepared by: Councillor Sarah Conboy, Executive Leader of the Council
Date of Publication: 23 March 2026
For Period: 1 April 2026 to 31 July 2026

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

Councillor Details		Councillor Contact Details
Councillor S J Conboy	Executive Leader of the Council and Executive Councillor for Place	Cloudberry Cottage 9 Earning Street Godmanchester Huntingdon PE29 2JD Tel: 01480 414900 / 07831 807208 E-mail: Sarah.Conboy@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor L Davenport-Ray	Executive Councillor for Climate, Transformation and Workforce	73 Hogsden Leys St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 6AD E-mail: Lara.Davenport-Ray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor S Ferguson	Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance	9 Anderson Close St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 6DN Tel: 07525 987460 E-mail: Stephen.Ferguson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Councillor J Harvey	Executive Councillor for Governance and Democratic Services	c/o Huntingdonshire District Council Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 3TN Tel: 07941 080531 E-mail: Jo.Harvey@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor S Howell	Executive Councillor for Communities, Health and Leisure	c/o Huntingdonshire District Council Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 3TN Tel: 01733 794510 E-mail: Sally.Howell@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor J Kerr	Executive Councillor for Parks and Countryside, Waste and Street Scene	15 Crown Walk St Ives Cambridgeshire PE27 5QN Tel: 07906 899425 E-mail: Julie.Kerr@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor B Mickelburgh	Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources	2 Grainger Avenue Godmanchester Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 2JT Tel: 07441 392492 E-mail: Brett.Mickelburgh@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Councillor T Sanderson	Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Planning	29 Burmoor Close Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 6GE Tel: 01480 436822 E-mail: Tom.Sanderson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor S Wakeford	Executive Councillor for Economy, Regeneration and Housing	4 Croft Close Brampton Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE28 4TJ Tel: 07762 109210 E-mail: Sam.Wakeford@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Notice is hereby given of:

- Key decisions that will be taken by the Cabinet (or other decision maker)
- Confidential or exempt executive decisions that will be taken in a meeting from which the public will be excluded (for whole or part).

A notice/agenda together with reports and supporting documents for each meeting will be published at least five working days before the date of the meeting. In order to enquire about the availability of documents and subject to any restrictions on their disclosure, copies may be requested by contacting the Democratic Services Team on 01480 388169 or E-mail Democratic.Services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

Agendas may be accessed electronically at the District Council's website.

Formal notice is hereby given under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that, where indicated part of the meetings listed in this notice will be held in private because the agenda and reports for the meeting will contain confidential or exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. See the relevant paragraphs below.

Any person who wishes to make representations to the decision maker about a decision which is to be made or wishes to object to an item being considered in private may do so by emailing Democratic.Services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk.or by contacting the Democratic Services Team. If representations are received at least eight working days before the date of the meeting, they will be published with the agenda together with a statement of the District Council's response. Any representations received after this time will be verbally reported and considered at the meeting.

Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) (Reason for the report to be considered in private)

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the Financial and Business Affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations that are arising between the Authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of or office holders under the Authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
6. Information which reveals that the Authority proposes:-
   (a)To give under any announcement a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
   (b)To make an Order or Direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Huntingdonshire District Council
Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon PE29 3TN.

Notes:-   (i)   Additions changes from the previous Forward Plan are annotated ***
               (ii) Part II confidential items which will be considered in private are annotated ## and shown in italic.

Matter for Decision Description of Decision	Decision Maker	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Housing Strategy Refresh The report sets out the strategic direction for housing in Huntingdonshire for the next five years and highlights the housing priorities for the District and how these will be achieved by the Council directly and through working in partnership.	Cabinet	21 Apr 2026		Pamela Scott, Head of Economy, Regeneration and Housing Delivery Tel: (01480) 388146 or email Pamela.Scott@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Wakeford	Performance & Growth
Great Ouse Valley Trust*** This report outlines recent work exploring whether the Great Ouse Valley and Washes could gain stronger landscape recognition through a locally led self-designation approach. It summarises the Arkwood Report, which assesses boundary options and examines the economical,	Cabinet	21 Apr 2026		Harriet Robinson, Place Strategy & Climate Lead Tel: (01480) 3885133 or email Harriet.Robinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Conboy	Performance & Growth

Matter for Decision / Description of Decision	Decision Maker	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
environmental, strategic and practical factors required for this concept to progress. The decision at this stage is to not proceed with the self-designation but the report will explain how HDC will continue to work with the Great Ouse Valley Trust to review the findings and consider future options.							

Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Housing Strategy 2026-2031
Meeting/Date:	Overview & Scrutiny (Performance & Growth) 1 April 2026
	Cabinet 21 April 2026
Executive Portfolio:	Cllr S. Wakeford, Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing
Report by:	Head of Economy, Regeneration and Housing Delivery
Ward(s) affected:	All

Executive Summary:

Huntingdonshire District Council's (HDC) current Housing Strategy was adopted by the Council in October 2020 and covered the period between 2020 to 2025, it was reviewed in December 2021 and June 2023. It is now necessary to develop a new Housing Strategy that covers the Council for the next five years or until a new strategy is developed following Local Government Reorganisation.

Since the 2020 Housing Strategy was published there has been a considerable amount of energy and commitment invested in implementing the strategy and achieving the objectives in the action plan, that were set at the time, these are referenced in the new strategy.

In developing the new five year strategy we have continued to align the strategy with the Council's Corporate Plan and Place Strategy, as we had following the mid term review in 2023 and in addition recognise the number of significant policy and legislative changes that now need to be factored into our thinking for the next five years.

This strategy sets out a comprehensive approach for the Council to focus on its strategic role to meet a broad range of housing objectives.

Recommendation(s):

The committee is requested to:

- Consider the contents of this report and;
- Provide comments on the New Housing Strategy and Action Plan.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To set out the strategic direction for housing in Huntingdonshire for the next five years.

1.2 To highlight the housing priorities for the district and how these will be achieved by the Council directly and through working in partnership with others under the Do, Enable, Influence model of action of the Corporate Plan

1.3 To set out an action plan for the strategy that recognises the housing priorities.

BACKGROUND

1.4 Huntingdonshire last Housing Strategy was adopted in October 2020 for the period 2020-2025, it was reviewed in December 2021 and June 2023.

1.5 It is now necessary to deliver a new Housing Strategy for the period 2026-2031 and recognise a number of significant policy and legislative changes that now need to be factored into the Council's thinking over the next five years. This strategy sets out a comprehensive approach on how the Council will focus on its housing objectives as part of its strategic housing role.

1.6 The strategy will continue to align with the Corporate Plan and Place Strategy ensuring that actions will follow the Do, Enable, Influence model.

1.7 Since the last Housing Strategy was published there has been a considerable amount of energy and commitment invested in implementing the strategy and achieving the objectives in the action plan. These are referenced in the key achievement section of the new strategy on Page 24.

1.8 This new strategy includes the outcome of the recent Local Housing Needs Assessment which shows continued high levels of housing demand in Huntingdonshire and the role housing plays in determining good health and quality of life for our residents.

1.9 Whilst there is no specific duty for the Council to have an up to date Housing Strategy it is considered good practice. With changes being brought about by Local Government Reorganisation it remains essential for HDC to have an up to date strategy as the reshaping of local government is likely to take several years to fully implement, while housing need across Huntingdonshire continues to evolve; updating the strategy ensures the Council can respond to current challenges , such as housing affordability, homelessness prevention and population growth and the delivery of new homes.

COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

2.1 Any comments from this committee will be included in this section prior to its consideration by Cabinet.

KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

3.1   A Housing Strategy is required to provide the overall framework for housing activity in an area, including development, homelessness, private sector housing, affordable housing etc.   Therefore, without one it could lead to different teams working without clear shared direction, different housing policies not aligning and a difficulty in prioritising activities.

LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES

4.1   The completion of a Housing Strategy is an objective of HDC's Corporate Plan 2023 – 2028 and aligns to the plan under the Priority – "In creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations", under the outcome of Improving Housing.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1   Whilst there is no specific statutory duty on Local Authorities to produce a Housing Strategy, most Local Authorities consider it best practice to have one, especially as they must carry out several other statutory duties in relation to Housing, including the maintenance of a Housing Allocation Scheme, reviewing housing conditions, developing a Homelessness Strategy and Tenancy Strategy.

5.2   Senior Officers across the Council have reviewed the new housing strategy, including colleagues from Communities and Housing Operations, Planning and Environmental Health.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1   There will be no additional resource implications, in implementing this Strategy, activities relating directly to HDC will be undertaken by existing teams and partnerships are already established to enable other actions to be developed.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

7.1   Within the Health and Wellbeing Integrated Care Strategy, there is a priority of, *"Reducing poverty through better housing, employment and skills"* This review identifies the links across this strategy and the Housing Strategy.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 In February 2023 the Council formally approved the Council's Climate Strategy this recognises that the current cost of living and climate crises require joint attention to support the wellbeing of residents and businesses. In passing this motion, the council committed to not only the delivery of a Climate Strategy but also that in making decisions it will wherever possible seek to contribute to positive environmental and social benefits. The delivery of good quality, secure accommodation for residents supports this ambition.

EQUALITIES

9.1 The Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

9.2 Understanding the need for housing in HDC helps support this duty.

Appendix 1

- Housing Strategy 2026 – 2031

Background Papers

- Housing Strategy 2020 – 2025 - Housing Strategy 2020 -2025
- Mid Term Review of the Housing Strategy June 2023 - HOUSING STRATEGY 2020-2025

CONTACT OFFICER

Name/Job Title: Pam Scott, Head of Economy, Regeneration and Housing Delivery
Email: pamela.scott@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

**Huntingdonshire District Council
Housing Strategy
2026-2031**

Contents page

Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Affordable Housing Advice Note
- Appendix 2: Housing Needs Assessment
- Appendix 3: Census

Foreword

Welcome to our new Housing Strategy for Huntingdonshire. This strategy sets out the main housing related challenges we face and how we will respond to them through the priorities and objectives we have set out for the next five years.

Our aim is to provide secure, good quality and affordable housing that contributes to improves health and wellbeing, acknowledging that housing plays a significant role in determining people's quality of life, opportunities, and outcomes.

In this strategy we state our commitment to increasing the supply of good quality homes that are affordable to a range of incomes, located in attractive, well designed communities.

The climate emergency and our ambition for net zero within Huntingdonshire means that we will work hard with our partners to reduce housing related carbon emissions. The strategy outlines the actions we will take to enhance existing homes by improving standards and safety whilst supporting our partners in increasing the energy efficiency of existing homes.

It sets out our response to preventing and tackling homelessness in an environment where the cost-of-living crisis is increasing the number of households dealing with financial hardship and the risk of homelessness.

The strategy details how we will support older people and vulnerable people who wish to remain living independently in their own homes, as well as addressing the needs of those who need more specialist accommodation.

We look forward to turning this strategy into action and are committed to working with our partners to deliver the priorities set out in this document.

Introduction

Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy 2020–2025 was adopted in October 2020 and subsequently reviewed in December 2021 and June 2023. With the current strategy approaching its end, it is now necessary to develop a new Housing Strategy that will guide housing priorities and delivery across Huntingdonshire for the next five years, covering the period 2026–2031.

The Housing Strategy brings together in a single document the various elements that make up the council's strategic housing function. The purpose of the Housing Strategy is to identify the key housing issues and challenges facing Huntingdonshire over the next five years and to set high level priorities and objectives across the full range of housing-related areas.

The Housing Strategy and its Delivery Plan has been developed and prepared in collaboration with all relevant service areas within the Council, to ensure that the housing related themes and issues relevant to the delivery of their service area are reflected in the strategy and inform the priorities and areas for actions set out in the Delivery Plan.

Ongoing engagement with our Registered Providers (RP's) and Homes England has taken place through and informed the strategy. It sets out our priorities, commitments and programme for the period 2026 to 2031 for a wide range of housing matters, including:

- How we will Support Sustainable Growth and Regeneration in Huntingdonshire
- How we will increase the supply of homes which people can afford and tackle homelessness
- How we will raise housing quality standards in existing homes to support health and wellbeing
- How we will meet the need for accessible and adapted housing, supported accommodation, and housing for specific groups

Experience has shown that our strategy needs to be agile, so that we can respond quickly and effectively to changes in legislation and shifting national and local issues as they develop. The strategy is therefore purposefully high level, with detail about how we will achieve our priorities set out in our Delivery Plan which we will publish each year.

National and Local Context

This section highlights some key national and local housing-related policies, strategies and plans that inform out housing agenda and underpin the priorities of the Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy 2026 to 2031.

3

National Context

This Housing Strategy has been developed in the context of evolving national policy and legislation in housing, welfare and planning. Below is a summary of the key legislative changes of recent years and some proposed legislative changes that are relevant to the housing sector and shape our response to meeting housing needs and demand in Huntingdonshire.

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which came into effect in April 2018 represented a fundamental change to homelessness legislation. It introduced new duties around preventing and relieving homelessness. The act extended the period which a person can be at risk of homelessness from 28 days to 56 days. This required local authorities to work with people to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage.

The act also requires local authorities to provide homelessness advice and support to all applications for housing assistance and make inquiries to see if they have a duty to help. This is a change from the previous duty where local authorities only had to help those at risk of homelessness if they considered them to be in priority need.

Changes to Government's Departments and Delivery Agencies

In 2018 as part of the government's bid to raise the profile of Housing, a new minister for housing was appointed and the Department for Communities and Local Government was renamed Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) were rebranded as Homes England (HE) and the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) was created as a stand-alone body.

In September 2021 MHCLG was renamed to become the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) "to help deliver on the government's mission to level up

4

every part of the UK as we build back better from the pandemic and deliver on the people's priorities".   In July 2024 it reverted back to MHCLG following the new government removing the "levelling up" element as part of a refocussing on substantive government work.

Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018, 2023, 2024 and 2025

A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) released by Government in July 2018 broadened the definition of affordable housing to include a range of products aimed at providing affordable routes to home ownership including starter homes, discounted market sale and rent to buy. The Definition of affordable housing for rent was also expanded to include affordable private rent which is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision in a Build to Rent scheme.

In December 2023 following a consultation process a further revised NPPF was published. This removed the requirement for Planning Authorities to continually demonstrate a deliverable five-year housing land supply. The updated NPPF states that local planning authorities will not need to meet this requirement as long as their adopted plan is less than five years old and had identified "at least a five year supply of specific, deliverable sites at the time that its examination concluded".

In December 2024 there was a further revision to NPPF which included the reinstatement of Mandatory Housing Targets and the removal of the urban uplift. The First Homes requirement was also removed giving Local Authorities flexibility to determine tenure mix based on local need. There was also the introduction of the term "grey belt" a new designation for previously developed or low contribution green belt land (e.g.: golf courses, car parks and solar parks) this land can now be considered for development subject to specific conditions; it is worth noting that Huntingdonshire does not have any green belt. Policies in local plans and spatial development strategies should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and should be updated as necessary. Reviews should be completed no later than five years from the adoption date of a plan.

In December 2025 the Government published a draft overhaul of the NPPF and opened it for public consultation until March 2026, this consultation is based on the structure of the document into a more plan like policy coded structure, clearer separation between plan making and decision making containing non-statutory development management policies, stronger emphasis on national decision making and a housing delivery focus.

Homes England

In the Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) 2021 -2026 Homes England announced that grant funding could now be used to fund replacement homes, alongside new affordable homes, as part of wider estate regeneration plans and to help bolster the affordable housing sector and maintain housing supply. Previously, affordable housing funds were limited to new build projects. AHP can also be used on replacement homes as part of estate regeneration, as long as schemes are providing additional new affordable homes.

5

In March 2025 it was announced that there would be a further £2 billion in additional "bridging" funding on the same terms as the AHP, but providers would have until March 2027 to start construction.

In July 2025 there was an announcement that there would be a new 2026-2036 Social and Affordable Homes Programme (SAHP) as part of the Government's "Delivering a Decade of Renewal for Social and Affordable Housing" committing a total of £39 billion over ten years. Key features include a delivery target of 300,000 homes with at least 60% for social rent; funding would be secured either by continuous market engagement (CME) or Strategic Partnerships, without ringfenced budgets enabling greater flexibility to support diverse housing needs. This new SAHP shows a long term commitment to funding for affordable housing and therefore provides certainty in the market alongside this the government confirmed a 10 year rent settlement for social housing providers allowing rents to increase by CPI +1% annually from April 2026 alongside a rent convergence mechanism to align rents below this formula.

First Homes

The government First Homes (FH) scheme was launched in June 2021, and it was a new policy that aimed to provide discounted homes to first time buyers in England who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford to purchase a home. As part of the NPPF 2024 the Government changed its position on FH and whilst it remains an active and supported affordable housing tenure, local authorities now have discretion over its delivery. The key elements of FH were that homes should be sold at 30% to 50% below market value, with the discount locked into the property for future resales, these were available to first time buyers, with a household income below £80,000 outside of London with discount prices not exceeding £250,000 and priority given to key workers, local residents, or those on lower incomes.

The Rough Sleeping Strategies 2018 and 2022

The Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 set out the government's vision for halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it entirely by 2027. In September 2022 the government published a refreshed rough sleeping strategy "Ending rough sleeping for good". The strategy has four key themes to end rough sleeping which are prevention, intervention, recovery and a transparent and joined up system. This was also accompanied with a further £2billion investment over a three-year period into policy and schemes to end rough sleeping such as Housing First and the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme. This strategy was reviewed in January 2024, and the four pillars were reaffirmed.

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced a statutory definition for domestic abuse for the first time including physical, emotional, coercive and economic abuse and placed a duty on local authorities in England to provide safe accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children. The Act recognised children as victims and introduced Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPN's) and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPO's). The Act amended homelessness legislation so that all eligible victims of domestic abuse that are

homeless because of domestic abuse are regarded as being in priority need under the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002.

Social Care White paper (2021) and revisions

In 2021, the government published their 10-year vision for adult social care in England. The Health and Social Care White Paper highlighted the importance of an integrated approach to meeting people's day-to-day health and social care needs and the government's aims and proposals regarding, amongst other things, housing adaptations and the Disabled Facilities grant (DFG). The principles of the paper of "Providing the Right Care, in the Right Place at the Right Time" provided for individuals to have choice over their housing arrangements which play a crucial role for achieving positive outcomes, this could be in the form of a new home or their existing home, purpose designed or not to meet their needs and have access to technologies and adaptations.

Since the publication several important elements have been changed the care cost cap was removed in 2024 and funding originally intended for long term reform has been redirected to immediate issues

The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023

The Social Housing Regulation Act received Royal Assent in July 2023 and is now officially law. The Act aims to improve the standard of social housing in the UK. It includes increased regulation for social landlords and new rules for the protection of tenants in their homes against serious health and safety hazards. It will require social landlords to investigate and fix hazards, such as damp and mould, in their homes within strict time limits for tenants The intention of the Act is to enable proactive regulation to improve these standards and provide tenants a voice that ensures that social landlords are held accountable by the Regulator of Social Housing. A new consumer regulatory regime began in April 2024, adding a Consumer Standard grading alongside existing Governance and Financial Viability gradings.

The Regulator of Social Housing has started issuing consumer grades based on proactive inspections and reactive engagement. As part of this **Awaab's Law** (a two-year-old boy who tragically died in social housing whose death was caused by prolonged exposure to black mould) which mandates that social landlords must investigate and resolve health hazards like damp and mould within strict legal timeframes, came into force on the 27 October 2025. Social landlords will have to address all emergency hazards and all damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to tenants to fixed time frames. In 2026 this will extend to excess cold and excess heat; falls associated with baths etc., on level surfaces, on stairs and between levels; structural collapse; and explosions; fire, and electrical hazards; domestic and personal hygiene and food safety. In 2027, regulations will be extended to all remaining Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazards (apart from overcrowding) where they present a significant risk of harm.

Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURA) received Royal Assent on 26th October 2023 and is now law. The LURA intends to change the planning and regeneration system in many ways by putting local people at the heart of development. It will now be easier to put Local Plans in place and future Local Plans will be limited to 'locally specific' matters with general policies set out in a suite of National Development Management Policies (non-statutory) which will have regard to climate change. Local Planning Authorities should develop design codes for their entire area. These codes set out specific design requirements and parameters to ensure that new developments reflect local character and preferences, ultimately aiming to create well designed sustainable places. It is important to note that the provisions it contains will require a raft of secondary legislation and further consultation before coming into effect. The Act makes provision for a new Infrastructure Levy which will replace the s106 and CIL regime, but it is anticipated that the new Infrastructure Levy will take several years to enact.

Future Homes Standard

The Future Homes Standard is an energy efficiency standard that should come into force in 2026 although the deadline for final publication which was expected in Autumn 2025 has past. The key purpose of the standard is to significantly reduce carbon emissions. Homes constructed under the future home's standard should produce 75-80% less carbon emissions and deliver homes that are zero carbon ready so that homes built under this standard will not need retrofitting to become net zero. It was expected that following a twelve month transitional period all new homes must comply by December 2027, but given the delays to publication, no new date has been set.

The Renters (Reform) Bill (Rights)

The Renters Reform bill now renamed the Renters Rights Bill received Royal Assent on 27 October 2025. It aims to change the law to provide a better deal for renters and landlords in the private rented sector. The key measures in the bill is the abolition of Section 21 "no fault" evictions, which comes into effect on the 1st May 2026, other elements including the decent homes standard extended to the Private Rented Sector, rent regulation, and additional powers for Local Authorities to inspect homes will follow, no date has currently been set for this.

The Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025

The Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 aims to accelerate the delivery of new homes and nationally significant infrastructure by streamlining planning processes and reducing delays. It introduces major reforms to speed up consenting for critical infrastructure, modernise National Policy Statements, reduce judicial review opportunities, and remove certain pre-application requirements for large projects. Local authorities gain more flexibility over planning decisions, and a nature restoration levy allows developers to fund environmental improvements more efficiently. Overall, the Act seeks to boost economic growth, support clean energy infrastructure, and help deliver the government's target of 1.5 million homes and faster decisions on major projects.

Local Context

Getting to know Huntingdonshire

Huntingdonshire is a large district (900 square kilometres) and a predominantly rural area in the county of Cambridgeshire. However over 40% of the population live in three of market towns of St Neots, Huntingdon and St Ives.

Huntingdonshire is situated approximately 100km (62 miles) north of London. It has strong relationships with Cambridge to the east, Peterborough to the north and Bedford to the south-west.

9

30 mile radius from Huntingdon

N

Scale = 1:500,000
Date Created: 03/02/2025

Huntingdonshire
DISTRICT COUNCIL
© Crown copyright and database rights 2025
Ordnance Survey HDC AC0000849958
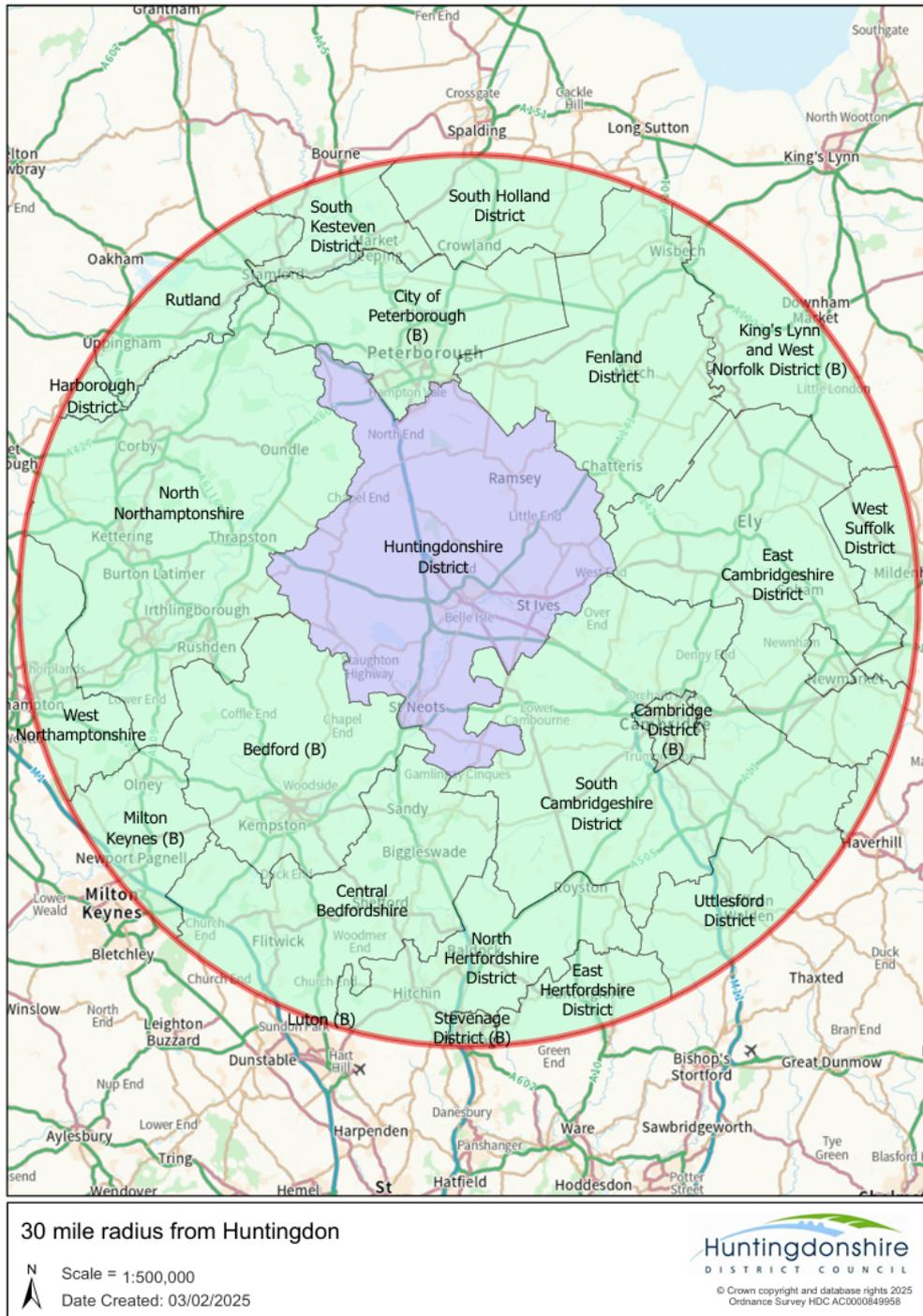
Huntingdonshire Futures Strategy

The Huntingdonshire Futures Strategy is a long-term, place-based vision developed by the Council to guide the district's development up to 2050. It was shaped through extensive public engagement—the largest in the district's history—and is designed to respond to major challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, and public health, while celebrating local identity and opportunity.

10

The purpose of the strategy is to create a shared vision for Huntingdonshire's future, to guide collaborative action across public, private, and community sectors and to ensure Huntingdonshire remains one of the best places to live in the UK.

There are five journeys each representing a strategic theme with long-term goals and actions:

Pride in Place - Focuses on celebrating local identity, heritage, and community spirit and aims to make Huntingdonshire's towns and villages distinct, unified, and well-loved.
Inclusive Economy - Seeks to build a confident, skilled, and resilient workforce and promotes access to opportunity, innovation, and economic participation for all.
Health Embedded - Prioritises holistic wellbeing, happiness, and health and encourages active lifestyles, social connection, and integrated health services.
Environmental Innovation - Champions sustainability and climate resilience and supports local environmental stewardship and global leadership in green innovation.
Travel Transformed - Envisions a future of greener, smarter, and more enjoyable travel that promotes sustainable transport, connectivity, and reduced reliance on cars.

Bringing the Place Strategy to life

Well planned housing delivery has a critical role in shaping places that are healthy, inclusive and environmentally sustainable. It does this through several interconnected mechanisms that link with the Place Strategy aims, these are:

Creating walkable neighbourhoods with access to key services – locating new homes close to schools, healthcare, shops and community facilities reduces car dependency and supports everyday needs within a 15-20 minute walk or cycle; designing neighbourhoods with direct, safe walking and cycling routes which should be connected to wider networks encourages these sustainable choices. Masterplanning new development around mixed use centres helps sustain local businesses, strengthens social cohesion and improves long term viability of services.

Embedding green and blue infrastructure – Housing Schemes can integrate parks, play areas, nature corridors and sustainable drainage systems enabling the creation of attractive environments that improve bio-diversity and climate resilience and provide access to high quality green space which supports physical and mental health and encourages outdoor activity.

Ensuring high quality design and placemaking - Policies that emphasise design codes, character, tenure integration and well considered street layouts result in developments that feel coherent and safe, this in turn creates long term attractiveness of an area whilst reducing anti social behaviour and create **pride in place.** A mix of housing types and tenures alongside community spaces supports diverse household needs from young to old. Modern housing built to a higher energy efficiency standards reduces carbon emissions, fuel bills and long term environmental impacts.

11

Strengthening local services and infrastructure – Through planning agreements, Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy contribute to the funding of schools, GP capacity, transport upgrades, open space improvements and community facilities.

Building Climate Resilient Homes and Neighbourhoods – modern housing design can reduce vulnerability to future climate hazards including: overheating resilience through passive cooling, shading, ventilation, tree cover and better orientation; flood resilience via sustainable drainage systems, permeable surfaces, flood resistant material and site selection; this protects resident by reducing long term costs. Climate change is increasing water scarcity especially in regions like Cambridgeshire using systems like, rainwater harvesting, greywater recycling and low flow systems helps reduce demand. Climate resilient homes help to lower household bills keeping more people financially secure, they improve the health outcomes, reducing pressure on the NHS and adult social care and provide stable, future proof homes for vulnerable groups.

Retrofitting Existing Homes – most homes that will exist in thirty years already stand today, making retrofit essential for long term sustainability and to deliver more energy efficient homes. This will include lower energy consumption through insulation, airtightness, glazing improvements and efficient heating systems and by switching from fossil fuels to heat pumps and other low carbon solutions. This supports improving air quality and reducing damp and mould and enhancing thermal comfort.

Health Outcomes – warm, energy efficient homes reduce respiratory and cardiovascular illness by preventing damp, mould and cold related conditions, accessible homes support independent living for older people and reduce pressure on the NHS and social care, whilst stable housing improves mental health, reduces stress and supports child development and healthy neighbourhoods with green space, active travel routes and low traffic improve physical activity and wellbeing.

Economic Growth - Good quality housing attracts and retains employers who need a stable local labour market and homes that employees can afford, jobs in construction, retrofit and green technologies helps to create skilled jobs in the local economy, whilst regeneration and homes in town centres helps to support high streets, stimulate local spending and attract investment. Housing affordability directly impacts economic growth, by providing a mix of housing types and tenures it enables key workers, such as NHS staff, teachers and emergency services to live near workplaces.

Huntingdonshire District Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2028

The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's strategic priorities and desired outcomes for the five-year period, aligning with the Huntingdonshire Futures Strategy and reflecting feedback from residents, businesses, and partners.

There are three Strategic Priorities

Improving Quality of Life for Local People by

- Improving the happiness and wellbeing of residents
- Keeping people out of crisis
- Helping people in crisis

Creating a Better Huntingdonshire for Future Generations

- Improving housing
- Forward-thinking economic growth
- Lowering carbon emissions

Doing our core work well

Delivering good quality, high value for money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. (CPCA)

The CPCA was created in 2017 and is a devolved regional body formed by the seven councils to make strategic decisions in the region. It has a range of responsibilities including transport, infrastructure, planning, housing, economic growth, business support and adult education.

The CPCA's Corporate Plan 2025-2029 identifies delivering homes as a core objective linked to wider goals of economic vitality, connectivity and resilience. It emphasises building homes that inspire **pride** and support a thriving inclusive region this supports HDC own housing ambitions through affordable provision, delivery targets and spatial planning.

The CPCA's Local Growth Plan which was adopted on 22 October 2025 is the region's overarching strategic framework guiding economic development to 2035. It identifies sector strengths, barriers to growth and investment priorities. It leads on discussions with government and aligns local ambitions across housing, transport, skills and infrastructure.

13

A New Local Plan

The purpose of the Local Plan is to provide a framework for sustainable development within Huntingdonshire including the identification of land for development to deliver the homes, employment and services needed and to set out local policies against which decisions on all planning applications are made. The Local Plan is the main basis for making planning decisions.

The council's current Local Plan to 2036 was adopted on 15 May 2019 identifying sufficient land for new homes (20,100), jobs, facilities, infrastructure, and open spaces to meet known needs. On 24 January 2023, Huntingdonshire District Council's Cabinet agreed to the preparation of a full update to the adopted Local Plan which will set out a plan for how the district will grow over future decades to 2046. The new plan will also be able to take into account recent changes in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) other recent national legislation as well as Huntingdonshire's Place Strategy and Climate Strategy.

The replacement Local Plan has benefitted from multiple phases of public engagement and it is the Council's intention to finalise a draft by the end of 2026 and then move through the public examination phase with the aspiration of adopting a replacement plan in 2028. The new plan proposes 32,200 new homes between 2021 to 2046.

Health and Wellbeing Integrated Care Strategy December 2022

Within the Health and Wellbeing Integrated Care Strategy, Priority 3 looks at:

"Reducing poverty through better housing, employment and skills"

It is known that poverty limits life chances, health and wellbeing, and has a much wider societal impact beyond the individuals who are personally affected. This priority focuses on reducing poverty through improving skills, better employment and better housing although reducing poverty is much broader than just these aspects.

14

The interaction between housing and poverty is two-way; poverty limits people's housing choices, often resulting in living in poor quality housing as that is all that is affordable or available. However, housing also affects the risk or severity of poverty; expensive housing reduces the financial resource for other life essentials, poor quality housing is likely to require considerably greater spend of limited incomes on heating, and poor quality or insecure housing also affects wellbeing and physical health which in turn can limit educational or employment outcomes.

Stable, secure, and good housing can have huge benefits not just to health but to the wider life chances. For example, housing with adequate space not only improves personal privacy reducing depression, anxiety and stress but also gives children room to play, a good night's sleep and provides sufficient study space enabling better achievement. The issue of poverty is being exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis. The 'Let's Talk - your health and care' campaign that was launched on 7 October 2022 to inform the Health and Wellbeing Integrated Care Strategy has identified that 45.8% of the respondents (1051/2292) felt that the cost of living crisis was impacting their health and wellbeing; key themes were the cost of heating and not having the heating on, having to cut down or purchase cheaper versions of food, the costs of transport to key services such as hospital appointments, reducing activities and increasing feelings of isolation

Although fewer homes nationally are classed as non-decent compared with 10 years ago; overcrowding and affordability problems have increased in recent years and are likely to worsen given the cost-of-living crisis. The Covid-19 pandemic has also highlighted the direct health implications of housing with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Covid Impact Assessment showing that deprivation, including poor housing conditions such as overcrowding, and high density were associated with greater spread of COVID 19. The economic fallout from the pandemic and the current cost of living crisis is likely to lead to an increase in evictions, a lack of housing security and increased over-crowding.

It is estimated to cost the NHS some £1.4bn per year to treat those people who are affected by poor housing conditions. The most common extreme hazards likely to be found in the home are those relating to cold and home accidents. These are, generally, not expensive to rectify or avoid compared with the long-term cost to the health services and society if they are ignored. Such hazards are particularly harmful to the most vulnerable, especially older people and families with young children. This was particularly highlighted recently in the case of Awaab Ishak, who died at two years old as a direct result of mould in his family home resulting in DLUHC highlighting some of the commitments needed to tackle poor housing standards. This links back to the "Renters Reform Bill mentioned earlier in this document.

Tackling poor housing is complicated and will require more cross sector working. The pattern of tenure and ownership shows that only a very small proportion (16.3%) of housing is under the direct control of partners, the vast majority of housing in Cambridgeshire is either private rented or owner occupied.

Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy 2024

The Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy is Huntingdonshire District Council's long-term commitment to improving quality of life for local people by addressing the root causes of poor health and economic inequality. By adopting a Community Wealth Building approach, the strategy ensures that public sector investment and decision-making deliver direct benefits for local communities. It supports the Council's Corporate Plan and Huntingdonshire Futures partnership's shared focus on prevention and wellbeing.

15

The strategy focuses on creating the conditions for residents to thrive by strengthening:

- economic resilience
- social connection
- physical and mental wellbeing
- access to local opportunities

The Community Health and Wealth Building Fund builds on the success of the pilot phase and Huntingdonshire District Council has now launched the full Community Health and Wealth Building Delivery Fund.

The Delivery Fund is an investment over three years to support community-led projects that improve health, wellbeing and economic resilience across Huntingdonshire by funding projects that:

- improve physical and mental health, including through increased physical activity
- strengthen economic resilience, focusing on employment, skills and reducing barriers
- increase social connection and a sense of community across Huntingdonshire

The fund will empower local communities, organisations and partners to lead initiatives that address the root causes of inequality and poor health.

Housing Need in Huntingdonshire

Huntingdonshire Local Housing Needs Assessment was completed by Iceni Projects Ltd on behalf of the Council in August 2025. This has provided the Council with more up to date information as follows:

Demographics

It shows that Huntingdonshire's population grew from 170,000 in 2011 to 186,000 in 2023, making up about 27% of Cambridgeshire's total. The district's growth was greater than the national rate but below the county and regional rates. The district has an older age profile than the county and region, with more residents aged 50 and above and fewer student age groups. In 2021 Huntingdonshire had 76,880 households, equating to an average household size of 2.35, this is smaller than the other comparable areas. Single-family households dominate in Huntingdonshire, especially married or civil partnership couples, Single-person households are less common than in the county or region. **(comparators are Cambridgeshire, Eastern Region and England)**

Housing Stock and Supply Trends

The total number of dwellings in Huntingdonshire in 2024 was 83,400, a 17% increase since 2011. This is a faster rate of growth than the national and regional growth rates and has a lower implied vacancy rate than the wider comparators.

Over the last five years, housing delivery in Huntingdonshire has increased to an average annual rate of 1,139 dwellings. Huntingdonshire has a larger proportion of detached dwellings than the wider comparators and a smaller proportion of flatted developments, linked to this there is a greater percentage of homes with four or more bedrooms when compared to the wider comparators. Huntingdonshire also has a larger proportion of owner-occupied households and conversely a smaller proportion of renters (social and private). The district has a higher proportion of under-occupied homes and a lower rate of overcrowding in the district. This is linked to the ageing population and the size of the housing stock.

Housing Market

Huntingdonshire's median house price is £315,000 in 2023 which is lower than the county (£337,000) and regional (£340,000) medians, but higher than the national median of £290,000. Apart from flats, Huntingdonshire's property prices are above the England average but below county and regional averages for all home types.

Over the past decade, house prices in Huntingdonshire have grown by 69%, similar to the county (67%), but below regional growth (74%) and above national growth (57%). In the last 5 years, overall median house price growth was 18%, lower than in the other wider areas. Property sales in Huntingdonshire have followed benchmark trends, with declines since 2022, the affordability ratio in Huntingdonshire is 8.45.

The median private rental value is £875 per month, lower than county and regional values, but higher than the national rate. Single-room rents have increased the most, indicating a high demand for smaller, affordable homes.

Housing Need and Demographics

Applying the government's Standard Method for assessing housing need to Huntingdonshire results there is an annual housing need of 1,232 dwellings per annum. This shows a projected population increase of around 54,700 people by 2046. This equates to a 29.1% increase, which is higher than a trend-based projection based on the last five years (24.5%).

Further analysis indicates that with the Standard Method, the increase in the economically active population is projected to be up to 30,300, which, taking account of individuals having two roles at the same time, could support up to 31,400 additional jobs. The main changes to

17

economic activity rates are projected in the 60-69 age groups, linked to changes in pensionable age and trends in older people working longer.

Affordable Housing

The analysis has taken account of local housing costs (to both buy and rent) along with estimates of household income. The evidence indicates that there is an acute need for affordable housing in the district and a need in all sub-areas. The majority of need is from households who are unable to buy or rent and therefore points particularly towards a need for rented affordable housing rather than affordable home ownership.

Affordable housing need for households unable to buy or rent equates to 480 homes per annum. The link between affordable need and overall need (of all tenures) is complex, and in trying to make a link, it must be remembered that many of those picked up as having an affordable need are already in housing (and therefore do not generate a net additional need for a home).

In addition, the private rented sector is providing benefit-supported accommodation for many households. That said, the level of affordable need does suggest the Council should maximise the delivery of such housing at every opportunity where viability allows. The Council's current approach of seeking 40% affordable housing with 70% being either Affordable Rent or Social Rent would be justified. The analysis suggests there will be a need for both social and affordable rented housing – the latter will be suitable particularly for households who are close to being able to afford to rent privately and possibly also for some households who claim full Housing Benefit. It is, however, clear that social rents are more affordable and could benefit a wider range of households – social rents could therefore be prioritised where delivery does not prejudice the overall delivery of affordable homes. The study also considers different types of AHO (notably First Homes and shared ownership) as each may have a role to play.

Shared ownership is likely to be suitable for households with more marginal affordability (those only just able to afford to privately rent) as it has the advantage of a lower deposit and subsidised rent. There was no strong evidence of a need for First Homes or discounted market housing more generally. Shared Ownership is considered more flexible, accommodating a wider range of income groups.

In deciding what types of affordable housing to provide, including a split between rented and home ownership products, the Council will need to consider the relative levels of need and also viability issues. For example, seeking Social Rented in place of Affordable Rented Housing could reduce the viable quantum the Council could secure. Viability consideration should recognise, for example, that providing AHO may be more viable and may therefore allow more units to be delivered, but at the same time, noting that households with a need for rented housing are likely to have more acute needs and fewer housing options. The evidence would justify a policy position of 70% low-cost rented and 30% affordable home ownership homes. The evidence indicates that up to 70% of rented affordable housing at social rents could be justified in need terms (therefore, about 50% of all affordable housing); although some additional viability testing is currently being undertaken and likely to conclude in the Autumn of 2026.

Low-cost home ownership provision should focus on shared ownership, with no strong evidence of a need for First Homes or discounted market housing identified. Overall, the analysis identifies a notable need for affordable housing, and it is clear that the provision of new affordable housing is an important and pressing issue in the area.

18

The report does not provide an affordable housing target; the amount of affordable housing delivered will be limited to the amount that can viably be provided. The evidence does, however, suggest that affordable housing delivery should be maximised where opportunities arise as the overall data shows that there is an 8% increase in housing demand.

Housing Mix

Analysis of the future mix of housing required takes account of demographic change, including potential changes to the number of family households and the ageing of the population. The proportion of households with dependent children in Huntingdonshire is about average, with around 28% of all households containing dependent children in 2021 (compared with around 29% regionally and nationally). There are notable differences between different types of households, with married couples (with dependent children) seeing a high level of owner-occupation, whereas lone parents are particularly likely to live in social or private rented accommodation.

There are a range of factors which will influence demand for different sizes of homes, including demographic changes, future growth in real earnings and households' ability to save, economic performance and housing affordability.

The analysis linked to future demographic change concludes that the following represents an appropriate mix of affordable and market homes, which takes account of both household changes and the ageing of the population, as well as seeking to make more efficient use of new stock by not projecting forward the high levels of under-occupancy (which is notable in the market sector).

Suggested size mix of housing by tenure – Huntingdonshire

	Market	Affordable home ownership	Affordable housing (rented)	
			Under 65	65 and over
1-bedroom	5%	15%	25%	50%
2-bedrooms	30%	45%	35%	50%
3-bedrooms	40%	30%	30%	
4+-bedrooms	25%	10%	10%	

Source: Iceni Analysis

For affordable rented housing, the Council's letting policies seek to minimise housing families with children in flats. Consequently, properties of 2 bedrooms or more will therefore mostly be houses. In all sectors, the analysis points to a particular need for 2 and 3 bedroom accommodation, with varying proportions of 1 and 4 bedroom homes.

For rented affordable housing for under-65s, there is a clear need for a range of different sizes of homes, including 40% to have at least 3-bedrooms, of which 10% should have at least 4-bedrooms. The strategic conclusions in the affordable sector recognise the role which delivery of larger family homes can play in releasing a supply of smaller properties for other households. Also recognised is the limited flexibility which 1 bedroom properties offer to changing household circumstances, which feed through into higher turnover and management issues.

The conclusions also take account of the current mix of housing by tenure and also the size requirements shown on the Housing Register. The mix identified above could inform strategic policies, although a flexible approach should be adopted. Additionally, in applying the mix to individual development sites, regard should be had to the nature of the site and

19

character of the area, and to up-to-date evidence of need (including the Housing Register) as well as the existing mix and turnover of properties at the local level and recent housing delivery.

Older and Disabled People

Huntingdonshire has a very slightly older age structure than is seen regionally and nationally, and lower levels of disability compared with other areas. The older person population (65+) shows high proportions of owner-occupation, and particularly outright owners who may have significant equity in their homes (79% of all older person households are outright owners). The older person population is projected to increase notably moving forward. An ageing population means that the number of people with disabilities is likely to increase. Key findings for the 2024-46 period include:

- a 38% increase in the population aged 65+ (potentially accounting for 32% of total population growth).
- a 64% increase in the number of people aged 65+ with dementia and a 54% increase in those aged 65+ with mobility problems.
- a need for around 2,000 additional housing units with support (sheltered/retirement housing) – around 70% in the market sector.
- a need for around 1,200 additional housing units with care (e.g. extra-care) – the majority (around three-quarters) in the market sector.
- a need for additional nursing and residential care bedspaces (around 1,300 in the period); and
- a need for around 670 dwellings to be for wheelchair users across all tenures (meeting technical standard M4(3)).

This would suggest that there is a clear need to increase the supply of accessible and adaptable dwellings and wheelchair-user dwellings, as well as providing specific provision of older persons housing. The evidence justifies current Council policy requiring all dwellings (in all tenures) to meet the M4(2) standards, and around 5% of homes meeting M4(3) – wheelchair user dwellings in the market sector (a higher proportion of around 10% in the affordable sector). Properties in the affordable sector should be wheelchair-accessible dwellings (constructed for immediate occupation) and in the market sector, they should be wheelchair-user adaptable dwellings (constructed to be adjustable for occupation by a wheelchair user and mostly in the form of bungalows). At the very least in the affordable sector M4(3) properties should be supplied with level access showers rather than baths recognising the needs of the individuals that will occupy the property at completion.

It should, however, be noted that there will be cases where this may not be possible (e.g. due to viability or site-specific circumstances) and so any policy should be applied flexibly. In framing policies for the provision of specialist older persons accommodation, the Council will need to consider a range of issues. This will include the different use classes of accommodation (i.e. C2 vs. C3) and requirements for affordable housing contributions (linked to this, the viability of provision).

Other Specific Groups

Looked After Children

The County Council's overarching policy is to ensure as few children as possible will be placed in residential care homes. There are currently around 700 looked-after children within the county, of which 63 are placed in residential children's care homes (0.03%). Although the

county has 32 registered children's care facilities, a significant proportion of these are filled by placements from outside the area. As a result, there is insufficient local provision.

If current prevalence rates continue, the projected population growth, linked to the Standard Method, would result in an increased demand for 3 additional residential beds in children's care homes by 2045 (a total of 14). Additional demand for residential care bedspaces for children will depend on the success or otherwise of preferred alternatives such as familial care or foster care and there will also be a need for supported accommodation for young adults.

The County Council is investing in children's social care by providing an extra £10.4m for looked-after children and reducing agency social worker use to improve stability. The Council is expanding local residential capacity by opening two new council-owned children's homes. It has also commissioned a new Residential Care Service using council properties and strengthening placement procurement through its Dynamic Purchasing System and less reliance on high-cost external placements.

Service Families

Huntingdonshire is home to several military establishments, including RAF Alconbury, RAF Wyton and RAF Molesworth. RAF Alconbury is a joint-service base with the US Air Force and the RAF.

According to data from the Ministry of Defence (MOD), as of April 2024, there are 2,200 military (UK Regular Forces) and MOD Civilian Personnel based in Huntingdonshire. Overall, the presence of regular forces in Huntingdonshire is not considered to be significant and is unlikely to have any implications on overall affordability, but it may be driving demand in local areas.

It is considered that the most pressing issue is likely to be finding accommodation for those transitioning out of the forces, as well as existing personnel who are seeking to buy in the district. Provision of Low-Cost Home Ownership can help account for this, as well as the allocation of housing regulations, which allow military personnel to establish local connections to the area. Overall, this group are likely to already be accounted for within affordable housing need and is not considered to be additional to it.

Under the Armed Forces Covenant the Council has committed to support service personnel through housing priority (under certain conditions), financial assistance, employment support, health and wellbeing services and family support.

Custom and Self-Build

The Council is required to grant sufficient planning permissions to meet the demand identified on the Register. There has been a total of 361 registered expressions of interest for a serviced plot of land in Huntingdonshire. This is an average of 45 registrations per base period (31st October to 30th October 12 months, but not a calendar year).

Although recent registrations have fallen significantly, HDC are meeting their requirement through CIL exemptions (361 on register, 377 exemptions, completions are 311) The proposed replacement plan allocates some sites for custom and self-build, although there is evidence that windfall development is meeting the need (most people on the register want a single plot).

21

The Council is considering a policy for self and custom build as a proportion of new homes on larger developments.

Keyworker Provision

There is strategic importance in providing housing for key workers in Huntingdonshire and this aligns with national policy. Key workers (NHS staff, teachers, emergency services, social care) are essential for community well-being. National surveys show 68% of NHS staff consider affordable housing critical to staying in their job, housing provision helps attract and retain skilled professionals locally, reducing vacancies and service disruption. Without stable housing, staff face long commutes or leave the area, creating gaps in essential services. Housing provision ensures reliable delivery of health, education, and emergency services.

Key workers underpin local economies—schools, hospitals, and care services enable other sectors to function, Workforce shortages impact productivity and growth. Many key workers earn below market thresholds for home ownership or private rent, affordable housing provision ensures they can live near their workplace, reducing inequality and improving quality of life.

In 2023 the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System (ICS) undertook a housing survey that reached approximately 50,000 local health and care staff, with 1,142 responses, of which 86 were from those living in Huntingdonshire—representing ~7.5% of the total sample.

The survey encompassed a broad range of staff: from Cambridge University Hospitals NHS FT, CPFT, NWAFT, Royal Papworth, local authorities, primary care, ambulance services, social care.

The survey revealed significant housing challenges for health and care staff in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. Affordability emerged as a major concern, with many respondents struggling to secure housing near their workplace, leading to long or poor commutes that negatively impact wellbeing and job satisfaction.

Staff expressed a strong preference for housing within 5–20 miles of work and highlighted financial strain, safety concerns, and the need for longer tenancies to ensure stability. Desired housing types vary by household size, underscoring the need for tailored policies at district level.

Respondents strongly supported employer-led housing initiatives and partnerships to provide affordable options closer to work, alongside better access to information through tools like a Housing Hub. The survey also identified gaps in accessibility for staff with disabilities and highlighted demographic variations in housing needs, reinforcing the importance of targeted interventions to improve staff wellbeing and retention.

As part of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Affordable housing includes provision for "essential local workers." and Local Plans are expected to help to address this need as part of meeting housing requirements whilst Section 106 agreements can secure affordable homes targeted to key workers.

In HDC we have completed two schemes for keyworkers at Alconbury Weald with Rentplus, which delivered a total of 22 homes, a mixture of one and two bedroom apartments, all

22

properties were occupied by September 2022. The second scheme was with Mangpm also in Alconbury Weald where a total of 75 homes, a mixture of one, two, three and four bedroom homes were identified for keyworkers.

Rural Housing

Rural housing is vital to the sustainability, resilience, and long-term viability of rural communities, but they are significantly less affordable than those in urban areas, with the average National lower-quartile rural house price standing at 8.8 times local earnings, compared with 7.6 times in comparable urban areas, making it increasingly difficult for local people—particularly younger households, key workers, and lower-income families—to remain in their communities.

The lack of affordable housing in rural areas leads to people moving away and undermining rural jobs, as essential workers—including those in health, social care, education, hospitality, and agriculture—face being priced out of the communities they serve. National analysis shows that demand for rural social housing has increased by 31% between 2019 and 2022, compared with just 3% in predominantly urban areas, underscoring how acute the challenge has become.

The consequences extend far beyond individual households: the lack of secure, affordable homes contributes to the erosion of key rural services. Between 2018 and 2023, rural areas saw the closure of 45 schools, 53 post offices, and 49 play parks, alongside a 6% reduction in rural pubs and bars, demonstrating how housing pressures directly weaken the social infrastructure on which communities rely. Investing in rural housing therefore strengthens local economies, protects essential services, supports intergenerational cohesion, and ensures that rural areas remain vibrant, economically active places where people can live, work, and thrive. [englishrural.org.uk] [housing.org.uk]

In Huntingdonshire we work with Cambridgeshire ACRE who support the delivery of rural housing schemes across Cambridgeshire. Many of these sites are classed as Rural Exception Sites which are sites outside the village development boundary on land not otherwise suitable for development. The schemes are small and in keeping with the size, scale and character of the village.

The resulting homes are made available for social rent, affordable rent or shared ownership to people who have a connection with the village, usually to people that are already living there, or work or have family in the area . A small number of open market homes can also be permitted to make the scheme financially viable; this would be no more than 40% net of the site area. The homes are provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Importantly, the homes will also stay affordable in perpetuity and are not able to become open market homes in the future.

CACRE work with Town and Parish Councils to provide information about rural housing and how this could work in their town or parish, especially around any questions they may have on rural exception sites, housing tenures, local connections and allocations policies. They will also undertake an independent housing needs survey which establishes the demand for

23

affordable housing in the town or parish. CACRE will also support the relationship between the Town or Parish Council and Huntingdonshire DC alongside, potential housing association partners and potential landowners.

Empty Homes

Empty homes represent a significant and often overlooked opportunity to meet housing need, support community regeneration, and make more effective use of existing housing stock. At a time of growing demand for affordable and decent homes, the presence of long-term vacant properties, often located in areas of high need, can undermine neighbourhood vitality, attract anti-social behaviour, and contribute to urban decline.

With the appointment of a new Empty Homes Officer in September 2025, the Council is developing an Empty Homes Strategy which will outline our commitment to tackling empty homes as part of a wider effort to create thriving, resilient communities and ensure that every home counts. This will include Strategic Integration, Data Driven Action, Tailored Interventions and cross sector collaboration.

This activity will support the role of the Environmental Health team who have previously responded to service requests relating to empty homes within the district, however, their input was focussed around dealing with the impact the property was having on immediate neighbours and the local community. This activity would generally require action under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 or Anti social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, their resourcing did not allow for further engagement with the property owner to discuss bringing the property back into use and there was no proactive management of empty homes.

Key Achievements from the 2020 – 2025 Housing Strategy

The previous Housing Strategy 2020 – 2025 which was adopted in October 2020 had three key priorities:

1. New homes to meet the needs of Huntingdonshire now and in the future
2. Homes to enable people in Huntingdonshire to live independent and healthy lives
3. Working in Partnership to achieve shared objectives

These priorities formed an action plan, in the last five years the Council working in partnership has been able to achieve the following outcomes:

❖ Delivered clear expectations for delivering new affordable housing by developing the Affordable Housing Advice Note, including tenure, size and specialist housing (Appendix 1)
❖ Delivered a total of 2008 affordable homes with a further 688 currently under construction
❖ Delivered five rural housing schemes delivering a total of 111 homes for local people with a further four planned (please see Case Study 2 and 3)
❖ Delivered a total of 5478 number of new homes across the district with a further 1,047 under construction.
❖ Maintained a strong performance on achieving 40% affordable housing on eligible sites with few challenges on viability
❖ Completion of two schemes for keyworkers with a further scheme expected to complete in the first quarter of 26/27 (please see Case Study 1)

24

- ❖ Entering into contract with Amplius (formerly Longhurst) to deliver affordable housing on Council owned sites
- ❖ Completion of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment known as "Housing Needs of Specific Groups" by G L Hearn, a cross council report for the Cambridge sub region to inform plan-making in 2021
- ❖ Completion of a Local Housing Needs Assessment by ICENI in August 2025 to support the emerging Local Plan
- ❖ Completion of a revised Lettings Policy
- ❖ Completed a revised Tenancy Strategy
- ❖ Continue to actively take part in Regional and Sub- Regional meetings on Housing Strategy, Planning and Enabling, including Housing Board, Strategic Housing Group, Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk Enablers.
- ❖ Continue to financially support the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Housing Co-Ordinator
- ❖ Continue to financially support Cambridgeshire Acre
- ❖ Continue to financially support Age Uk in the delivery of the Handyperson Service
- ❖ Completion of the Housing Options for Older People booklet
- ❖ Continuation of the Rough Sleeping outreach project which was recommissioned in 2024
- ❖ Adoption of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2021
- ❖ Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation in 2025
- ❖ Case Study on Affordable Housing Delivery in the Local Government Association
- ❖ Draft Empty Homes Strategy 2026
- ❖ Acquisition of 21 homes in partnership with Stonewater for the Local Authority Housing Fund.

25

CASE STUDIES –

CASE STUDY ONE

26

Keyworker Provision at Alconbury Weald with Rentplus

The Rentplus model is an affordable rent to buy scheme offering residents the chance to move into a new home without a deposit and purchase it after a fixed rental period.

The scheme was 22 homes comprising:

8 x 1 bedroom flats

11 x 2 bedroom flats

3 Coach Houses
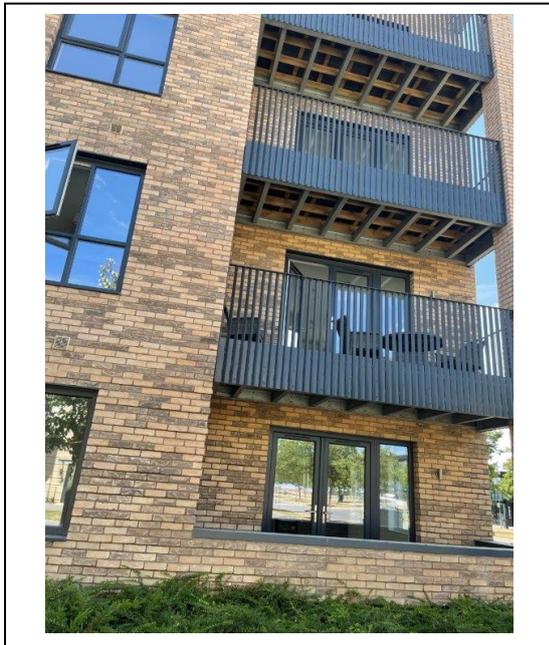
Of the 28 people living in the 21 apartments, 20 work in key and essential industries – 13 as key (public sector)

Salaries range from £18,000 to £52kpa. With 13 people earning under £29,999 and 17 earning under £39,999.

All had a local connection with Huntingdonshire.

CASE STUDY TWO

27

Rural Housing Delivery – Bluntisham

Meridian Close is a scheme on the western edge of Bluntisham.

This was a developer led rural exception site, with Rose Homes constructing the homes. Hastoe were involved in the planning process, and the affordable homes were built in alignment with Hastoe's design requirements. These requirements aim to maintain high standards at all stages of development and ensure that the resulting homes are energy efficient, well designed, of high quality and provide for the needs of residents

The scheme is unique in that it includes 9 private sale homes. This large proportion of private sale homes is possible through Huntingdonshire District Councils policy allowing up to 40% of a rural exception site to be used for private sale. These homes assist in making the rest of the scheme, i.e. the affordable homes, viable and possible to be provided for the village

Number of Properties	20 (of which 11 affordable and 9 private sale)
Property Types	Rented = 2 x 1bed house 3 x 2bed house 1 x 2bed bungalow 2 x 3bed house Shared Ownership = 1 x 2bed house 1 x 3bed house
Housing Needs Survey	December 2012
Planning Permission	April 2019
Start on Site	March 2020
Completion	July 2021
Homes England Funding	£420,000.

- Hastoe Housing Association
- Rose Homes
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- Bluntisham Parish Council
- Cambridgeshire ACRE

CASE STUDY THREE

Rural Housing Delivery – Great Staughton Community Land Trust

Jewell Close in Great Staughton is a housing scheme delivered by a Community Land Trust (CLT), a community-led organisation established in August 2018 to provide affordable, long-term housing for local residents.

The scheme emerged from the Neighbourhood Plan, it comprises 12 new homes a mixture of one, two and three bedroom homes for social rent and shared ownership.

All homes were built to modern standards and designed to remain affordable in perpetuity for people with a local connection to Great Staughton and neighbouring villages.

Number of Properties	12 (of which 3 for shared ownership and 9 for social rent)
Property Types	Rented = 2 x 1 bedroom flat 2 x 2 bedroom house 2 x 2 bedroom bungalow 3 x 3 bedroom house Shared Ownership = 2 x 2 bedroom house 1 x 3 bedroom house
Housing Needs Survey	2013
CLT Incorporated	August 2018
Planning Permission	July 2021
Start on Site	October 2021
Completion	March 2023
CPCA Grant Funding	£606,423

- Luminous (now Places for People)
- Eastern Community Homes
- Community Land Trust
- Great Staughton Parish Council
- CPCA
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- Aspen Homes

29

CASE STUDY 4

Affordable Housing Scheme in Bluntisham by Accent delivering 26 Homes

Orchard View, Bluntisham, was a scheme by Accent Housing Association which delivered 26 high-quality, energy-efficient homes for affordable rent and shared ownership. The

The development was supported by Huntingdonshire District Council and received grant from Homes England.

The new development includes 7 homes for affordable rent (5 one-bedroom, 2 two-bedroom) and 19 shared ownership homes (9 two-bedroom, 10 three-bedroom).

All homes have been allocated or sold to people with a local connection, ensuring that the Bluntisham community benefits directly from the development. The homes were built with a fabric first approach, every property achieved an EPC rating of B or higher, with 9 homes achieving an A rating.

Solar panels have been installed on every roof, reducing energy bills for residents and helping tackle fuel poverty. All homes have EV charging points, future-proofing them for sustainable living. The scheme incorporates significant green space, new trees, and a children's play area, all designed for community use.

Two 1 bedroom bungalows and Two 2 bedroom bungalows were delivered as part of the scheme and included wet rooms ensure the homes are accessible to a wide range of residents, including older people and those with reduced mobility.

This new development is located adjacent to existing Accent homes on Station Road

- ➢ **Start on site: September 2023**
- ➢ **Completion: July 2025**
- ➢ **Total investment: £7.43m**

CASE STUDY 5

Amplius Housing Scheme – California Road, Huntingdon

This project delivered 56 affordable homes in Huntingdon as part of Cambridgeshire Regional College redevelopment, it delivered a mixture of one, two and three-bedroom properties.

The development was built using modern methods of construction which saw panels constructed in factory conditions using sustainably sourced timber and delivered to the site as complete wall panels with insulation and external cladding. The use of panellised timber along with factory-fitted detailing means the homes will be lower carbon and use less energy for residents. The development also used a ground source heat pump for all the homes, which will also help to reduce energy costs for the residents.

The development won both the social housing project of the year and the overall best timber frame project of the year at the Structural Timber awards.

31

ACTION PLAN

Priority 1 – Delivering new homes and meeting Housing Need

Delivering new homes for Huntingdonshire through sustainable growth and regeneration and through high quality place making that enhances health and wellbeing continues to be an objective of the Council.

Therefore under this priorty the Council will:

	ACTION	Lead Service	Timeframe	Comments
P1 - 1	Deliver new housing that meets our annual delivery targets **DO**	Planning	Yearly	Information obtained from the Annual Monitoring Report
P1 – 2	Deliver new affordable housing that meets housing demand **ENABLE**	Strategic Housing	Yearly	Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process

32

	ACTION	LEAD SERVICE	TIMEFRAME	COMMENTS
P1 – 3	Explore further options for Keyworker Housing **INFLUENCE**	Strategic Housing	Yearly	Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process
P1 – 4	Support the development of Rural Housing **ENABLE**	Strategic Housing	Yearly	Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process
P1 – 5	Work with Places For People on housing led regeneration schemes **ENABLE**	Strategic Housing	Yearly	Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process
P1 – 6	Encourage the use of non traditional construction methods to support work on Climate Change. **INFLUENCE**	Strategic Housing	Yearly	Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process
P1 – 7	Refresh the Huntingdonshire Local Plan **DO**	Planning	Summer 2027	Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process
P1 – 8	Increase the number of homeless preventions recorded **DO**	Communities & Operational Housing	Yearly	Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process
P1 – 9	Reduce households in temporary accommodation through innovative housing solutions **DO**	Communities & Operational Housing	Yearly	Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process
P1 – 10	Review and update the Lettings Policy **DO**	Operational Housing	2026/27	Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process
P1 – 11	Reduced the number of Long Term Empty Homes **DO**	Strategic Housing	Yearly	Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process

Priority Two – High Quality Homes in Huntingdonshire enabling people to live safe, independent and healthy lives

Delivering high quality homes continues to be a priority for the Council, the actions below set out how the Council will work with partners to deliver this priority as follows:

	ACTION	LEAD SERVICE	TIMEFRAME	COMMENTS
P2 – 1	Work with partners to deliver the Health and Wellbeing Strategy **DO /ENABLE/INFLUENCE**	Communities	Ongoing	
P2 – 2	Work with partners to deliver the Health and	Communities	Ongoing	

33

	Wealth Building Strategy **DO/ENABLE/INFLUENCE**			
P2 – 3	Develop a Supported Housing Strategy (links to P2 – 5 **DO**	Housing Strategy	March 2027	
P2 - 4	Implement the changes brought about by the Renters Rights Bill **DO**	Environmental Health	2026/2027	
P2 – 5	Implement the Social Housing Regulatory Act and prepare for further objectives **DO**	Housing Strategy	Unknown at the present time	Prepare for the introduction of additional elements once guidance provided
P2 – 6	Review the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy **DO**	Housing Operations	2026/27	In line with Government's National Plan to end Homelessness
P2 – 7	Work with Health and Social Care in relation to Specialist Housing Provision **ENABLE / INFLUENCE**	Housing Strategy	Yearly	Accommodation for Physical Disability, Older Persons, Learning Disability, Mental Health, Autism, etc.
P2 - 8	Review services to Rough Sleepers including outreach **DO**	Housing Operations	2026/2027	
P2 - 9	Review and Monitor the delivery of Disable Facility Grants **DO**	Commnunities	26/27 and then yearly	Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process

34

Glossary of Terms

Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing is a broad category covering all homes for rent or sale below market rates. This includes homes let at Social Rent and Intermediate Rent. It also includes homes for sale on a Shared Ownership basis or as Discounted Market Sale.

Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) came into force in April 2010. It allows local authorities to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects in their area. The money can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure that is needed as a result of development. This includes new or safer road schemes, flood defences, schools, hospitals and other health and social care facilities, park improvements, green spaces and leisure centres. Local authorities implementing CIL must produce a charging schedule setting out the charge rates for different types of development in their area.

Extra Care Housing

Extra Care Housing is housing designed with the needs of frailer older people in mind and with varying levels of care and support available on site. People who live in Extra Care Housing have their own self-contained homes, their own front doors and a legal right to occupy the property.

35

Homes England

Homes England is the government housing and regeneration agency with an aim to accelerate the pace of house building and regeneration across the country. It works with housing provider partners to bring together land, money, expertise, and planning and CPO powers to facilitate the delivery of new homes. In May 2023 HE published its new five-year strategic plan that has been signed off by government and supports the levelling up agenda. The strategy has a strong emphasis on supporting regeneration.

Net-Zero Carbon

Net zero is the state in which as much greenhouse gas emissions are removed from the atmosphere as are produced. The term can be applied on many levels, for instance a home, city or country. In the example of a home, the emissions associated with the construction of the property and the day-to-day use of the house (e.g. heating and electricity use) should equal to emissions captured. In practice, this means reducing emissions as much as possible, through energy efficient design and use of low carbon heating and renewable electricity.

Registered Provider

A Registered Provider is an organisation that provides social housing but must be registered by the Regulator of Social Housing.

Regulator of Social Housing

The Regulator of Social Housing is a stand-alone non departmental public body of government. Its role is to promote a viable, efficient, and well-governed social housing sector that can deliver and maintain homes of appropriate quality that meet a range of needs. It is a stand-alone non departmental public body of government.

Statutorily Homeless

A household will be considered as statutorily homeless by their local authority if they meet specific criteria set out in legislation. Broadly speaking, somebody is statutorily homeless if they do not have accommodation that they have a legal right to occupy, which is accessible and physically available to them and which it would be reasonable for them to continue to live in.

In cases where an authority is satisfied that an applicant is eligible for assistance, is in priority need, and has become homeless through no fault of their own, the authority will owe a main homelessness duty to secure settled accommodation for that household. Such households are referred to as acceptances.

Section106 Agreement

Section106 agreements are those struck between developers and the local authority to support planning applications. The agreements included in a s.106 agreement can be broad, but they are usually utilised to ensure that a local community affected by development actually benefits from it. This is usually through the provision of affordable housing on the development where the s.106 agreement is in place, or as a financial contribution from a developer towards schools and other local services.

Temporary Accommodation

Temporary Accommodation is a category of housing provided by a council either while it investigates a homelessness application, or when it has confirmed that it has a duty to provide

settled housing under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. When that legal duty applies this is because somebody is homeless but has not made themselves homeless deliberately and is also in a defined priority need group. Temporary accommodation provided on an emergency basis while a homeless application is investigated is also called 'interim' or 'emergency' accommodation, and it might either be a hostel, self-contained or hotel accommodation.

Thermal efficiency

The ability to use or produce heat without wasting materials, time, or energy

Supported housing

Supported housing is an umbrella term which is applied to a whole range of housing based solutions for vulnerable people. It caters for a wide range of client groups with diverse needs who require different levels of support in a range of accommodation models.

Social Housing

Social housing, or social rented housing is a sub-set of affordable housing. Social housing refers specifically to rental properties owned by local authorities or non-profit Registered Provider

Appendices

37

This page is intentionally left blank

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Affordable Housing Advice Note

November 2024

Introduction

This note provides a summary of HDC`s main requirements for new affordable housing provision on development sites in the District, the purpose of which is to bring clarity and consistency for affordable housing within the area. This advisory note needs to be read in conjunction with:

- The adopted Local Plan (2019 - 2036) and relevant Neighbourhood Plans (and emerging new Local Plan)
- Huntingdonshire District Council's Housing Strategy 2021- 2025 (and emerging strategy 2025-2030)
- National Planning Policy
- National Described Design Standards (NDSS)

General Provision

The Council expects developers and builders to take account of its policies, particularly those relating to the need for affordable housing, when acquiring land for housing development. The most relevant planning policies are LP24, LP25 and LP28 in the Council's Local Plan.

What is affordable housing?

The National Planning Framework includes definitions of Affordable Housing. The Council sets out our definition as below:

"Affordable Housing can be Social Rented, Affordable Rented and or Intermediate tenures, (generally shared ownership), provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should where permissible, include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision".

Affordable housing provision may include specialist or supported housing where an identified need exists. This may be in the form of m4(3) properties and bungalows to address physical disability or older persons needs and may also be accommodation to suit the needs of specialist groups.

In considering whether a development meets the threshold of 11 homes or 1,001m2 residential floorspace or more for providing affordable housing, the Council will consider the net increase in dwellings, which takes into account any loss through demolition or conversion.

In terms of rented Affordable Housing, the Council's practice is currently to allow either Affordable or Social Rented provision and S106s are drafted accordingly. This is finalised on a site by site basis during the course of discussions with a specific housebuilder, Developer or Registered Provider. For both of these tenures the rent must not exceed the Local Housing Allowance (LHA).

However, a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is currently under consultation (September 2024) and suggests Local Authorities should form a view on the proportions of these two tenures. The Council will therefore consider whether its position may need to be reviewed once the new NPPF is finalised.

Level of Need for Affordable Housing

The level of need for affordable housing is consistently high, the latest evidence from the G L Hearn report on The Housing Needs of Specific Groups confirms the priority need is for rented affordable housing.

We will seek affordable housing provision consistent with our Housing Strategy and Affordable Housing Provision as stated in the current Local Plan (LP 24).

A housing development will be required to provide a range of affordable housing types, sizes and tenures. The affordable housing provision may include specialist or supported housing where an identified need exists.

As LP24 states, a proposal will be supported where:

a. it delivers a target of 40% affordable housing on a site where 11 homes or 1,001m2 residential floorspace (gross internal area) or more are proposed;
b. it provides approximately 70% of the new affordable housing units as Social or Affordable Rented properties with the balance made up of other affordable tenures (most of the other affordable tenures will be low cost home ownership in the form of Shared Ownership);
c. affordable housing is dispersed across the development in small clusters of dwellings; and
d. it ensures that the appearance of affordable housing units is externally indistinguishable from that of open market housing.

Design

As stated above (**d**) of LP24 states, the Council aspires to consistency of design and quality of housing across affordable and market housing. It does not follow that distinctly differing approaches in design of affordable housing compared to market homes is acceptable.

The design of affordable housing will as far as possible be consistent in approach to market housing and enable affordable housing occupants to enjoy the same quality of environment as market housing occupants.

In order to achieve tenure blind layout, the development will avoid unnecessary parking courts, poor relationship of parking to home, lack of on plot parking and significantly higher density than market housing.

As per the Council's Developers Contribution SPD, affordable housing will be distributed throughout a site in clusters. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council, not more than fifteen (15) Affordable Housing Units shall be located in any one cluster and no cluster of Affordable Housing Units shall be immediately adjacent to or in close proximity to any other cluster

Additionally, party walls of differing tenures should be avoided as occupants of differing tenures may receive different management arrangements.

For flats/apartments/maisonettes it is desirable to avoid communal areas which will result in service charges. Two storey blocks should ideally have an external door. In any event no more than three storeys blocks are acceptable as this would prevent the need for lifts.

All new homes are to meet Building Regulation M4(2). In addition, as per LP25, for a large scale development (50 or more units, or 2 hectares, or 2,500m2 as per Local Plan) a proportion of market homes should be to m4(3) and regardless of development size a proportion of m4(3) affordable housing should be provided.

Precise levels of need will vary in response to circumstances, where proposals state that meeting such requirements would be impractical or unviable, (such as may be the case where floor levels need to be raised due to flood risk and this would necessitate significant ramping to comply with the standards), developers of affordable housing should provide evidence supporting this conclusion.

Further detail on need is expanded further at para 7.22 of LP25, which suggests that to meet need, 9% of market homes and 30% of affordable housing should be m4(3) and in the Huntingdonshire Accessible and Specialist Housing Evidence Paper.

Type of property

The Council will at the appropriate time (site by site), specify the type, number and tenure required. In preparing this the Council is mindful of need and takes into account (if necessary) specific site issues. LP24 is once again relevant, it states (in addition to the matters already mentioned):

"In order to assist in meeting the identified local need for additional affordable homes, a proposal which includes housing development will be required to provide a range of affordable housing types, sizes and tenures. These should be appropriate to meet the requirements of the local community taking into account the latest evidence from the Housing Register, the Cambridgeshire sub-region Strategic Housing Market Assessment and other local sources. The affordable housing may include specialist or supported housing where an identified need exists"

The following mix of homes size by tenure is suggested as a strategic mix for Huntingdonshire for the 2020-2040 period in the Housing Needs of Specific Groups in October 2021.

Size	Market	Affordable Homes to Buy	Affordable Homes to Rent
1 bedroom	0-10%	15-25%	30-40%
2 bedroom	20-30%	35-45%	35-45%
3 bedroom	40-50%	25-35%	15-25%
4 bedroom	20-30%	5-15%	0-1

In accordance with LP24 the Council refers to other evidence, which is equally important, most notably the more up to date Housing Register data. As an overview:

- Accommodation for families should be properties with two or more bedrooms.
- The mix of types of property (house, flat, bungalow)
- The number of homes which should be m4(3).
- For flats regardless of whether they are m4(3), if they are on the ground floor bathrooms should be provided with level access shower or wet room, this also applies to any bungalows.

Size of units Property size

The Council's Local Plan is currently under review, the current plan does not require homes to meet the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) although the emerging plan is intended to require all affordable housing to be to Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). Nonetheless our Local Plan does make reference to NDSS, it states:

(LP25 para 7.18) The current Local Plan does not include a policy requirement for new housing to meet the Nationally Described Space Standard. However, developers may wish to refer to the Technical housing standards – nationally described space standards to evidence how their proposals meet the broader policy requirement of providing housing of sizes which help achieve sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. In relation to this particularly for affordable housing for rent and in contrast to much market housing, it should be recognised that such homes are likely to be fully occupied

NDSS is therefore encouraged and in considering housebuilder/developer proposals a 'fit for purpose' approach will be taken. As confirmed affordable housing will be fully occupied so standards should be such that this is indeed recognised. Occupation levels will also be considered, for example, 2 bedroom houses should be 4 person and not 3 person as is sometimes proposed.

For shared ownership the need is mostly for 2 and 3 bedroom houses. As the housing is for sale, a 'spare' room can be considered hence for example a household with a minimum requirement of one bedroom can be considered for a 2 bedroom home.

NOTE As per policy, all homes are to be m4(2). All the bungalows including m4(2) to be wheelchair accessible with level access shower/wet room or to full wheelchair standard m4(3) where indicated; full wheelchair m4(3) to have hoist capacity (to be fitted for first or subsequent tenant) allowing easy transfer from main bedroom to bathroom. Convenient level access route from car to home in a wheelchair to be confirmed on plans provided within the planning application Our Special Housing Needs Officer may from time to time ask for some of the rented homes to be adapted to meet the needs of applicant families. She will liaise with the RP and yourselves to confirm necessary details. Please note also number of persons to be housed by property type and tenure.

Number of bedrooms	Gross Internal Floorspace
1 bedroom flat	50 sq. m
2 bedroom 4 person 2 storey house	79 sq. m
3 bedroom 5 person 2 storey house	93 sq. m
4 bedroom 6 person 3 storey house	112 sq. m

Unit size Accommodation should meet the following

Number of bedrooms	Minimum number of people
1 bedroom flat	2 person
1 bedroom bungalow	2 person
2 bedroom flat	4 person
2 bedroom bungalow	At least 50% 4 person
2 bedroom house	4 person
3 bedroom	5 person
4 bedroom	6 person

Nb – 2 bedroom bungalow 50% to be 3 person 50% to be 4 person

Adaptable and Accessible

In reflection of the ageing population within the District 20% of one bed units to be built to HAPPI design principles – with particular attention given to:

- layouts maximise natural light and ventilation by avoiding internal corridors and single-aspect flats,
- all apartments have balconies, patios, or terraces with enough space for table and chairs as well as plants;

- Adequate storage is available inside & outside the home together with provision for cycles and mobility aids, storage inside the home meets the needs of the occupier;
- In the implementation of measures to ensure adaptability, homes are designed to be 'care ready' so that new and emerging technologies, such as telecare and community equipment, can be readily instal

All new homes are to meet Building Regulation M4(2) in addition around 30% of homes are to meet Building Regulation M4(3) overall, but precise levels of need will vary in response to circumstances:

30% of homes are to meet Building Regulation M4(3). **LP25 M**4(3) Category 3 – 'Wheelchair User Dwellings', split into two sub-types:

- Category 3 (a) – 'Wheelchair adaptable' (providing space and layout features, but not fully fitted out), and
- Category 3 (b) – 'Wheelchair accessible' (ready and fitted to accommodate wheelchair user household)

The majority of M4(3) will be M4(3a) unless specified.

New build warranty and adaptations to M4(2) properties

In order to meet the needs of a specific household, adaptations may be required to an affordable home.

The housebuilder/developer and Registered Provider should enable the provision of such adaptations at any time, either at first or subsequent let unless the works significantly impacts on the structure of the property.   Any building work would be carried out carefully by competent contractors who are fully insured.

It should be possible for Building Defects warranties not to be adversely affected and as a result identified adaptations required to make property accessible to M4(3a) to M4(3b), will be incorporated.

Alternative Tenures

As the evidence base (Housing Needs of Specific Groups) shows by some margin, the most pressing need is for Affordable Rented and Social Rented housing. For this reason, policy specifies that 70% of new affordable housing should be to these tenures.

In terms of low cost home ownership (addressing the needs of those aspiring to own their own home but unable to afford housing at market levels) the Council considers the best option is Shared Ownership. This addresses the needs of a variety of

income groups; differing proportions of initial ownership can be acquired dependant on an applicant's circumstances. As those circumstances improve additional tranches can be acquired and ultimately staircasing to full ownership can be achieved. It follows that the remaining 30% is mostly expected to be Shared Ownership.

Whilst Shared Ownership is the Council's preferred route to Affordable Home Ownership. The Council may also accept other affordable housing tenures where these are justified by particular local needs or circumstances and consistent with national policy.

The needs of specific groups such as Key Workers may also from time to time be considered, and this may include considering which tenures best suit the groups under consideration.

Services charges

Service charges should be kept reasonable and within Local Housing Allowance (LHA). The total costs of rent and service charges for all affordable units should not exceed LHA levels at each letting. Early consultation is recommended with the Strategy and Enabling team to minimise high service charge costs

HDC Local Housing Allowance rate April 24 – 31 March 25

	Huntingdon Area	Cambridge Area	Peterborough Area	Northampton Central Area
Shared Accommodation Weekly Rate	£105.86 (£458.72)	£121.13 (£524.90)	£79.36 (£343.89)	£86.50 (£374.83)
1 Bedroom Weekly Rate	£149.59 (£648.22)	£207.12 (£897.52)	£132.33 (£573.43)	£126.58 (£548.51)
2 Bedroom Weekly Rate	£182.96 (£792.83)	£218.63 (£947.40)	£161.10 (£698.10)	£159.95 (£693.12)
3 Bedroom Weekly Rate	£218.63 (£947.40)	£258.90 (£1121.90)	£186.41 (£807.78)	£182.96 (£792.83)
4 Bedroom Weekly Rate	£287.67 (£1246.57)	£333.70 (£1446.03)	£241.64 (£1047.11)	£228.99 (£992.29)

Developer/housebuilder/landowner form of Affordable Housing provision

Affordable Housing is expected to be provided on site without any public subsidy, this would be in line with Homes England policy and the same would apply to any commuted sums the Council holds. The Council secures this through a Section 106 Planning Obligation usually in the standard form.

Registered Providers will submit offers based on the tenure and types of Affordable Housing specified in the planning application (without public subsidy). The S106 will specify:

- Relevant definitions for Affordable Housing.
- Details of an Affordable Housing Scheme requiring formal submission and approval by the Council before commencement of development. The Scheme confirms the details of the Affordable Housing to be provided (mix, types, tenure etc.), the identity of the Registered Provider and that terms are agreed to deliver the Scheme, the nomination levels to accrue to the Council and the manner in which Shared Ownership is to be addressed.
- Timescales in which the Affordable Housing must be delivered relative to market homes (for example not to occupy more that 'x' % of the market homes until 'y'% of the affordable homes have been transferred to the Registered Provider and are ready for occupation).
- Mortgagee in Possessions clauses which are essential to all the Registered Providers to enable them to secure the necessary finance.

Approach to Public Subsidy

Public Subsidy in the form of grant from Homes England or Commuted Sums secured by the Council in lieu of onsite affordable housing provision is not eligible for delivering policy level affordable housing (the usual 40%).

If Public Subsidy is available the Council will work with Registered Providers, Homes England and other interested parties to secure 'additionality' to deliver affordable housing in excess of policy level.   The Council has in partnership with Registered Providers, delivered a number of developments in this way including developments delivering 100% affordable housing.

The Council will in appropriate circumstances, continue in principle to support such initiatives which secure additional affordable housing.

In those discussions the Council is mindful to still address identified need but also to ensure sustainable development is delivered. The Council will use Local Lettings Plans for the rented homes which allow the Council and Registered Providers to allocate accommodation such that they deliver a balanced community, these developments will often involve a significant proportion of Shared Ownership.

Viability

The council generally delivers policy level affordable housing on site, on rare occasions there may be reasons why this is not viable. In these circumstances the Council requires formal submission of a Viability Assessment. This needs to be such that it provides a detailed financial assessment of the development costs. The Council will appoint consultants to scrutinise the assessment and form a view as to whether there is a Viability barrier.

The Council will ask it's consultants to consider a number of options to consider whether different forms of affordable housing is viable. This may involve considering a lower level of affordable housing or different proportions of tenures (if a quantum of 40% with 70% rented housing and 30% shared ownership is considered unviable). It will also consider if there is scope to secure a financial contribution in lieu of onsite provision (see below Commuted Sums).

The cost of employing a consultant must be borne by the applicant and payable in advance in order for the Council to instruct the consultants.

Commuted Sums

Commuted Sums, payments to the Council in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision, are secured via S106 Planning Obligations. This will confirm that the Council will use these funds to assist delivery of affordable housing at another location in the District. This is generally calculated based on residual land value.

Rural Exceptions Housing.

Local Plan Policy LP28 confirms that:

"A proposal for housing will be supported on a site well-related to a built-up area, as an exception to the requirements of relevant policies, where it can be demonstrated that:
a. at least 60% (net) of the site area is for affordable housing for people with a local connection;
b. the number, size, type and tenure of the affordable homes is justified by evidence that they would meet an identified need arising within the settlement or nearby small settlements (as defined in 'Small Settlements') through a local needs survey or other local needs evidence;
c. the remainder of the site area is available as open market housing or plots suitable for custom or self-build homes tailored to meet locally generated need; and
d. the amount of development and location of the proposal is sustainable in terms of:

i. availability of services and existing infrastructure; ii. opportunities for users of the proposed development to travel by sustainable modes;
and
ii. effect on the character of the immediate locality and the settlement as a whole. Mechanisms, including planning conditions/ obligations, will be put in place to ensure that the affordable housing is delivered and remains affordable in perpetuity or for the appropriate period as applicable to the form of housing. To ensure that market housing and affordable housing elements are delivered concurrently a planning condition will be applied."

The policy is intended to primarily provide rural housing for people with a connection to the village under consideration. The connection can be:

- by living in the village,
- having previously lived in the village,
- having close relatives in the village, or,
- having an employment connection.

It is essential that formal evidence of need is provided, and this should be by way of a local Housing Needs Survey. To ensure independence, the Survey is carried out by Cambridgeshire ACRE, this survey is usually funded by the Registered Provider or Landowner. The Council works with CACRE, Parish Councils, Registered Providers and other interested parties.

More detailed criteria is set out in LP28 but if they are met and need is established, the affordable housing should occupy not less than 60% of the proposed net site area and the remainder can comprise of market housing.

Links to documents referred to in this paper:

- [Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036](#)
- [Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document](#)
- [Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system - GOV.UK](#)
- [CWS Table](#)
- [Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard - GOV.UK](#)
- [Housing our Ageing Population Plan for Implementation](#)
- [Huntingdonshire Accessible and Specialist Housing Evidence Paper](#)

This page is intentionally left blank

Huntingdonshire Local Housing Needs Assessment

Final Report

Iceni Projects Limited on behalf of

Huntingdonshire District Council

August 2025

Contents

1. Executive Summary

Demographics

1.1   Huntingdonshire's population grew from 170,000 in 2011 to 186,000 in 2023, making up about 27% of Cambridgeshire's total.

1.2   The district's growth was greater than the national rate but below the county and regional rates.

1.3   The district has an older age profile than the county and region, with more residents aged 50 and above and fewer student age groups.

1.4   In 2021, Huntingdonshire had 76,880 households. This equates to an average household size of 2.35. This is smaller than the other comparable areas.

1.5   Single-family households dominate in Huntingdonshire, especially married or civil partnership couples. Single-person households are less common than in the county or region.

Housing Stock and Supply Trends

1.6   The total number of dwellings in Huntingdonshire in 2024 was 83,400, a 17% increase since 2011. This is a faster rate of growth than the national and regional growth rates.

1.7   Huntingdonshire has a lower implied vacancy rate than the wider comparators.

1.8   Over the last five years, housing delivery in Huntingdonshire has increased to an average annual rate of 1,139 dwellings.

1.9   Huntingdonshire has a larger proportion of detached dwellings than the wider comparators. Conversely, there is a smaller proportion of flatted developments.

1.10   Linked to this, Huntingdonshire has a greater percentage of homes with four or more bedrooms when compared to the wider comparators.

1.11   Huntingdonshire has a larger proportion of owner-occupied households than the wider comparators and conversely a smaller proportion of renters (social and private).

1.12   The district has a higher proportion of under-occupied homes than the wider comparators and, conversely, a lower rate of overcrowding in the district. This is linked to the ageing population and the size of the housing stock.

Housing Market

1.13   Huntingdonshire's median house price is £315,000, lower than the county (£337,000) and regional (£340,000) medians, but higher than the national median of £290,000.

1.14   Apart from flats, Huntingdonshire's property prices are above the England average but below county and regional averages for all home types.

1.15   Over the past decade, house prices in Huntingdonshire have grown by 69%, similar to the county (67%), but below regional growth (74%) and above national growth (57%).

1.16   In the last 5 years, overall median house price growth was 18%, lower than in the other wider areas.

1.17   Property sales in Huntingdonshire have followed benchmark trends, with significant declines since 2022.

1.18   The affordability ratio in Huntingdonshire is 8.45, showing long-term deterioration but recent improvements.

1.19   The median private rental value is £875 per month, lower than county and regional values, but higher than the national rate.

1.20   Single-room rents have increased the most, indicating a high demand for smaller, affordable homes.

Housing Need and Demographics

1.21   Applying the government's Standard Method for assessing housing need to Huntingdonshire results in an annual housing need of 1,214 dwellings per annum.

1.22   At a late stage in the production of the report, this figure was increased to 1,232 dwellings per annum. This change is not considered significant enough to alter the main findings of this report.

1.23   The report has developed a projection linked to the delivery and occupation of 1,214 dwellings per annum, which shows a population increase of around 54,700 people by 2046.

1.24   This equates to a 29.1% increase, which is higher than a trend-based projection based on the last five years (24.5%).

1.25   Further analysis indicates that with the Standard Method, the increase in the economically active population is projected to be up to 30,300, which, taking account of double jobbing, could support up to 31,400 additional jobs.

1.26   The main changes to economic activity rates are projected in the 60-69 age groups, linked to changes in pensionable age and trends in older people working longer.

Affordable Housing

1.27   The analysis has taken account of local housing costs (to both buy and rent) along with estimates of household income. The evidence indicates that there is an acute need for affordable housing in the District and a need in all sub-areas.

1.28   The majority of need is from households who are unable to buy OR rent and therefore points particularly towards a need for rented affordable housing rather than affordable home ownership.

1.29   Affordable housing need for households unable to buy or rent equates to 480 homes per annum.

1.30   Despite the level of need being high, it is not considered that this points to any requirement for the Council to increase the Local Plan housing requirement due to affordable needs.

1.31   The link between affordable need and overall need (of all tenures) is complex, and in trying to make a link, it must be remembered that many of those picked up as having an affordable need are already in housing (and therefore do not generate a net additional need for a home).

1.32   In addition, the private rented sector is providing benefit-supported accommodation for many households. That said, the level of affordable need does suggest the Council should maximise the delivery of such housing at every opportunity where viability allows.

1.33   The current Council's approach of seeking 40% affordable housing with 70% being either Affordable Rent or Social Rent would be justified.

1.34   The analysis suggests there will be a need for both social and affordable rented housing – the latter will be suitable particularly for households who are close to being able to afford to rent privately and possibly also for some households who claim full Housing Benefit.

1.35   It is, however, clear that social rents are more affordable and could benefit a wider range of households – social rents could therefore be prioritised where delivery does not prejudice the overall delivery of affordable homes.

1.36   The study also considers different types of AHO (notably First Homes and shared ownership) as each may have a role to play.

1.37   Shared ownership is likely to be suitable for households with more marginal affordability (those only just able to afford to privately rent) as it has the advantage of a lower deposit and subsidised rent.

1.38   There was no strong evidence of a need for First Homes or discounted market housing more generally. Shared Ownership is considered more flexible, accommodating a wider range of income groups.

1.39   In deciding what types of affordable housing to provide, including a split between rented and home ownership products, the Council will need to consider the relative levels of need and also viability issues. For example, seeking Social Rented in place of Affordable Rented Housing could reduce the viable quantum the Council could secure.

1.40   Viability consideration should recognise, for example, that providing AHO may be more viable and may therefore allow more units to be delivered, but at the same time, noting that households with a need for rented housing are likely to have more acute needs and fewer housing options.

1.41   The evidence would justify a policy position of 70% low-cost rented and 30% affordable home ownership homes. The evidence indicates that up to 70% of rented affordable housing at social rents could be justified in need terms (therefore, about 50% of all affordable housing). Low-cost home ownership provision should focus on shared ownership, with no strong evidence of a need for First Homes or discounted market housing identified.

1.42   Overall, the analysis identifies a notable need for affordable housing, and it is clear that the provision of new affordable housing is an important and pressing issue in the area.

1.43   It does, however, need to be stressed that this report does not provide an affordable housing target; the amount of affordable housing delivered will be limited to the amount that can viably be provided.

1.44   The evidence does, however, suggest that affordable housing delivery should be maximised where opportunities arise.

Housing Mix

1.45   Analysis of the future mix of housing required takes account of demographic change, including potential changes to the number of family households and the ageing of the population.

1.46   The proportion of households with dependent children in Huntingdonshire is about average, with around 28% of all households containing dependent children in 2021 (compared with around 29% regionally and nationally).

1.47   There are notable differences between different types of households, with married couples (with dependent children) seeing a high level of owner-occupation, whereas lone parents are particularly likely to live in social or private rented accommodation.

1.48   There are a range of factors which will influence demand for different sizes of homes, including demographic changes, future growth in real earnings and households' ability to save, economic performance and housing affordability.

1.49   The analysis linked to future demographic change concludes that the following represents an appropriate mix of affordable and market homes, which takes account of both household changes and the ageing

of the population, as well as seeking to make more efficient use of new stock by not projecting forward the high levels of under-occupancy (which is notable in the market sector).

Table 1.1 Suggested size mix of housing by tenure – Huntingdonshire

	Market	Affordable home ownership	Affordable housing (rented)	
			Under 65	65 and over
1-bedroom	5%	15%	25%	50%
2-bedrooms	30%	45%	35%	50%
3-bedrooms	40%	30%	30%	
4+-bedrooms	25%	10%	10%	

Source: Iceni Analysis

1.50   For affordable rented housing, the Council's letting policies are such that they are seeking to minimise housing families with children in flats. Consequently, properties of 2 bedrooms or more will therefore mostly be houses.

1.51   In all sectors, the analysis points to a particular need for 2- and 3-bedroom accommodation, with varying proportions of 1- and 4+-bedroom homes.

1.52   For rented affordable housing for under-65s, there is a clear need for a range of different sizes of homes, including 40% to have at least 3-bedrooms, of which 10% should have at least 4-bedrooms.

1.53   The strategic conclusions in the affordable sector recognise the role which delivery of larger family homes can play in releasing a supply of smaller properties for other households.

1.54   Also recognised is the limited flexibility which 1-bedroom properties offer to changing household circumstances, which feed through into higher turnover and management issues.

1.55   The conclusions also take account of the current mix of housing by tenure and also the size requirements shown on the Housing Register.

1.56   The mix identified above could inform strategic policies, although a flexible approach should be adopted.

1.57   Additionally, in applying the mix to individual development sites, regard should be had to the nature of the site and character of the area, and to up-to-date evidence of need (including the Housing Register) as well as the existing mix and turnover of properties at the local level and recent housing delivery.

Older and Disabled People

1.58   Huntingdonshire has a very slightly older age structure than is seen regionally and nationally, and lower levels of disability compared with other areas.

1.59   The older person population (65+) shows high proportions of owner-occupation, and particularly outright owners who may have significant equity in their homes (79% of all older person households are outright owners).

1.60   The older person population is projected to increase notably moving forward. An ageing population means that the number of people with disabilities is likely to increase. Key findings for the 2024-46 period include:

- a 38% increase in the population aged 65+ (potentially accounting for 32% of total population growth);

- a 64% increase in the number of people aged 65+ with dementia and a 54% increase in those aged 65+ with mobility problems;

- a need for around 2,000 additional housing units with support (sheltered/retirement housing) – around 70% in the market sector;

- a need for around 1,200 additional housing units with care (e.g. extra-care) – the majority (around three-quarters) in the market sector;

- a need for additional nursing and residential care bedspaces (around 1,300 in the period); and

- a need for around 670 dwellings to be for wheelchair users across all tenures (meeting technical standard M4(3)).

1.61   This would suggest that there is a clear need to increase the supply of accessible and adaptable dwellings and wheelchair-user dwellings, as well as providing specific provision of older persons housing.

1.62   The evidence justifies current Council policy requiring all dwellings (in all tenures) to meet the M4(2) standards, and around 5% of homes meeting M4(3) – wheelchair user dwellings in the market sector (a higher proportion of around 10% in the affordable sector).

1.63   Where the authority has nomination rights, the supply of M4(3) dwellings would be wheelchair-accessible dwellings (constructed for immediate occupation) and in the market sector, they should be wheelchair-user adaptable dwellings (constructed to be adjustable for occupation by a wheelchair user) user and mostly in the form of bungalows).

1.64   It should, however, be noted that there will be cases where this may not be possible (e.g. due to viability or site-specific circumstances) and so any policy should be applied flexibly.

1.65   In framing policies for the provision of specialist older persons accommodation, the Council will need to consider a range of issues. This will include the different use classes of accommodation (i.e. C2 vs. C3) and requirements for affordable housing contributions (linked to this, the viability of provision).

Other Specific Groups

Looked After Children

1.66   The County Council's overarching policy is to ensure as few children as possible will be placed in residential care homes.

1.67   There are currently around 700 looked-after children within the county and Peterborough (0.4%), of which 63 are placed in residential children's care homes (0.03%).

1.68   Although the county has 32 registered children's care facilities, a significant proportion of these are filled by placements from outside the area. As a result, there is insufficient local provision.

1.69   To address this shortage, the County Council is developing its own facilities and actively seeking to expand provision through collaboration with the independent sector.

1.70   If current prevalence rates continue, the projected population growth, linked to the Standard Method, would result in an increased demand for 3 additional residential beds in children's care homes by 2045 (a total of 14).

1.71   But additional demand for residential care bedspaces for children will depend on the success or otherwise of preferred alternatives such as familial care or foster care.

1.72   Regardless, the Council are encouraged to support further proposals to meet growing demands.

1.73   There will also be a need for supported accommodation for young adults, and the Council should work with the County Council and Registered Providers to explore opportunities to provide this.

Service Families

1.74   Huntingdonshire is home to several military establishments, including RAF Alconbury and RAF Molesworth. RAF Alconbury is a joint-service base with the US Air Force and the RAF.

1.75   According to data from the Ministry of Defence (MOD), as of April 2024, there are 2,200 military (UK Regular Forces) and MOD Civilian Personnel based in Huntingdonshire.

1.76   Overall, the presence of regular forces in Huntingdonshire is not considered to be significant and is unlikely to have any implications on overall affordability, but it may be driving demand in local areas.

1.77   It is considered that the most pressing issue is likely to be finding accommodation for those transitioning out of the forces, as well as existing personnel who are seeking to buy in the District.

1.78   Provision of Low-Cost Home Ownership can help account for this, as well as the Allocation of Housing regulations, which allow military personnel to establish local connections to the area.

1.79   Overall, this group are likely to already be accounted for within affordable housing need and is not considered to be additional to it.

Custom and Self-Build

1.80   The Council is required to grant sufficient planning permissions to meet the demand identified on the Register within 3 years of the end of each base period.

1.81   There has been a total of 356 registered expressions of interest in a serviced plot of land in Huntingdonshire. This is an average of 42 registrations per base period (12 months, but not a calendar year). Although recent registrations have fallen.

1.82   Although this indicates the future need for plots, the actual requirement will depend on the numbers entering the register and any unmet need, of which to date there is none.

1.83   There will also be a more stringent requirement for the Council to demonstrate that this supply is being occupied by those commissioning or customising the build before it can be counted towards the supply.

1.84   The Council may wish to consider a policy for self and custom build as a proportion of new homes on larger developments, as well as its current policy supporting it.

1.85   We do not consider it to be necessary to develop a policy to address the need for students or Co-living.

2. **Introduction**

2.1   Huntingdonshire District Council commissioned Iceni Projects ('Iceni') and Justin Gardner Consulting to prepare this Local Housing Needs Assessment ('LHNA').

2.2   This LHNA provides an evidence base on housing issues to support informed decision-making and development of housing policies within the Local Plan.

2.3   The Assessment calculates housing need and examines other issues across the district and three sub-areas. This includes evaluating affordable housing need, recommending a housing mix, and examining the need for specific groups.

2.4   The report is based on the best and most up-to-date information available at the time of drafting in Spring 2025. The report therefore incorporates changes to the National Planning Policy Framework published in December 2024.

2.5   The housing need identified in this report is based on a technical assessment of overall housing figures using the Planning Practice Guidance. It does not constitute a housing target.

2.6   These figures must then be translated into a housing requirement for local plans, considering broader factors such as growth strategies, capacity and infrastructure.

National Planning Policy Framework

2.7   The latest version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the Government in December 2024. The NPPF sets

out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

2.8   Paragraph 7 in the NPPF states that the purpose of planning is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It sets out that planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

2.9   Paragraph 17 of the NPPF states that development plans must include strategic policies to address each local planning authority's priorities for the development and use of land in its area.

2.10   Paragraph 16 states that Plans should be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and be positively prepared in a way that is aspirational but deliverable.

2.11   Strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring authorities, where it is sustainable to do so. Paragraph 11 b reiterates that for plan-making:

"strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring area, unless…i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."

2.12   To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, Paragraph 61 in the NPPF states that it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is

needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed, and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. Adding "The overall aim should be to meet an area's identified housing need, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community."

2.13   Paragraph 62 sets out that to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment (this report), conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance. We have provided more detail on the calculation of the standard method in Chapter 8 of this report.

2.14   The NPPG adds in paragraph 62, "In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for. "

2.15   Paragraph 63 goes on to set out that within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.

2.16   Paragraphs 64-68 address affordable housing provision. Paragraph 64 states that where an affordable housing need is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required (including the minimum proportion of Social Rent homes required) and expect it to be met on-site unless off-site provision or a financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified, or the agreed approach contributes to the objectives of creating mixed and balanced communities.

2.17   Paragraph 65 states that the provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments

(major development is where 10 or more homes will be provided), other than in designated rural areas.

2.18   Paragraph 66 states "Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect that the mix of affordable housing required meets identified local needs, across Social Rent, other affordable housing for rent and affordable home ownership tenures."

2.19   The NPPF's Glossary (Annex 2) provides an updated definition of affordable housing; as well as definitions of Build to Rent development, local housing need, older people; and self-build and custom housebuilding.

Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023)

2.20   The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill was introduced to the House of Commons on the 11 May 2022 and received Royal Assent on the 26 October 2023 and in doing so became the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA).[1]

2.21   Although the Act initiated several laws which affect planning, none of these laws directly impact the production of this report in relation to overall need.

2.22   However, it did impact specific groups including those wishing to self or custom build their own home. This is set out in the appropriate section of this report.

[1] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/55/enacted

The Planning Practice Guidance

2.23   The Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)[2] includes several sections which are relevant to the assessment of housing need. This sub-section summarises the relevant sectors.

2.24   Guidance on Housing and Economic Needs Assessments[3] explains that housing need is "an **unconstrained assessment** of the number of homes needed in an area" and should be **undertaken separately** from assessing land availability, establishing a housing requirement figure and preparing policies to address this such as site allocations.

2.25   The guidance also examines affordable housing need (as does the PPG relating to the Housing Needs of Different Groups). The PPG sets out how affordable housing need can be assessed, and this is set out in Chapter 9 of this report.

2.26   The affordable housing need (and the housing needs of individual groups) may well exceed, or be proportionally high in relation to, the overall housing need figure calculated using the standard method, as these will often be calculated having consideration to the whole population as opposed to new households.

2.27   The PPG for Housing for Older and Disabled People[4] describes the need to provide housing for older people as critical, as people are living longer, and the older population is increasing. It sets out that the health,

---

[2] MHCLG, 2016. Planning practice guidance.

[3] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments

[4] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-for-older-and-disabled-people

lifestyle and housing needs of older people will differ greatly as will their housing need.

2.28   These needs can be met with housing needs ranging from accessible and adaptable general needs housing to specialist housing with high levels of care and support.

2.29   The PPG provides guidance on how the housing needs of older and disabled people can be assessed and sets out that this should inform clear policies within plans which may include specific site allocations to provide greater certainty to developers.

2.30   Separate guidance is provided on optional technical standards[5] including for accessible and adaptable housing, use of national space standards and wheelchair-accessible housing.

2.31   Separate PPGs have also been prepared which address Build to Rent[6] and Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding[7]. The Build-to-Rent Guidance requires authorities to assess need, and where a need is identified to include a planning policy setting out the circumstances and locations where build-to-rent development will be encouraged.

2.32   The Self-Build Guidance sets the requirements of the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended), including the requirement for local authorities to maintain a Register of those interested in self-build housing and to grant consents to meet the need shown. It also sets out that needs assessments can consider other secondary data sources.

---

[5] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-optional-technical-standards

[6] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/build-to-rent

[7] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/self-build-and-custom-housebuilding

Other Legislation

2.33   Wider legislation affecting housing need includes the 1996 Housing Act (as amended), the Housing and Social Care Act 2012, the 2014 Care Act and the 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act.

2.34   The 2014 Care Act sets out local authorities' duties in relation to assessing people's needs and their eligibility for publicly funded care and support.

2.35   Under the Act, local authorities must assess anyone who appears to require care and support and focus the assessment on the person's needs, how they impact their well-being, and the outcomes they want to achieve.

2.36   Local authorities must also consider other things besides care services that can contribute to the desired outcomes (e.g., preventive services, community support and specialised housing needs).

2.37   The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places legal duties on English Councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help.

2.38   Local Authorities have a duty to produce homelessness strategies to prevent homelessness in their respective areas.

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted May 2019)

2.39   The Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 was adopted in May 2019 and sets out key policies to shape development in the district. The key housing policies are summarised below:

- **Policy LP24: Affordable Housing** – States that proposals will be supported where. a. it delivers a target of 40% affordable housing on a site where 11 homes; b. it provides approximately 70% of the new affordable housing units as social or affordable rented properties with the balance made up of other affordable tenures; c. affordable

housing is dispersed across the development; and d. it ensures that the appearance of affordable housing units is externally indistinguishable from that of open market housing. Deviation from this is allowed but it needs to be demonstrated that the required mix is not viable.

- **Policy LP25 – Housing Mix and Accessibility** – Development should provide a mix of sizes, types and tenures. However, proposals should reflect the need set out within the Council's existing evidence.

- Housing which meets Building Regulations for accessible and adaptable dwellings will be supported, ensuring 100% of new dwellings across all tenures meet requirement M4(2). There is also an expectation that larger developments and all affordable housing, deliver an element of M4(3) housing.

- Local requirements for self and custom-build homes will be addressed, as identified in the self and custom-build register.

- **Policy LP26 – Specialist Housing –** Will be supported where it is easily accessible to services and social infrastructure and integrated with the wider community. It should also incorporate a mix of tenures, including affordable.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Housing Strategy (2018)

2.40   The Combined Authority's strategy aims to deliver 100,000 new homes, emphasising affordability, accelerated delivery, economic growth and diverse house choices.

2.41   The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Memorandum of Cooperation[i] sets out Huntingdonshire's links to the Cambridge and Peterborough HMA's.

2.42   The Cambridge Sub Region Housing Market Area comprises all five Cambridgeshire districts (Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Fenland and South Cambridgeshire), plus the west Suffolk districts of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury which were merged in 2019.

2.43   Due to its historic and functional ties with Cambridgeshire, plus its own housing market area overlapping with the Cambridge Housing Market Area, Peterborough City Council has also collaborated with these local authorities.

2.44   Within that memorandum, Huntingdonshire's housing targets are also part of this coordinated strategy, with a planned provision of 17,000 homes (extending to 21,000 by 2036 as per Huntingdonshire's Local Plan horizon).

HMA Update

2.45   The HMA was last reconfirmed in the Huntingdonshire Objectively Assessed Housing Need April 2017[8] did not seek to redefine the HMA but notes "The Cambridge housing market area - defined as Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Forest Heath, Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire and St Edmundsbury council areas - is an established assessment area."

2.46   However, a range of data has since been published, and we have summarised this in the table below while still seeking to test if the Cambridge HMA remains a reasonable starting point.

---

[8] https://cambridgeshire.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/HDC_OAN-Update_28-04-2017.pdf

Migration

2.47   The most recent migration data from the 2021 census shows that Huntingdon's strongest flows are with South Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The South Cambridgeshire flow is largely inward to Huntingdonshire, while the Peterborough flow is more balanced. These flows are the greatest in gross terms as well as when weighted to reflect their relative population size.

Table 2.1 Migration Flows to/from Huntingdonshire (2021)

Local Authority	In-Migrants	% of In-Migration	Local Authority	Out Migrants	% of Out Migration
Huntingdonshire	9,002	52.0%	Huntingdonshire	9,002	56.3%
South Cambridgeshire	850	4.9%	Peterborough	735	4.6%
Peterborough	751	4.3%	South Cambridgeshire	461	2.9%
Central Bedfordshire	461	2.7%	Fenland	428	2.7%
Cambridge	381	2.2%	North Northamptonshire	340	2.1%
Fenland	326	1.9%	Cambridge	238	1.5%
Bedford	291	1.7%	Bedford	235	1.5%
North Northamptonshire	287	1.7%	Central Bedfordshire	166	1.0%
East Cambridgeshire	166	1.0%	East Cambridgeshire	158	1.0%
North Hertfordshire	163	0.9%	South Kesteven	149	0.9%

Source: ONS, Census 2021

2.48   There are also notable flows to and from Fenland and Cambridgeshire, and to a lesser degree, Bedfordshire and North Northamptonshire. This demonstrates the interaction with directly neighbouring authorities and would justify the continuation of the existing HMA by this measure alone.

2.49   Overall, Huntingdonshire has a self-containment rate of between 52% and 56%. This increases to 62% to 67% when long-distance (outside the East of England and East Midlands) moves are removed. This would not be sufficient to see the district as an HMA in its own right.

Commuting

2.50   In 2021, Huntingdonshire had a job self-containment ratio of 81.7% meaning that 81.7% of jobs in the District are taken by people residing there.

2.51   Conversely, it had a resident self-containment rate of 78.8%, meaning that 78.8% of working residents in Huntingdonshire are employed within the district. This includes those working from home.

2.52   These rates are significantly higher than those derived from the 2011 Census data; however, comparisons between the 2011 and 2021 census data should be treated with caution due to changes in working patterns as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This particularly relates to the much higher incidence of people working from home and, conversely, fewer people commuting.

2.53   As set out in the table below, around 5% of jobs in Huntingdonshire are taken up by Peterborough residents and 2.4% by Fenland residents (including those working from home). Around 3,850 people commute to Peterborough from Huntingdonshire, which is around 4.2% of all residents.

2.54   This means that there is a greater flow from Peterborough to Huntingdonshire than from Huntingdonshire to Peterborough. This is perhaps expected given the larger population of Peterborough.

Table 2.2 Commuting Flows to and from Huntingdonshire (2021) – including home workers

| In-commuting	Commuters	% Job	Out-Commuting	Commuters	% Residents
Huntingdonshire	71,833	81.7%	Huntingdonshire	71,833	78.8%
Peterborough	4,391	5.0%	Peterborough	3,849	4.2%
Fenland	2,142	2.4%	South Cambridgeshire	3,476	3.8%
South Cambridgeshire	1,677	1.9%	Cambridge	3,344	3.7%
North Northamptonshire	1,550	1.8%	Bedford	2,046	2.2%
Bedford	1,493	1.7%	Central Bedfordshire	897	1.0%

Source: ONS, Census 2021

2.55   The flows to Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire are smaller than to Peterborough. However, these flows is largely one-way with much more commuting to Cambridge and South Cambridge than commuting from them.

2.56   This analysis would also demonstrate Huntingdonshire's continuing relationships with its neighbouring authorities. This would justify the continuation of the Cambridge Sub Region HMA (Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Fenland and South Cambridgeshire) as well as West Suffolk. There also appears to be notable overlap with Peterborough and this particularly relates to Huntingdonshire.

Sub Areas

2.57   This assessment provides analysis and outputs for three sub-areas of the district (see below). These sub-areas reflect geographic areas of the district and are based on wards:

- The **North and West** sub-area is largely rural and includes Alconbury, Great Stoughton, Kimbolton, Stilton, Folksworth & Washingley.

- The **Central and South** sub-area includes Alconbury Weald, St Ives, St Neots, Godmanchester and Huntingdon.

- The **East** sub-area includes Holywell-cum-Needingworth, Sawtry, Warboys, Somersham and Ramsey. It also includes Yaxley and Farcet.

Figure 2.1 Huntingdonshire Sub-Areas
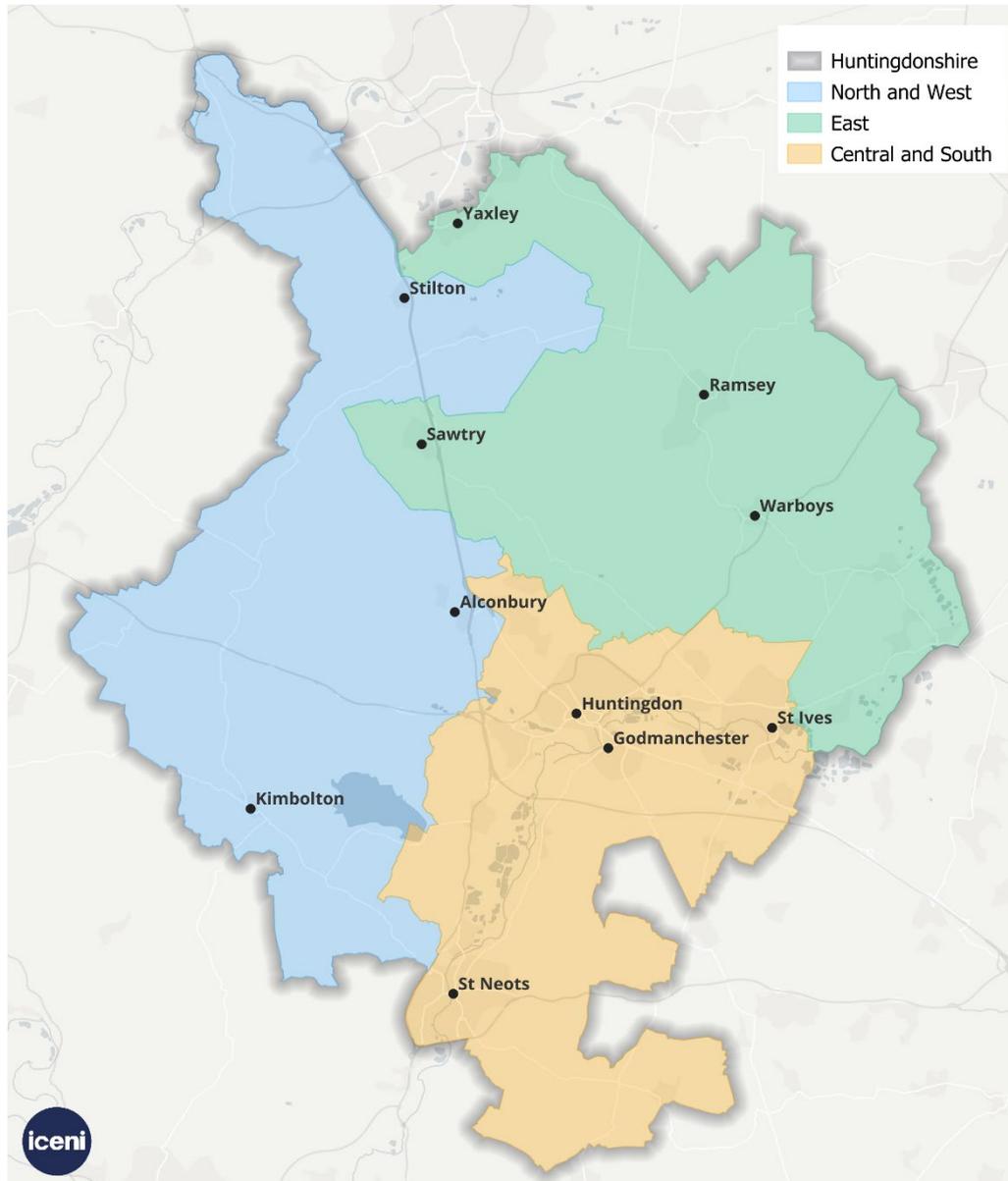
Source: Iceni Projects

3. Demographic Profile

3.1   This section sets out the existing demographic profile and future population projections across all the spatial study areas. Regional and national figures have been included as benchmarks.

Population

3.2   As of 2023, the population of Huntingdonshire is 186,000. This comprised 27% of Cambridgeshire. Since 2011, the population in the district has increased by 16,000 (9.4%). This compares to 12.4% in the county, 10.3% regionally and 8.6% nationally.

Table 3.1 Changes to the resident population (2011-2023)

Area	2011	2023	Net Change	% change
Huntingdonshire	170,000	186,000	16,000	9.4%
Cambridgeshire	622,000	700,000	77,300	12.4%
East of England	5,860,000	6,470,000	606,000	10.3%
England	53,100,000	57,700,000	4,580,000	8.6%

Source: ONS, 2011[ii] and MYE 2023[iii]

3.3   Mid-year estimates are unavailable for the sub-areas, however between 2011 and 2021, the population decreased in the North and West sub-area (-3%), while Central and South increased by 9% and the East by 2.6%.

Table 3.2 Changes to the resident population (2011-2021)

Area	2011	2021	Net Change	% change
North and West	18,335	17,860	-475	-2.6%
East	45,266	46,443	1,177	2.6%
Central and South	106,438	116,528	10,090	9.5%
Huntingdonshire	170,039	180,832	10,800	6.3%

Source: Census 2011 and Census 2021[iv]

Age Profile

3.4   Huntingdonshire has a lower percentage of younger population and a higher percentage in most older age groups compared to the wider comparators, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 3.1 Age Profiles (2023)
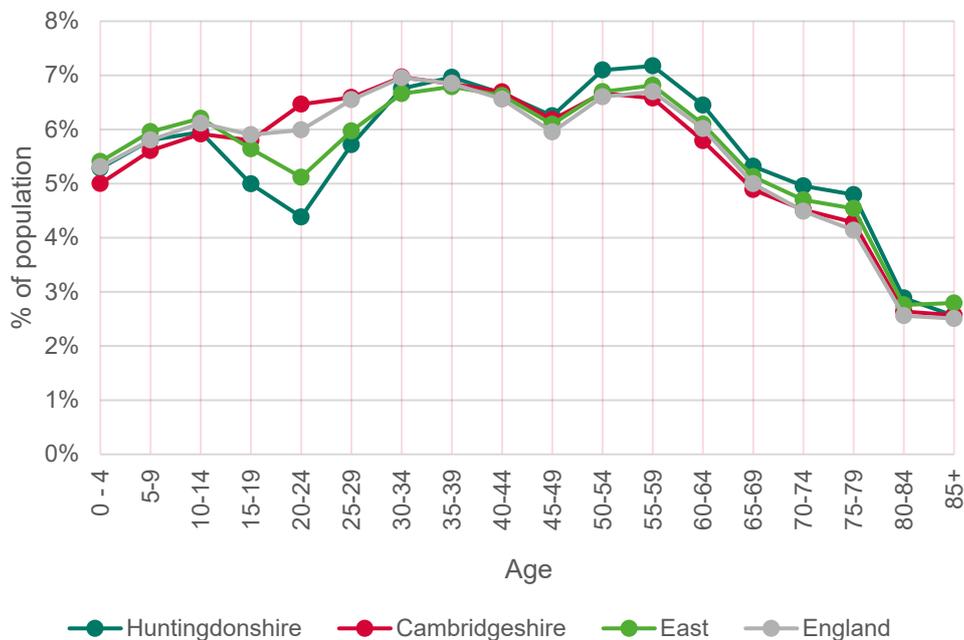
Source: ONS, 2023

3.5   Huntingdonshire has a smaller proportion of 15-24 year olds, which can be attributed to the lack of higher education institutions. Particularly, in comparison to Cambridge which has two major universities.

3.6   The Central and South sub-area has the highest proportion of young children, while the North and West has the lowest rates. Conversely, the North and West shows higher rates in the over 50s age groups. This is a reflection of the sub-area's more rural setting.

The Central and South sub-area also show a higher percentage in the 25-49 age brackets compared to the North and West and East sub-areas. For all age groups, except 16-24 year olds, the percentages in the East sub-area sit between the other two sub-areas

Figure 3.2 Sub-area profiles (2021)
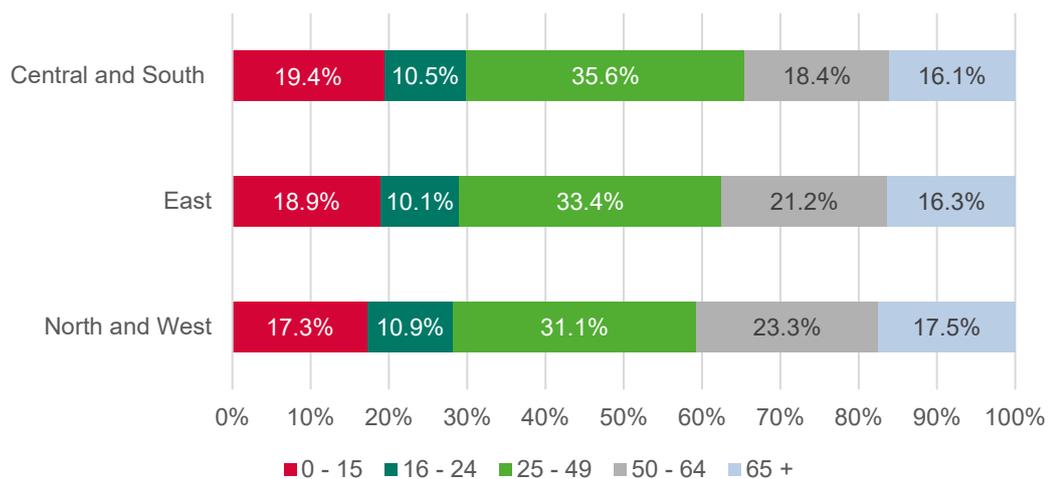
Source: ONS, 2021

Household Composition

3.7   In 2021, Huntingdonshire had 76,880 households. This equates to an average household size of 2.35. This is smaller than the other comparable areas.

Table 3.3 Average Household Size (2011)

Area	Households	Population	Average Household Size
Huntingdonshire	76,880	180,832	2.35
Cambridgeshire	277,635	678,849	2.45
East of England	2,628,778	6,335,074	2.41
England	23,436,086	56,490,048	2.41

Source: ONS, 2021

3.8   In all areas, most households are single-family, but the proportion is higher in Huntingdonshire (67.3%) than in the rest of the county and region.

3.9   Huntingdonshire also has a slightly lower percentage of single-person households (28.1%) and Other Household Types (4.7%) than these areas.

3.10   Within the family household type the largest group in all areas is the married or civil partnership composition. However, Huntingdonshire has a slightly above average number of households where everyone was aged over 65.

Table 3.4 Household Composition

	Huntingdon shire	Cambridge shire	East of England	England
One-person household - Total	**28.1%**	**28.4%**	**28.9%**	**30.1%**
One-person household: Aged 66 years and over	12.4%	12.3%	13.2%	12.8%
One-person household: Other (not over 66)	15.6%	16.1%	15.7%	17.3%
Single-family household[9] - Total	**67.3%**	**65.1%**	**65.2%**	**63.0%**
SFH: All aged 66 years and over	11.2%	10.3%	10.4%	9.2%
SFH: Married or civil partnership couple	34.4%	33.4%	32.3%	30.4%
SFH: Cohabiting couple family	12.3%	12.1%	11.8%	11.6%
SFH: Lone-parent family	8.9%	8.7%	10.2%	6.3%
SFH: Other	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%	0.8%
Other household types - Total	**4.7%**	**6.5%**	**5.9%**	**6.9%**
Other: With dependent children	1.8%	2.0%	2.4%	2.7%
Other: Other, including all full-time students and all aged 66 years and over	2.9%	4.5%	3.5%	4.2%

Source: Census, 2021

3.11   Cambridgeshire stands out for having a higher proportion of households with full-time students or all aged 66+, and this is linked to the universities in Cambridge.

3.12   The Central and South sub-area has the highest proportion of younger one-person households. The North and West sub-area shows the lowest percentage of this group.

---

[9] A single-family household is a home occupied by individuals living together as one household, including married couples, relatives and those connected through couples and their relatives.

Table 3.5 Household Composition by Sub-Area

	North and West	East	Central and South	Huntingdonshire
One-person household - Total	**24.4%**	**26.5%**	**29.2%**	**28.1%**
One-person household: Aged 66 years and over	12.5%	12.9%	12.2%	12.4%
One-person household: Other (not over 66)	11.8%	13.6%	17.0%	15.6%
Single-family household - Total	**71.8%**	**69.2%**	**65.9%**	**67.3%**
SFH: All aged 66 years and over	14.8%	12.0%	10.4%	11.2%
SFH: Married or civil partnership couple	40.6%	36.1%	32.8%	34.4%
SFH: Cohabiting couple family	9.8%	12.1%	12.7%	12.3%
SFH: Lone-parent family	6.3%	8.6%	9.4%	8.9%
SFH: Other	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%	0.5%
Other household types - Total	**3.8%**	**4.2%**	**5.0%**	**4.7%**
Other: With dependent children	1.4%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%
Other: Other, including all full-time students and all aged 66 years and over	2.4%	2.4%	3.2%	2.9%

Source: Census, 2021

3.13   Single-family households comprise the majority of households. The North and West has the highest proportion of this household type, with the lowest seen in Central and South.

3.14   The North and West sub-area has the highest percentage of single-family households where all members are over 66. However, the East sub-area has the highest percentage of older one-person households.

Demographic Profile: Summary

3.15   Huntingdonshire's population grew from 170,000 in 2011 to 186,000 in 2023, making up about 27% of Cambridgeshire's total.

3.16   The districts growth was greater than the national rate but below the county and regional rates.

3.17   The district has an older age profile than the county and region, with more residents aged 50 and above and fewer student age groups.

3.18   In 2021, Huntingdonshire had 76,880 households. This equates to an
        average household size of 2.35. This is smaller than the other
        comparable areas.

3.19   Single-family households dominate in Huntingdonshire, especially
        married or civil partnership couples. Single-person households are less
        common than in the county or region.

4.   Housing Stock and Supply Trends

4.1   Between 2011 and 2024, every area examined experienced growth in the number of households. Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire show a 17% increase, outpacing the East of England (13%) and England as a whole (11%).

Table 4.1 Number of Dwellings (2024)

Area	2011	2024	Net Change	% change
Huntingdonshire	71,400	83,400	12,000	17%
Cambridgeshire	259,000	304,000	45,000	17%
East of England	2,530,000	2,849,000	319,000	13%
England	23,000,000	25,600,000	2,600,000	11%

Source: Census 2011 and 2024 Dwelling Estimates[v]

4.2   When the number of households and dwellings are compared for 2021, we can see that Huntingdonshire has a lower implied vacancy rate than the wider comparators. This is only an implied vacancy rate as the gap between households and dwellings can be filled by other uses such as short term lets or second homes.

Table 4.2 Implied Vacancy Rate (2021)

Area	Households	Dwellings	Vacancy Rate
Huntingdonshire	76,880	79,850	3.7%
Cambridgeshire	277,635	290,889	4.6%
East of England	2,628,778	2762299	4.8%
England	23,436,086	24,927,588	6.0%

Source: Census, 2021

4.3   Between 2011 and 2021, there was growth in the housing stock across all sub-areas. The North and West had the highest growth proportionally (34%). The East experienced a 19% increase, and the

Central and South sub-area had a lower increase of 11% but this was the highest absolute growth.

Table 4.3 Number of dwellings by sub-area

	2011	2021	Net Change	% change
North and West	10,041	10,787	746	7%
East	18,146	19,464	1,318	7%
Central and South	43,212	49,594	6,382	15%
Huntingdonshire	71,399	79,845	8,446	12%

*Source: 2011 and 2021 Census *best fit 2011 OAs have been used to calculate dwelling stock.*

Housing Completions

4.4   According to Council monitoring, since 2011/2012, there have been 11,061 (net) new homes delivered in Huntingdonshire, showing a five-year average of 1,120 homes. The ten-year average in the district equates to 890 homes, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 4.1 Net Housing Delivery Rate – Huntingdonshire
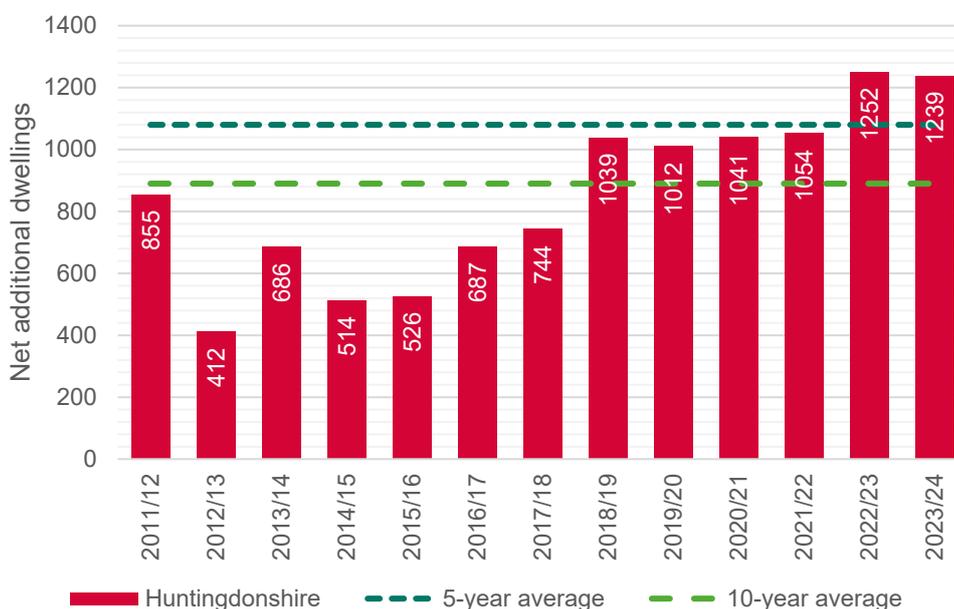

Source: Annual Monitoring Report, 2024 (Part 1)[vi]

4.5   The figure below sets out the number of completions by sub-area in Huntingdonshire drawn from Annual Monitoring. Although this source does not apply to the conversion of listed buildings.

4.6   The Central and South has contributed the greatest number of new dwellings (72%), peaking in 2019 with 8,727 dwellings. The East has shown steady growth since 2017, before this, the sub-area contributed an average of 17% of completions. However, since 2017 its average contribution has been 27%.

4.7   Both the Central and South and the East sub-areas have strategic expansion sites: Alconbury Weald and Wintringham Park, respectively and the delivery of these sites is reflected in the high number of homes delivered.

4.8   The North and West area has consistently low numbers throughout the period. There is a decline in the Central and South and North and West sub-areas in the last year.

4.9   It is important to note that two developments (Grange Farm and Ermine South South) have now secured outline planning permission and will likely contribute to housing delivery within the next five years.

4.10   Along with ongoing development at Wintringham Park and Alconbury Weald, various smaller sites across the district have the potential to increase housing delivery above the annual target requirement significantly.

Figure 4.2 Completions, by sub-area
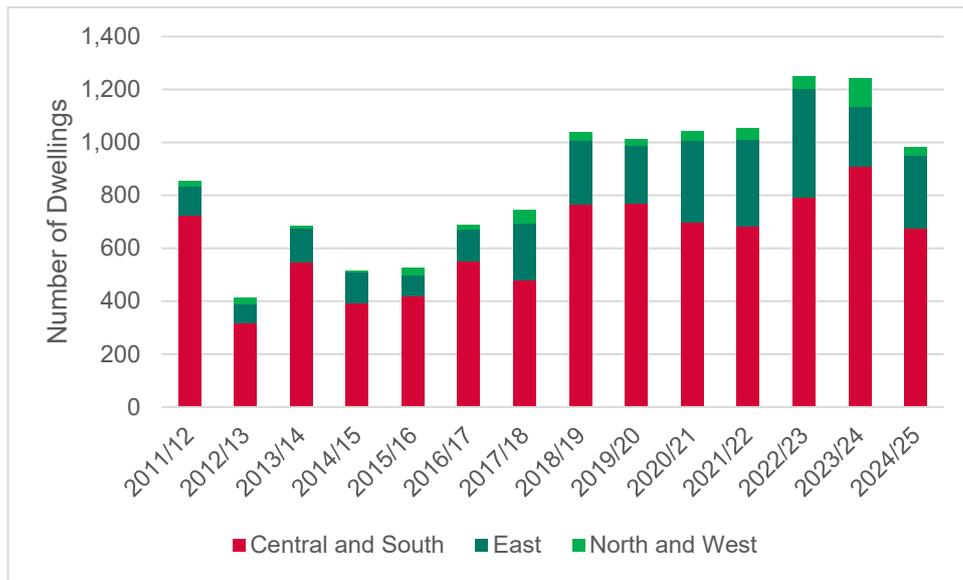
Source: Council Annual Monitoring Data

Dwelling Type

4.11   Huntingdonshire has a larger proportion of detached dwellings than the wider comparators. Conversely, there is a smaller proportion of flatted developments.

Figure 4.3 Dwelling Types

Source: Census 2021

4.12   For semi-detached and terraced homes, the district has a similar percentage to the county. In both instances, this is less than the regional and national figures.

4.13   The North and West is dominated by detached homes and has a lower proportion of flatted developments, similar to the East sub-area. Central and South has a higher proportion of terraced homes and flats. Again, this is reflecting urban and rural characteristics.

Figure 4.4 Dwelling Types by sub-area
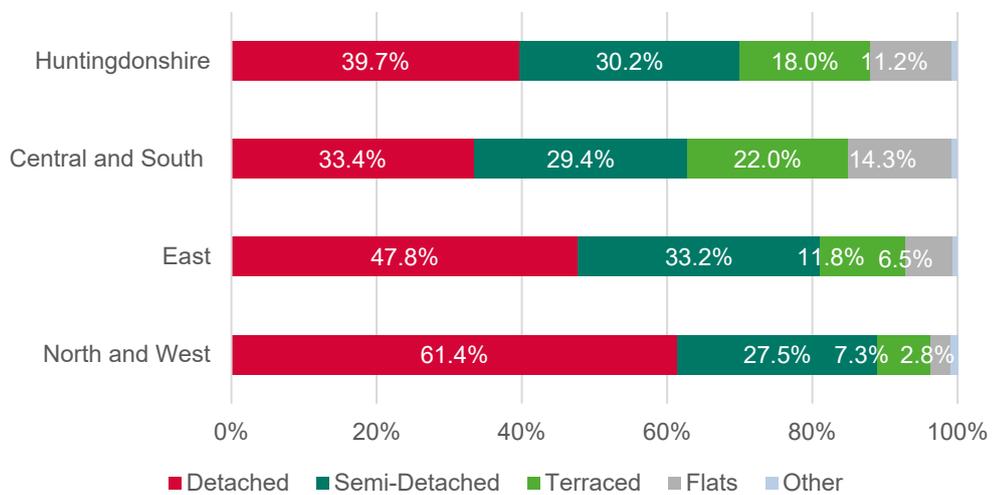
Source: Census 2021

Number of Bedrooms

4.14   Huntingdonshire has a greater percentage of homes with four or more bedrooms when compared to the wider comparators. Conversely, it has a smaller percentage of one bedroom homes. This would be expected in a predominantly rural area but is also driven by the greater proportion of detached properties.

Figure 4.5 Sizes of Dwellings
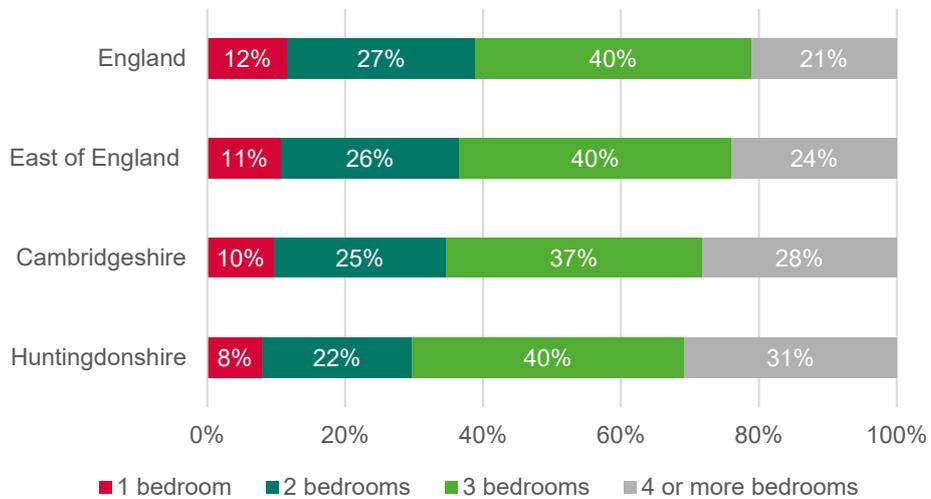
Source: Census 2021

4.15   This is further demonstrated by the North and West sub-area displaying the same characteristics with it being the most rural of the sub-areas. In the Central and South area, which has the largest urban centres, displays the smallest proportion of large homes and the greatest percentage of small homes.

Figure 4.6 Sizes of Dwellings by sub-area
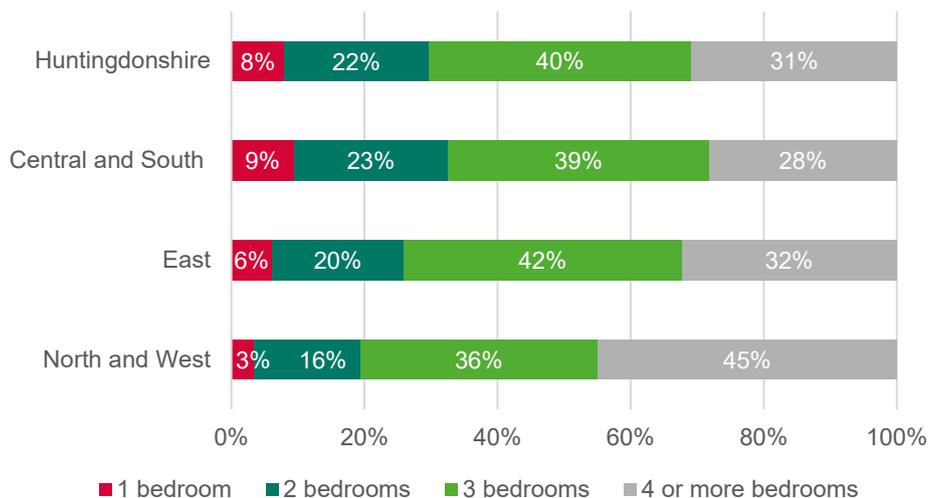
Source: Census 2021

4.16   Since 2021/2022, 3,602 (gross) dwellings have been completed in Huntingdonshire. Of these, there has been a fairly even split across

two, three and four bedrooms, all around 30%. Around 11% of completions have been in one bedroom properties.

Table 4.4 Gross Completions by Bedroom

Bedrooms	Completions	%
1 Bed	321	11%
2 Bed	901	29%
3 Bed	1,261	31%
4+ Beds	1,119	29%
Total	3,602	

Source: HDC, 2025

Tenure

4.17   Huntingdonshire has a larger proportion of owner-occupied households than the wider comparators. Conversely, the district shows a smaller proportion of renters (social and private) in comparison to all other areas.

Figure 4.7 Tenure (2021)
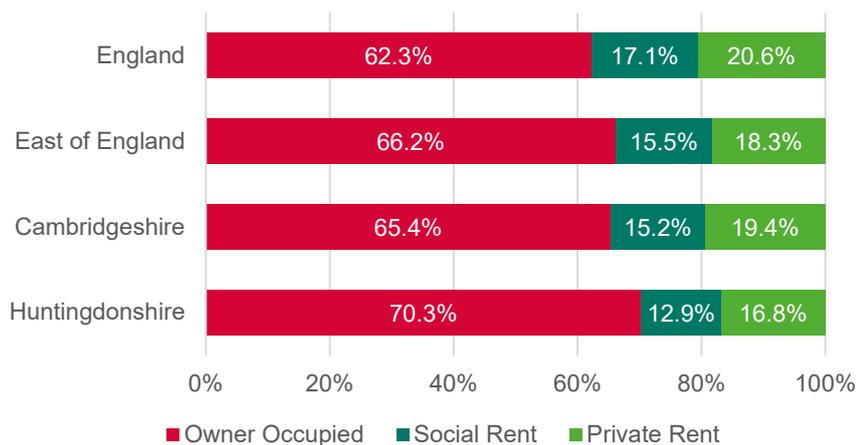
Source: Census 2021

4.18   The Central and South has a higher proportion of social and private renters whereas the North and West shows the lowest proportions for both social and private renters. The tenure split in the East sub-area

falls in between the Central and South and North and West sub-areas for all types, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 4.8 Tenure (2021)
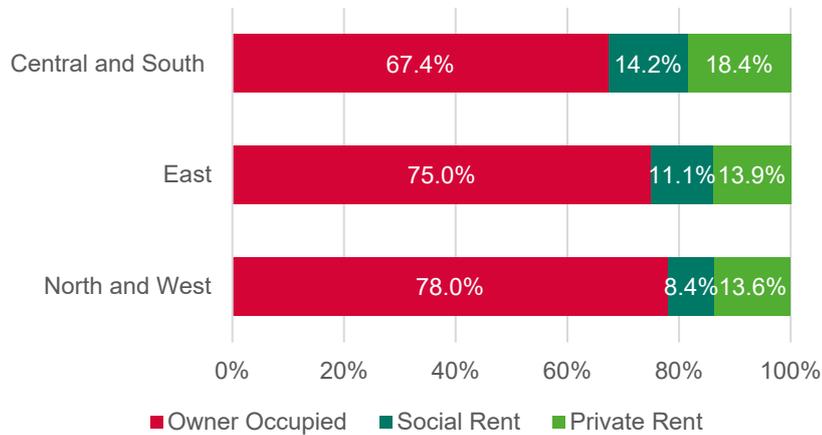
Source: Census 2021

Occupancy Patterns

4.19   The Census bedroom occupancy rating assesses whether a home has the right number of bedrooms for its occupants.

4.20   A household's bedroom needs are determined by ONS' Bedroom Standard, which requires that the following groups should have their own bedroom:

- adult couple;

- any remaining adult (aged 21 years or over);

- two males (aged 10 to 20 years) or;

- one male (aged 10 to 20 years) and one male (aged 9 years or under), if there is an odd number of males aged 10 to 20 years or;

- one male aged 10 to 20 years if there are no males aged 0 to 9 years to pair with him;

- repeat steps 3 to 5 for females;

- two children (aged 9 years or under) regardless of sex;

- any remaining child (aged 9 years or under).

4.21   A score of +1 or more means a home is under-occupied (has more bedrooms than needed), 0 means it's "rightsized," and -1 or less means it's over-occupied (overcrowded[10]).

4.22   For this assessment, only homes with +2 or more (at least two spare bedrooms) are counted as under-occupied, excluding +1 scores (which may reflect legitimate needs like a home office or carer's room). As a result, the percentages in the table do not total 100%.

4.23   As shown in the figure below, Huntingdonshire has a higher proportion of under occupied homes than the wider comparators. Conversely, the rate of overcrowding in the district is lower than all other areas shown.

Figure 4.9 Occupancy Rating (Bedrooms)
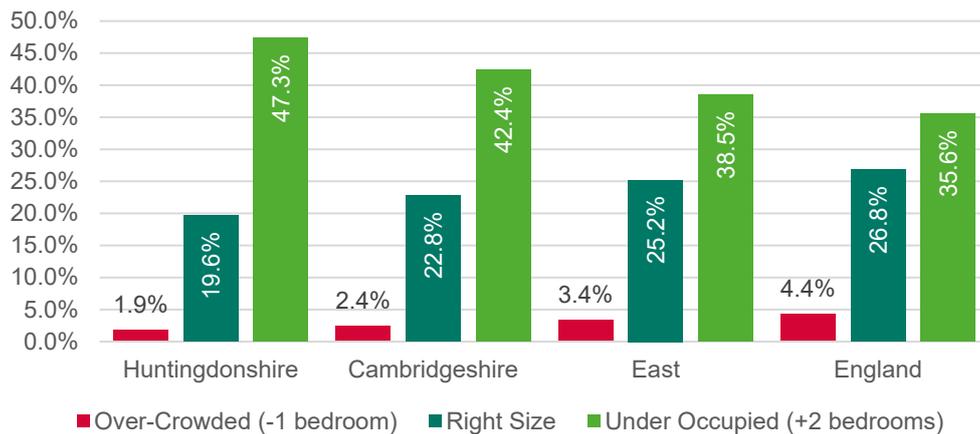
Source: Census 2021

4.24   This would be expected in an area with an older population and a large percentage of detached properties. This is often described as the empty nest effect. Indeed, even within the housing register, there are 27 applicants in Band A that are under-occupying 2-bedroom homes.

---

[10] It is calculated based on household size, age and relationships of household members. Whilst under-occupied properties are those with more bedrooms than the house theoretically needs. For instance, an under-occupied property can relate to a couple with no children living in a two or more-bedroom property.

4.25   The Central and South sub-area has the largest proportion of over-
        crowded homes at 2.2%. Of all sub-areas, the North and West has the
        highest percentage of under-occupied dwellings.

Figure 4.10 Occupancy Rating (Bedrooms) by sub-area
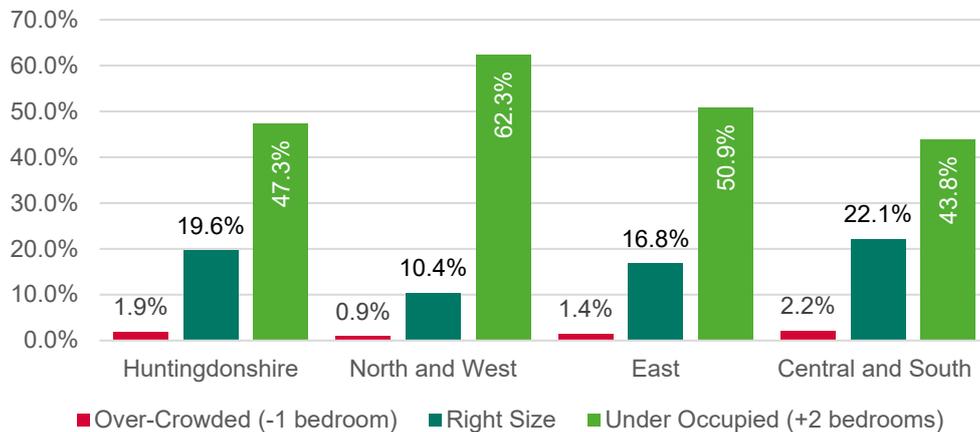
Source: Census 2021

Housing Stock: Conclusions

4.26   The total number of dwellings in Huntingdonshire in 2024 was 83,400, a
        17% increase since 2011. This is a faster rate of growth than the
        national and regional growth rate.

4.27   Huntingdonshire has a lower implied vacancy rate than the wider
        comparators.

4.28   Over the last five years, housing delivery in Huntingdonshire has
        totalled 5,598 dwellings and this has increased the average annual rate
        of delivery to 1,120 dwellings.

4.29   Huntingdonshire has a larger proportion of detached dwellings than the
        wider comparators. Conversely, there is a smaller proportion of flatted
        developments.

4.30   Linked to this, Huntingdonshire has a greater percentage of homes with
        four or more bedrooms when compared to the wider comparators.

4.31   Huntingdonshire has a larger proportion of owner-occupied households than the wider comparators and conversely, a smaller proportion of renters (social and private).

4.32   The district has a higher proportion of underoccupied homes than the wider comparators and conversely, a lower rate of overcrowding in the district. This is linked to the ageing population and the size of the housing stock.

5. Housing Market Dynamics

5.1   This section of the report considers housing market dynamics across all spatial study areas. The section addresses the housing market dynamics with respect to both the sales market and the lettings market.

House Prices

5.2   In the year to March 2025, Huntingdonshire's median house price (£356,396) is lower than the regional (£416,584) and national medians (£377,621), as shown in the table below.

Table 5.1 Average House Prices (March 2025)

Area	Price
Huntingdonshire	£356,396
East of England	£416,584
England	£377,621

Source: Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Housing Market Bulletin 2025 based on hometrack data

5.3   Drawing on HMLR Price Paid data, it is possible to look at median costs at a sub-area level. At £410,000, the North and West sub-area has a considerably higher median than the other two sub-areas, although the Central and South sub-area median is also above the Huntingdonshire average (which is notably different to the hometrack data and also more dated). The East sub-area shows the lowest median house prices, as shown in the table below.

Table 5.2 Median House Prices (2023)

Area	Price
North and West	£410,000
East	£292,000
Central and South	£320,000
Huntingdonshire	£315,000

Source: HMLR Price Paid Data,

5.4   A shown in the figure below, property prices under £350,000 are concentrated in the Central and South and East sub-areas. Higher-priced properties are found mainly in the North and West sub-areas with various pockets seen across the other sub-areas.

Figure 5.1 Median Property Prices
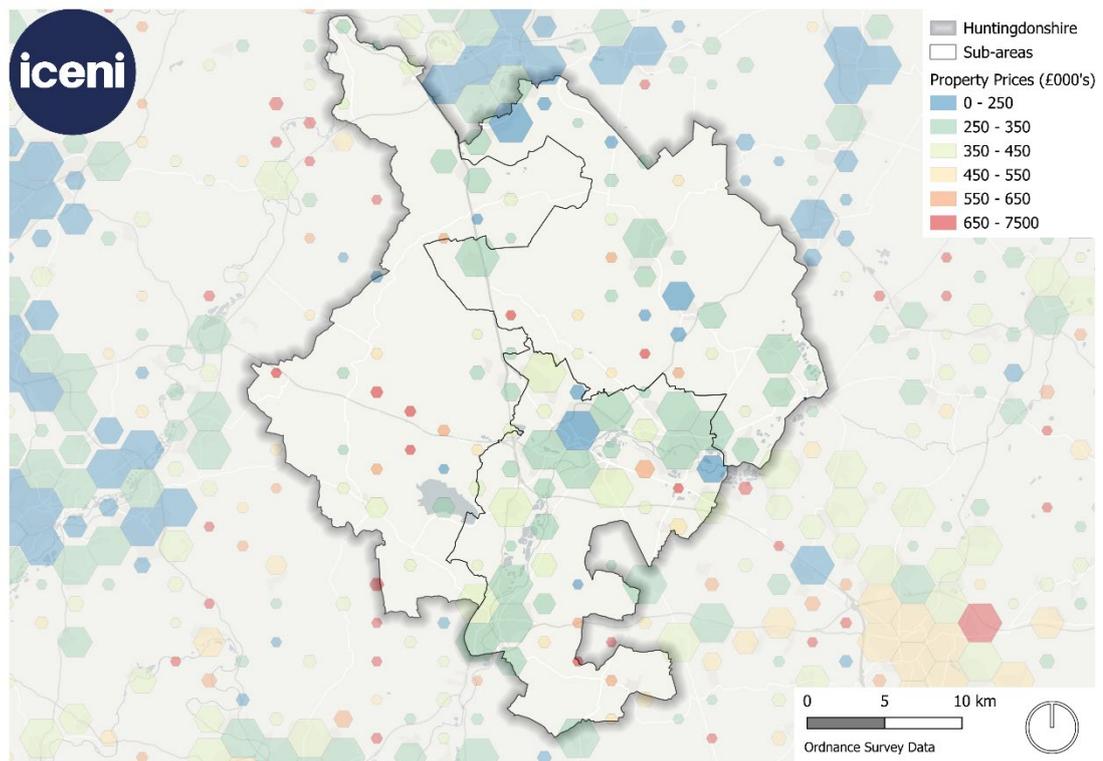
Source: HM Land Registry Price Paid Data[vii], 2025

5.5   As shown in the table below, Huntingdonshire is consistently above the England average for all property types except flats. In contrast, the district is below the county and regional averages for all types of homes.

Table 5.3 Median Price by Type (2023)

Area	Overall	Detached	Semi	Terraced	Flatted
Huntingdonshire	£312,000	£442,000	£310,000	£260,000	£165,000
Cambridgeshire	£337,000	£452,000	£315,000	£285,000	£210,000
East of England	£340,000	£485,000	£350,000	£310,000	£205,000
England	£290,000	£440,000	£274,000	£240,000	£232,000

Source: ONS price paid data (blue cells = highest for each type)

5.6   North and West shows the highest median price for detached dwellings across all other areas. The East sub-area has the lowest overall median prices in comparison to all other areas shown in the table below.

Table 5.4 Median Price by Type (2023)

Area	Overall	Detached	Semi	Terraced	Flatted
North and West	£410,000	£503,000	£293,000	£238,000	£130,000
East	£292,000	£395,000	£260,000	£210,000	£120,000
Central and South	£320,000	£440,000	£330,000	£260,000	£170,000
Huntingdonshire	£312,000	£442,000	£310,000	£260,000	£165,000

Source: ONS price paid data (blue cells = highest for each type)

House Price Change

5.7   Median prices in Huntingdonshire have grown by 69% over the last decade. This is similar to the rest of the county at 67%. But it is notably below the regional growth (74%) but above the national growth (57%). In the shorter term (5-year) growth at 18% has been lower than all other areas examined.

Table 5.5 House Price Growth

Area	2023	5 Year Change		10 Year Change	
		Absolute	%	Absolute	%
Huntingdonshire	£312,000	£47,000	18%	£127,000	69%
Cambridgeshire	£337,000	£57,000	28%	£135,000	67%
East of England	£340,000	£60,000	31%	£145,000	74%
England	£290,000	£55,000	23%	£105,000	57%

Source: ONS, Median House Price for Administrative Geographies

Residential Sales

5.8   Since 2014, Huntingdonshire has generally tracked the benchmark areas for property sales, which demonstrates macroeconomic factors. Across all areas, there were peaks in the number of sales in 2016 and post-pandemic in 2022, with a decline from 2016 to 2020 and from 2022 onwards, with the most recent fall being the most notable. This is linked to mortgage rate increases and the general cost of living crisis.

Figure 5.2 Property sales (indexed to the year 2014)
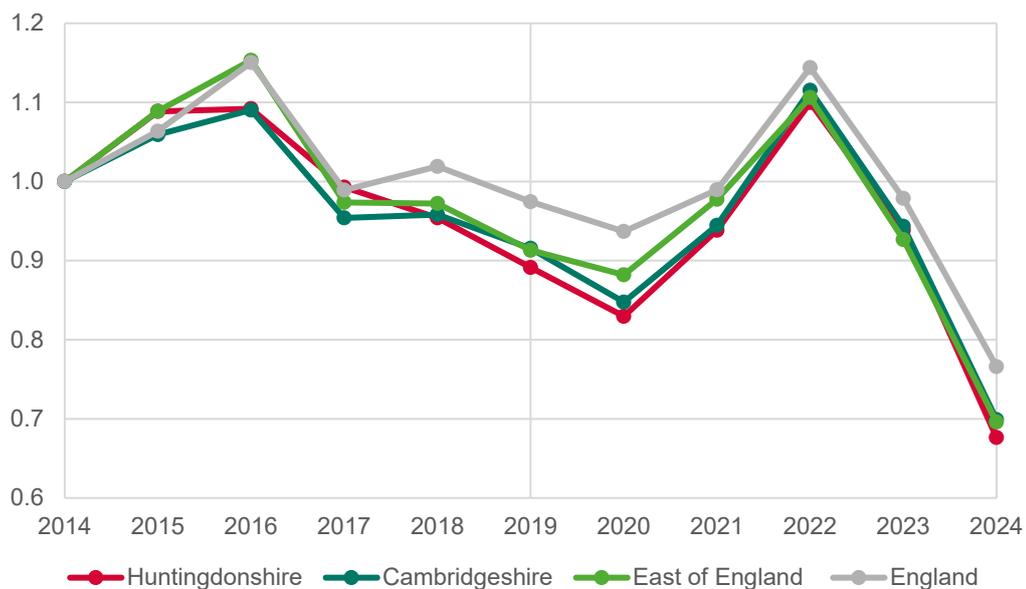
Source: Iceni analysis of ONS data

5.9   The figure below shows that Huntingdonshire housing stock is more dominated by detached properties than the wider comparators. Flatted homes are least common in Huntingdonshire, broadly in line with the county rate but below the regional and national figures.

Figure 5.3 Property Sales by Type (Year to Sept 2024)
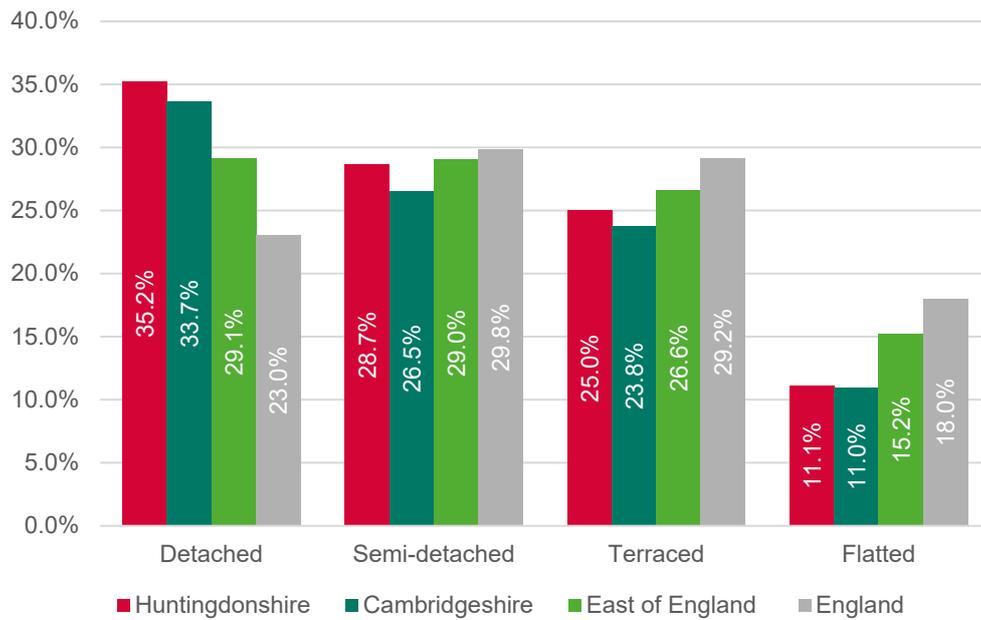
Source: Iceni analysis of ONS data

5.10 The North and West sub-area shows the highest percentage of detached sales and, conversely, the lowest percentage of flat sales. This is not unexpected for a rural area. The East sub-area has a higher percentage of semi-detached property sales.

Figure 5.4 Sub-area Property Sales by Type (Year to Sept 2024)

Bar chart showing property sales by type and sub-area:

Property Type	Central and South	East	North and West	Huntingdonshire
Detached	33%	51%	62%	39%
Semi-detached	26%	30%	26%	27%
Terraced	27%	14%	10%	22%
Flats	14%	5%	1%	11%
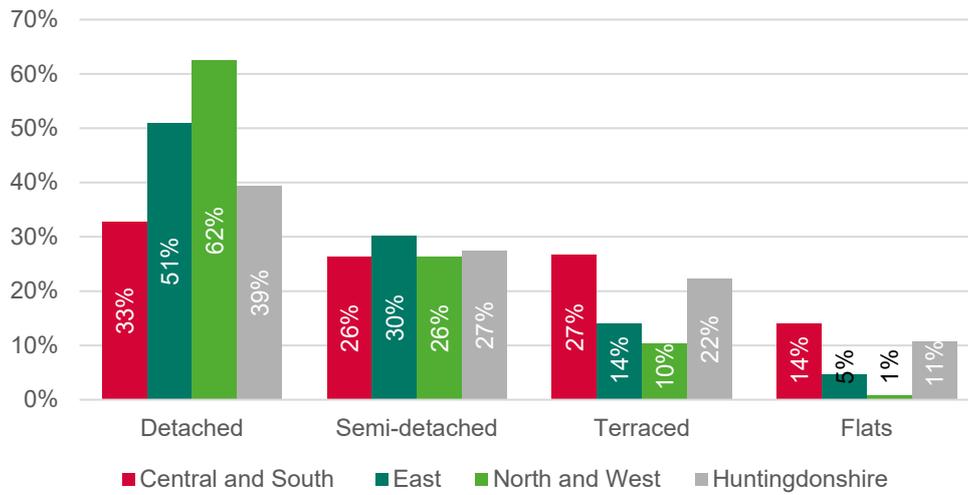
Source: Iceni analysis of ONS data

5.11   The Central and South sub-area has the highest percentage of smaller flats and terraced property sales. Again, this would not be unexpected in the district's most urban settings.

Affordability

5.12   As with all areas, Huntingdonshire shows long-term deterioration in affordability. There have been periodic downturns, particularly around 2008-2009 and since 2020-21. The affordability ratio in Huntingdonshire now stands at 8.45.

Figure 5.5 Affordability Ratio (1997-2024)
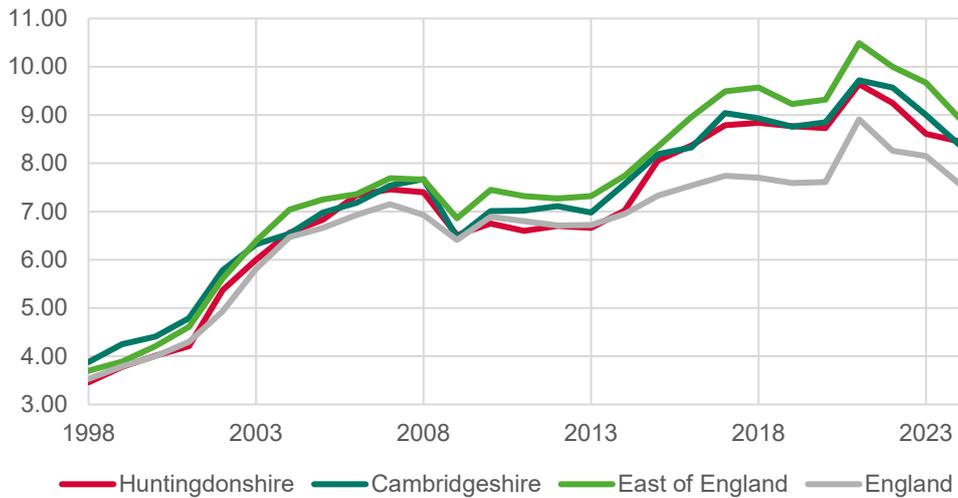
Source: ONS, Housing Affordability in England and Wales[viii]

5.13   The ONS affordability ratio is just one measure of affordability in a given area, as it compares median earnings with median property prices overall.

5.14   However, it does not take into account other important factors affecting affordability, such as savings, stamp duty and additional costs associated with moving.

Private Rental Market

5.15   Huntingdonshire shows a lower overall median rental value (£875) when compared to the regional and county values but higher than the national rate.

Figure 5.6 Median Rental Values

	Overall	Room	Studio	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ beds
Huntingdonshire	£875	£625	£550	£678	£850	£995	£1,400
Cambridgeshire	£995	£625	£900	£850	£949	£1,100	£1,600
East of England	£925	£550	£650	£750	£900	£1,100	£1,500
England	£850	£495	£671	£750	£825	£925	£1,550

Source: VOA Private Rental Statistics, 2023

5.16   Between 2018/19 and 2022/23, rents increased across all sizes in Huntingdonshire. The largest rent increase is shown for rooms in Huntingdonshire, while the smallest increase is seen for 4+ bed homes, a higher rate than all other areas shown. This suggests the demand is greatest for smaller affordable homes, as shown in the table below.

Table 5.6 Rental Change by Size, (2018/19 - 2022/23)

Area	Room	Studio	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4+ beds
Huntingdonshire	46%	15%	14%	17%	16%	12%
Cambridgeshire	21%	29%	17%	15%	16%	10%
East of England	24%	24%	15%	16%	22%	11%
England	25%	22%	21%	22%	19%	17%

Source: VOA Private Rental Statistics[ix], 2023

Agent Engagement

5.17   Iceni have engaged with estate and lettings agents within Huntingdonshire; a summary of the findings is set out below.

5.18   It should be noted that the information is qualitative and will be subject to each agent's opinions. The agents consulted include Harvey Robinson, Oliver James, Thomas Morris, Lennon James, Sharman Quinney, Ellis Winters and Giggs & McGrath.

5.19   In sales, three-bedroom homes and detached properties dominate buyer preferences, with local movers and first-time buyers comprising the majority of sales.

5.20   Meanwhile, the lettings market is under significant pressure due to sustained demand from key workers and military personnel, particularly for smaller properties.

5.21   Across both sectors, proximity to transport links, schools, and amenities remains a major draw, and appetite for Build-to-Rent opportunities is emerging across several areas.

Sales Market

5.22   The sales market across Huntingdonshire demonstrates a healthy balance of supply and demand, with strong interest across a range of property types and demographics.

5.23   Key drivers of demand in Huntingdon include proximity to well-regarded school catchments and the local train station, which has good links to London and is on the East Coast main line.

5.24   The area also has a significant proportion of key workers in the town, owing to the presence of the local hospital.

5.25   One agent suggested the buyer profile in Huntingdon is mixed, though there is a notable prevalence of first-time buyers. Most purchasers are local to the area, continuing the trend of internal migration that began a few years ago. Although another suggested an element of relocation-driven demand

5.26   Three-bedroom properties are particularly sought after in the town and tend to sell quickly, with larger homes, particularly detached, increasingly in demand. Homes priced between £200,000 and £500,000 attract the most attention.

5.27   The Huntingdon market is well-balanced, with supply generally meeting demand and vendors achieving their asking prices.

5.28   While the demand for flats has seen a decline in popularity over recent years – possibly due to younger individuals returning to live with parents. Properties generally sell within 3–4 weeks, with some achieving instant sales.

5.29   The majority of recent transactions have involved local movers, though a small number of buyers from London are also present.

5.30   In St Neots, the agents noted a gap in the supply of one-bed and two bed properties – most popular. These are often workers at Hinchingbrooke Hospital in Huntingdon, looking to live in the town and commute to work either by road or train.

5.31   In Godmanchester, semi-detached, freehold homes are in high demand, whereas interest in flats remains relatively low.

5.32   An agent in the rural parts of the district noted that the sales market is predominantly local movers.

5.33   The highest demand was for two- and three-bedroom houses, with the average time on market not exceeding four weeks.

5.34   Key worker housing is not a dominant feature of the sales landscape in the rural areas.

5.35   Within the Ramsey area, agents reported the market primarily serving first-time buyers and investors. The most sought-after property type remains the 3 bed semi-detached houses which are typically purchased by first-time buyers and are prominent in the buy-to-let market.

5.36   The highest demand spans a mix of buyers typically aged late 20s to late 30s. The main reasons for relocation to Ramsey are stated as being closer to family and seeking more affordable options.

5.37   Overall, the market appears stable and is expected to remain robust over the coming months. Over the longer term the outlook remains positive, with expectations of continued progression and stability.

Lettings

5.38   The lettings market across the district is experiencing particularly high levels of demand, especially among key workers and those in the healthcare and military sectors.

5.39   Across all agencies, the consensus is that rental properties are letting quickly, with particular pressure on smaller units.

5.40   The rental sector in Huntingdonshire is performing strongly, noting demand across all property types. The tenant mix in Huntingdonshire is also varied.

5.41   Carers and key workers are a significant component of the tenant base in Huntingdon due to the hospital and nearby military base. This was exacerbated by the closure of staff accommodation for NHS workers at the hospital.

5.42   Furthermore, RAF and USAAF personnel often arrive with substantial budgets and contribute to a dynamic and aggressive rental market.

5.43   Huntingdon's Private Rental Supply (PRS) supply is insufficient to meet the high demand, creating a highly competitive market.

5.44   Agents believe there is growing interest in Build-to-Rent (BTR) schemes in the town due to the high demand and lack of supply. The town could also tap into the commuter market to London and Cambridge as the area's train station adds to its appeal.

5.45   Agents confirmed that one- and two-bedroom properties are most in demand, suggesting a need for smaller affordable homes.

5.46   Similar demand is seen in St Ives although demand is greater for three-bedroom semi-detached properties.

5.47   St Ives' rental market also sees a broad demographic mix, including both key workers and private tenants.

5.48   The demand is such that properties tend to let within two weeks, and there is definite interest in Build-to-Rent offerings.

5.49   In St Neots there is an acute shortage of one- and two-bedroom properties – the most popular among tenants.

5.50   The area's excellent road and rail links further contribute to demand. There is strong interest in Build-to-Rent in this locality as well.

Housing Market Dynamics – Summary

5.51   In 2023, Huntingdonshire's median house price was £315,000, lower than the county (£337,000) and regional (£340,000) medians, but higher than the national median of £290,000.

5.52   Apart from flats, Huntingdonshire's property prices are above the England average but below county and regional averages for all home types.

5.53   Over the past decade, house prices in Huntingdonshire have grown by 69%, similar to the county (67%), but below regional growth (74%) and above national growth (57%).

5.54   In the last 5 years, growth was 18%, lower than in the other areas.

5.55   Property sales in Huntingdonshire have followed benchmark trends, with significant declines since 2022.

5.56   The affordability ratio in Huntingdonshire is 8.45, showing long-term deterioration but recent improvements.

5.57   In 2023, The median rental value is £875 per month, lower than county and regional values, but higher than the national rate.

5.58   Single-room rents have increased the most, indicating a high demand for smaller affordable homes.

6. Overall Housing Need

Introduction

6.1 This section of the report considers overall housing need set against the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) – specifically the Standard Method for assessing housing need.

6.2 Before its publication, the policy objectives of the 2024 NPPF consultation in terms of housing were clear, including to:

- get Britain building again, to build new homes, create jobs, and deliver new and improved infrastructure;

- take a brownfield first approach and then release low-quality grey belt land, while preserving the Green Belt;

- boost affordable housing, to deliver the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation;

- bring home ownership into reach, especially for young first-time buyers; and

- promote a more strategic approach to planning, by strengthening cross-boundary collaboration, ahead of legislation to introduce mandatory mechanisms for strategic planning;

- The consultation also noted that 'We must deliver more affordable, well-designed homes quickly. We are changing national policy to support more affordable housing, including more for Social Rent, and implementing golden rules to ensure development in the Green Belt is in the public interest. Promoting a more diverse tenure mix will support the faster build out we need'.

6.3 The Government's Standard Method seeks to support the ambition to deliver 1.5 million homes over the next five years (300,000 per annum on average) with the method seeking to provide a 'more balanced distribution of homes across the country, by directing homes to where they are most needed and least affordable and ensure that all areas contribute to meeting the country's housing needs'.

6.4   It is further suggested that 'High and rapidly increasing house prices
        indicate an imbalance between the supply of and demand for new
        homes, making homes less affordable. The worsening affordability of
        homes is the best evidence that supply is failing to keep up with
        demand'.

6.5   Looking beyond overall housing numbers, the NPPF seeks to deliver a
        high proportion of affordable housing, particularly social rented housing.

The Standard Method

6.6   The starting point for assessing housing need is the standard method,
        which is set out by the Government in Planning Practice Guidance. The
        two-step process is summarised in the figure below and worked through
        below for Huntingdonshire.

Figure 6.1 Overview of the Standard Method
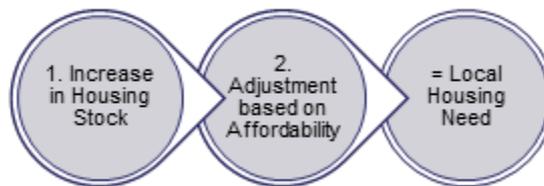
        The Standard Method figures produce an estimate of 'housing need' and
        later in this section projections have been developed to consider the
        implications of housing delivery in line with this number.

6.7   The Standard Method is a simplified variation of the previous standard
        method. Step 1 seeks to grow the housing stock in each area by a flat
        0.8% growth per annum.

6.8   Step 2 is an affordability uplift which uses an average of the last five
        years' affordability ratios, and for each 1% the average ratio is above 5
        the housing stock baseline is increased by 0.95%, with the calculation
        being as follows:

$$Adjustment\ Factor = (Affordability\ Ratio - 5)/5 \times 0.95 + 1$$

Step One: Setting the Baseline

6.9   The first step in considering housing need is to establish a baseline of housing stock. This is taken from Live Table 125, which is published annually.

6.10   According to ONS 2023 Dwelling Estimates, Huntingdonshire had 82,155 dwellings. The baseline is 0.8% of the existing housing stock for the area and this equates to 657 dwellings per annum.

Step Two: Affordability Adjustment

6.11   The second step of the standard method is to consider the application of an uplift on the housing stock baseline, to take account of market signals (i.e. relative affordability of housing).

6.12   The adjustment increases the housing need where house prices are high relative to workplace incomes. It uses the published workplace-based median affordability ratios from ONS for the most recent five years.

6.13   The latest (workplace-based) affordability data relates to 2024 and was published by ONS in March 2025. For Huntingdonshire, the average ratio was 9.46. Based on the calculation set out above, this results in an uplift of 185% in Huntingdonshire.

6.14   The table below sets out the Standard Method for Huntingdonshire, which results in an annual housing need of 1,214 per annum.

Table 6.1 Standard Method – March 2025

	Huntingdonshire
Total Dwelling Stock	82,155
Step 1. Annual Dwellings Stock Increase (0.8%)	657
Average Affordability Ratio (2020-24)	9.46
Uplift	185%
Step 2. Housing Need	1,214

Source: MHCLG[x], 2024

6.15   At a late stage in the production of the report, ONS released new dwelling stock estimates for every local authority. For Huntingdonshire, the new estimate is that there are 83,394 dwellings in the district. Applying the 185% uplift to this figure results in a need for 1,232 dpa.

6.16   While this equates to an uplift of 18 dpa, this is not considered material to change the findings of this report in relation to affordable housing and housing mix. It would also only result in a minor increase in the other population-driven need for specific groups.

Population

6.17   We have also developed a trend-based projection and then flex levels of migration to and from the district, so there is a sufficient population to fill 1,214 homes per annum. The projections look at the 2024-46 period. The analysis below starts with a review of local population trends.

6.18   As of mid-2023 (the latest date for which ONS has published mid-year population estimates (MYE)), the population of Huntingdonshire is estimated to be 186,100; this is an increase of around 13,500 people over the previous decade (an 8% increase), which is slightly higher than seen nationally, but slightly below equivalent figures for the County and region.

Table 6.2 Population change (2013-23)

	2013	2023	Change	% change
Huntingdonshire	172,540	186,066	13,526	7.8%
Cambridgeshire	634,996	699,573	64,577	10.2%
East of England	5,970,484	6,468,665	498,181	8.3%
England	53,918,686	57,690,323	3,771,637	7.0%

Source: ONS

6.19   The figure below shows an indexed population change back to 1991 (index to 1 in 2013). This shows population growth to have generally followed the regional trend historically. The data also shows particularly strong growth over the past 4-years or so.

Figure 6.2 Indexed Population Change – 1991-2023
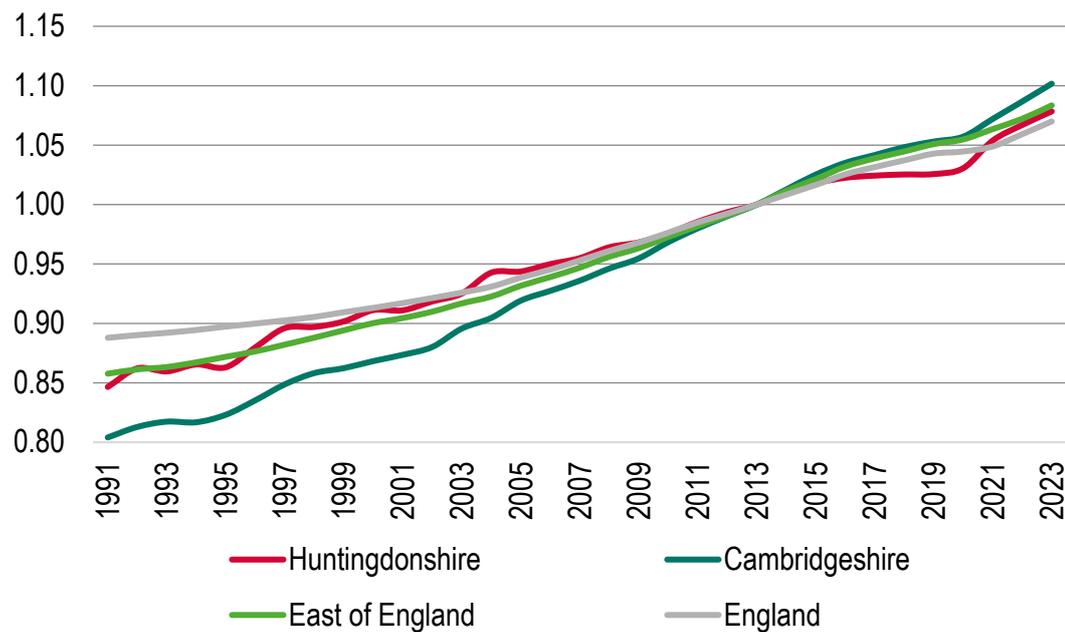
Source: ONS, 2024

Age Structure

6.20   The figure below shows the age structure by single year of age (compared with a range of other areas). Overall, the population structure is broadly similar to that seen in other locations with key differences being in some younger age groups, notably a lower proportion of people in their

late teens and early 20s – this observation will be linked to people moving away for further education although the data also points to many of these returning over time.

Figure 6.3 Population profile (2023)
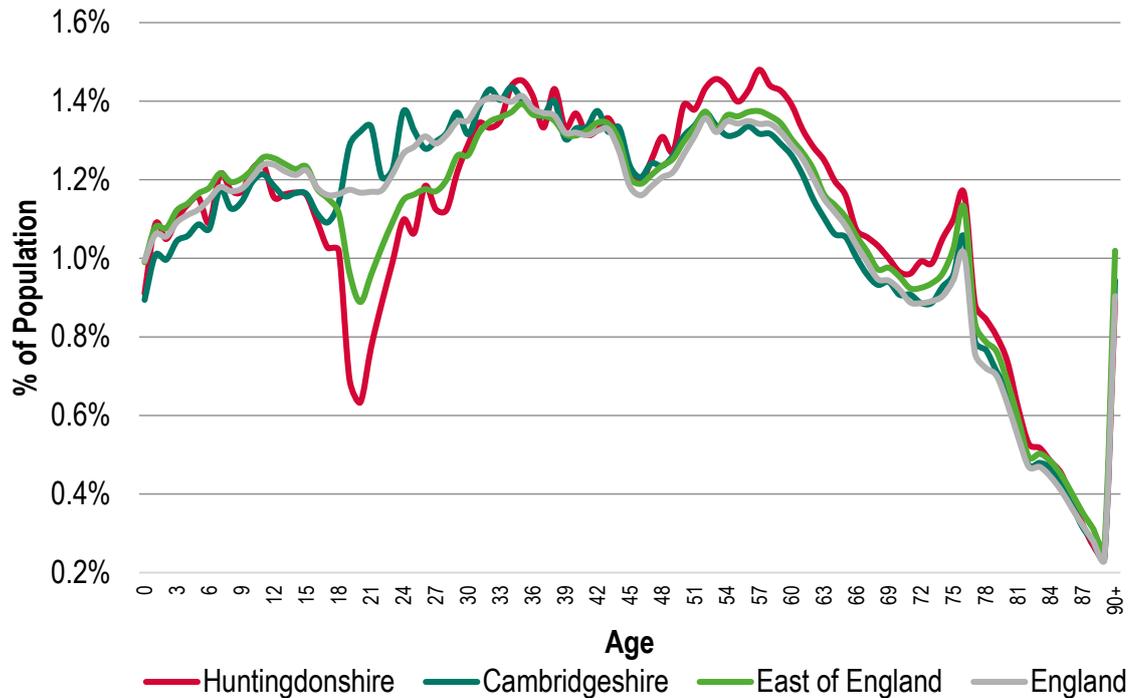
Source: ONS, Mid-Year Population Estimates

6.21   The analysis below summarises the above information (including total population numbers for Huntingdonshire) by assigning population to three broad age groups (which can generally be described as a) children, b) working age and c) pensionable age).

6.22   This analysis confirms the similar age structure between the different areas examined but does highlight a slightly higher proportion of older people (21% aged 65 and over) in Huntingdonshire.

Table 6.3 Population profile (2023) – summary age bands

	Huntingdonshire		Cambridge-shire	East of England	England
	Population	% of population	% of population		% of population
Under 16	33,863	18.2%	17.7%	18.8%	18.5%
16-64	114,030	61.3%	63.4%	61.3%	62.9%
65+	38,173	20.5%	18.9%	19.9%	18.7%
All Ages	186,066	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: ONS

Age Structure Changes

6.23   The figure below shows how the age structure of the population has changed in the 10-year period from 2013 to 2023 – the data used is based on population, so it will also reflect the increase seen in this period.

6.24   There have been some changes in the age structure, including increases in the population in their 50s; the number of people aged 65 and over also looks to have increased notably. Where there are differences, it is often due to cohort effects (i.e. smaller or larger cohorts of the population getting older over time.

Figure 6.4 Population age structure (people) (2013 and 2023) – Huntingdonshire
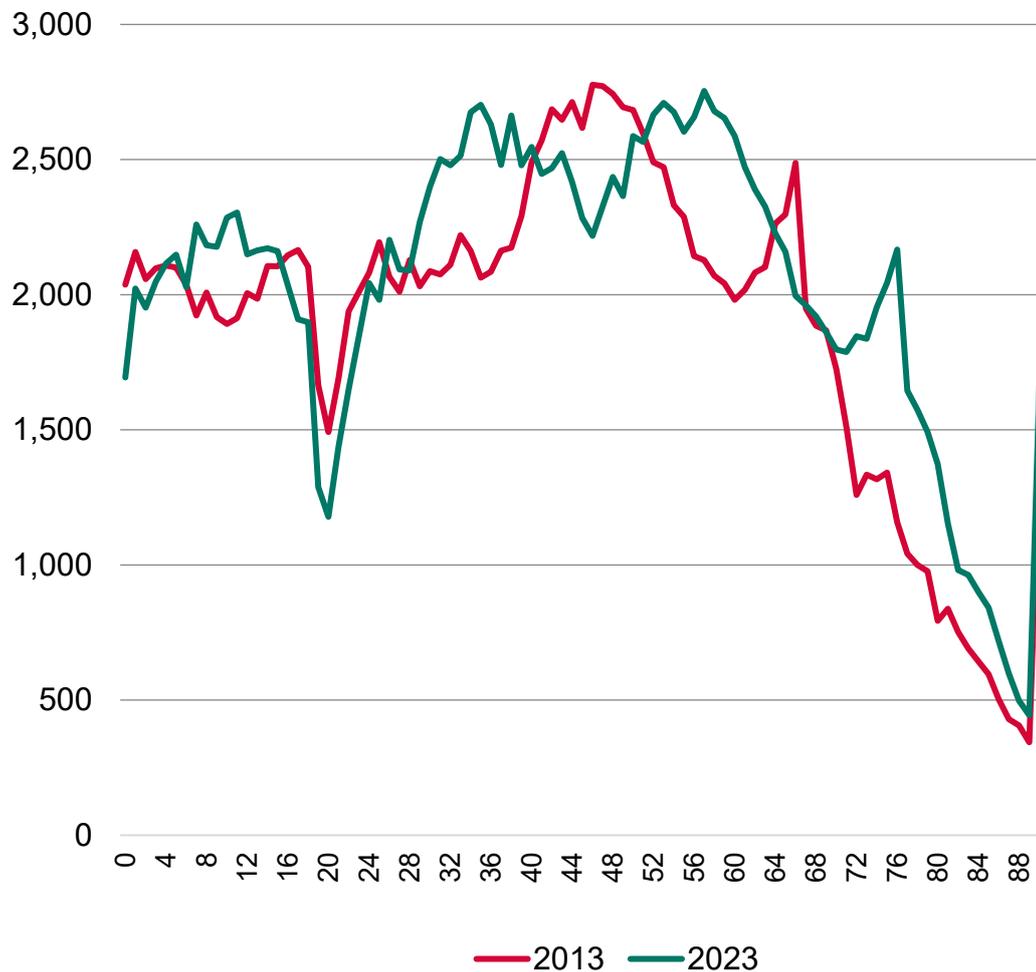
Source: ONS

6.25   Again, the information above is summarised into the three broad age bands to ease comparison. This shows population increases in all age bands with the highest total and proportionate increase being amongst those aged 65 and over – this age group increasing by 7,600 people, accounting for 56% of all population change in the area.

Table 6.4 Change in population by broad age group (2013-23) – Huntingdonshire

	2013	2023	Change	% change
Under 16	32,451	33,863	1,412	4.4%
16-64	109,550	114,030	4,480	4.1%
65+	30,539	38,173	7,634	25.0%
TOTAL	172,540	186,066	13,526	7.8%

Source: ONS

Components of Population Change

6.26   The table below considers the drivers of population change from 2011 to 2023. The main components of change are natural change (births minus deaths) and net migration (internal/domestic and international).

6.27   There is also an Unattributable Population Change (UPC), which is a correction made by ONS upon publication of Census data if the population has been under- or over-estimated (this is only calculated for the 2011-21 period).

6.28   There are also 'other changes', which are variable (sometimes positive and sometimes negative but generally balancing out over time) – these changes are often related to armed forces personnel, prisons or boarding school pupils.

6.29   The data shows natural change to generally be dropping over time – in the last year for which there is data there were more deaths than births for the first time going back to at least 2011.

6.30   Migration is variable, and generally positive for internal (domestic) migration. It ranges from -108 to 2,858 with the peak in 2020/21 which could be a pandemic effect as people moved to the country. It could also be to do with higher (or lower) rates of housing delivery in certain years.

6.31   For international net migration figures are much lower; however, the last
        two years for which data is available show a notably higher level of
        international migration than had been seen generally in the past – this
        being a consistent trend to that seen nationally. Internal net migration has
        been particularly high over the past four years.

6.32   The analysis also shows (for the 2011-21) period a negative level of UPC
        (totalling around 3,200 people over the 10-year period), which suggests
        that when the 2021 Census was published, ONS had previously over-
        estimated population change. Overall, the data shows a continuing trend
        of increasing population throughout the period studied.

Table 6.5 Components of population change, mid-2011 to mid-2023
– Huntingdonshire

	Natural change	Net internal migration	Net intern-ational migration	Other changes	Other (unattri-butable)	Total change
2011/12	879	732	196	-62	-347	1,398
2012/13	702	802	238	-310	-329	1,103
2013/14	754	979	391	-46	-335	1,743
2014/15	551	129	391	625	-332	1,364
2015/16	650	52	444	-61	-307	778
2016/17	375	20	146	121	-344	318
2017/18	336	65	2	97	-334	166
2018/19	387	-108	-26	118	-312	59
2019/20	137	1,034	-109	30	-244	848
2020/21	124	2,858	92	1,240	-303	4,011
2021/22	264	1,750	500	-245	0	2,269
2022/23	-102	1,663	758	-349	0	1,970

Source: ONS

Developing a Trend-Based Projection

6.33   The purpose of this section is to develop a trend-based population
        projection using the latest available demographic information – this

projection then being used as a base to develop an alternative scenario linking to the Standard Method.

6.34   A key driver for developing a new projection is due to the publication of 2021 Census data, which has essentially reset estimates of population (size and age structure) compared with previous mid-year population estimates (MYE) from ONS (ONS has subsequently updated 2021 MYE figures to take account of the Census). In addition, as referenced above, a 2023 MYE is now available.

6.35   The projection developed looks at estimated migration trends over the past 5-years with this period being used as it is consistent with the time period typically used by ONS when developing subnational population projections.

6.36   Below, the general method used for each of the components and the outputs from the trend-based projection are set out. The population projection uses the framework of ONS subnational population projections (SNPP) as a starting point.

6.37   This means considering data on births, deaths and migration. The most recent ONS projections are 2018-based and therefore quite out-of-date, given there are now population estimates and components of change data up to 2023. The 2018-based projections are, however, used as a starting point from which up-to-date projections can be developed.

Natural Change

6.38   Natural change is made up of births and deaths and the analysis above has shown a general downward trend over time. To project trends forward, the analysis looks at each of births and deaths separately and compares projected figures in the 2018-SNPP with actual recorded figures in the MYE.

6.39   The analysis also takes account of differences between the estimated population size and structure in the 2018-SNPP compared with ONS MYE (up to 2023).

6.40   Overall, it is estimated that recent trends in fertility are slightly lower (around 6% lower than projected in 2018) and mortality rates are slightly higher (8% higher) when compared with data in the 2018-SNPP and so adjustments have been made on this basis.

Migration

6.41   The migration analysis looks separately at each of in- and out-migration and for internal and international migration, all data being considered by sex and single year of age.

6.42   Trend-based projections do not typically simply project trends forward and can vary year by year, in part relating to how the population of other areas is projected to change.

6.43   The approach used is to look at migration trends in the 2018-23 period and compare these with figures projected back in the 2018-SNPP for the same period. Adjustments are then made to migration numbers to provide a best estimate of a future projection based on recent trends.

6.44   This method will provide a realistic view of projected migration in the absence of being able to develop a full matrix of moves at a national level (as ONS would do).

Population Projection Outputs

6.45   The estimates of fertility, mortality and migration (including changes over time) have been modelled to develop a projection for the period to 2046 (the end of the plan period).

6.46   The projection outputs start from 2024, but as we only have ONS estimates to 2023, the data to get from 2023 to 2024 is also projected (on this trend-based position).

6.47   The table below shows overall projected population growth of around 46,100 people – a 25% increase from 2024 levels.

Table 6.6 Projected population growth under a trend-based scenario – Huntingdonshire (2024-46)

	Population 2024	Population 2046	Change	% change
5-year trend	187,953	234,072	46,119	24.5%

Source: Iceni analysis

Household Projections

6.48   To understand what this means for housing need the population growth is translated into household growth using household representative rates and data about the communal (institutional) population (which are not in households). These have again been updated using data from the Census with the table below summarising the assumptions used.

6.49   For the communal population, it is assumed actual numbers are held constant up to ages under 75, with the proportion of the population being used for 75+ age groups – this approach is consistent with typical ONS projections.

6.50   In interpreting the table below (by way of examples) the data shows around 8.8% of females aged 85-89 live in communal establishments (i.e. are not part of the household population) whilst around 78% of males aged 50-54 are considered to be a 'head of household' (where they are living in a household).

6.51   Generally, the HRRs increase by age, this is due to older people being more likely to live alone, often following the death of a spouse or partner. The rates reflect the percentage of each person in that age group being the head of the household or household Representative.

Table 6.7 Communal Population and Household Representative Rates from 2021 Census – Huntingdonshire

Age	Communal population		Household Representative Rates	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
0 to 15	4	10	-	-
16 to 19	36	23	0.020	0.025
20 to 24	159	42	0.158	0.162
25 to 29	195	27	0.446	0.306
30 to 34	146	14	0.651	0.336
35 to 39	137	11	0.735	0.342
40 to 44	131	0	0.753	0.373
45 to 49	120	14	0.755	0.407
50 to 54	121	3	0.783	0.431
55 to 59	157	6	0.790	0.441
60 to 64	108	20	0.761	0.469
65 to 69	84	14	0.706	0.415
70 to 74	72	20	0.752	0.458
75 to 79	0.022	0.013	0.819	0.557
80 to 84	0.036	0.032	0.852	0.673
85 to 89	0.041	0.088	0.904	0.773
90 or over	0.096	0.240	0.919	0.871

Source: Derived from Census 2021 (mainly Tables CT 106 and 107)

6.52   For household representative rates (HRRs), the figures are calculated at the time of the Census. If ONS follow the method used in their most recent projections for future releases, then they are likely to build in the trend between the last three Census points (2001, 2011 and 2021). The figure below shows a summary analysis of the changes in HRRs by age.

6.53   Arguably the key groups to look at are younger age groups where there may have been a degree of suppression in household formation (due to

affordability) and this does appear to be the case in Huntingdonshire – particularly for those aged 25-34 and to a lesser extent 16-24 and 35-44.

6.54   Continuing this trend in the projection would therefore potentially build in further suppression and would not be a positive reaction to the Standard Method seeking to improve affordability.

6.55   For some older age groups, there does also appear to be a trend of increasing or decreasing HRRs – particularly the 65-74 and 75-84 age groups (and mainly in the 2001-11 period). For these age groups, it is considered that the 'trends' are more likely to be due to cohort effects rather than any trend that should be modelled moving forward.

Figure 6.5 Change in household representative rates by age 2001-21
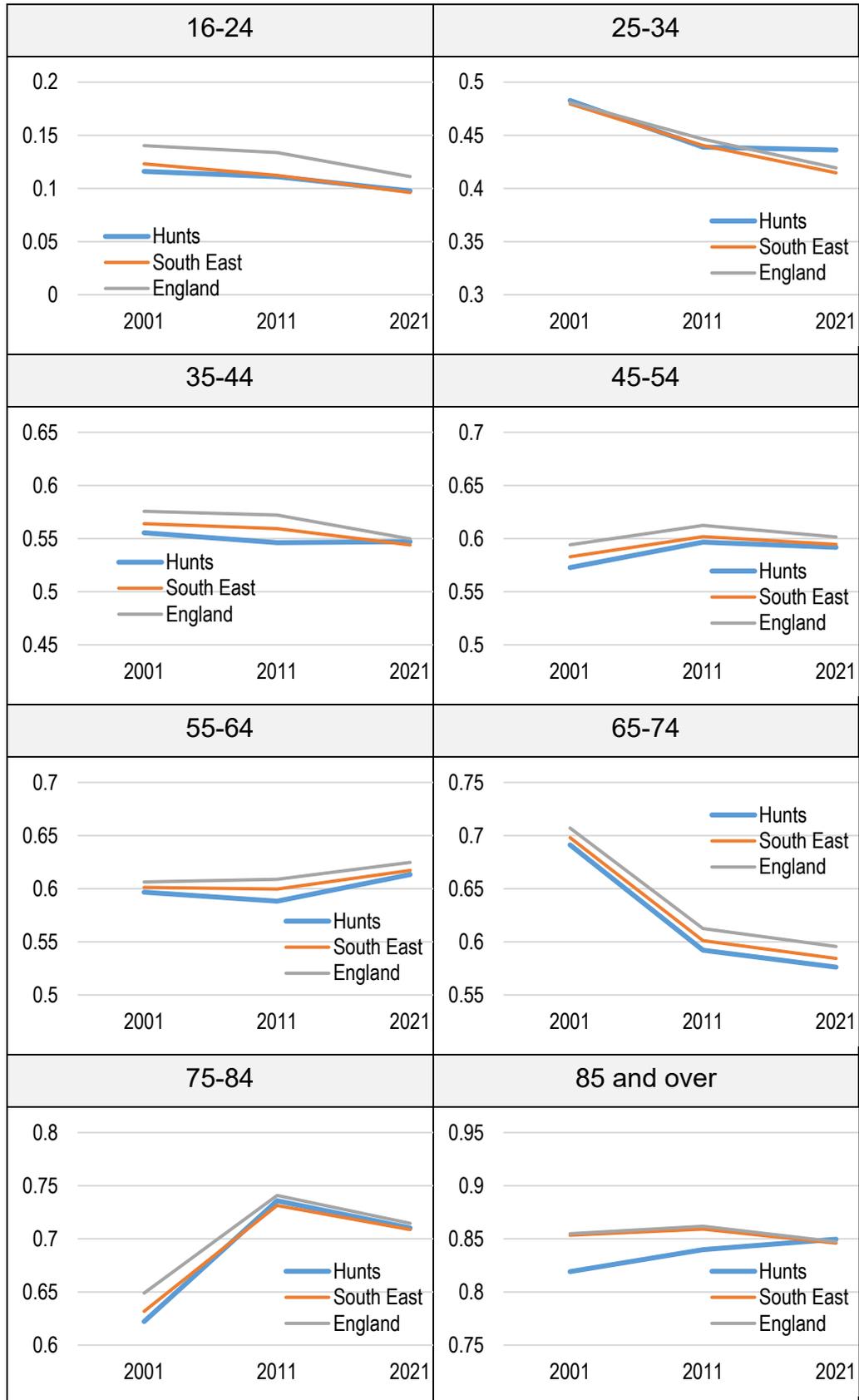
Source: ONS

6.56   The approach to HRRs taken in this report for the trend-based projection is to hold figures constant at the levels shown in the 2021 Census. However, when considering a higher housing need (linking to the Standard Method), the possibility of some increases for younger age groups is modelled (i.e. to reduce or reverse suppressed household formation) – this is discussed in relation to the Standard Method projection below.

6.57   Applying the HRRs to the trend-based population projection shows a projected increase of 21,400 households over the 2024-46 period, at an average of 975 per annum.

Table 6.8 Projected change in households – trend-based – Huntingdonshire

	Households 2024	Households 2046	Change in households	Per annum
5-year trend	80,351	101,796	21,445	975

Source: Iceni analysis

Developing a Projection linking to the Standard Method

6.58   As well as developing a trend-based projection it is possible to consider the implications of housing delivery in line with the Standard Method. The analysis below looks at how the population might change if this level of homes occurs. This is 1,214 dwellings per annum.

6.59   A scenario has been developed which flexes migration to and from the District such that there is sufficient population for this level of additional homes to be filled each year.

6.60   In addition, as the new Standard Method was only introduced in December 2024, the dwelling growth estimate for 2024-25 has been set at 987 (based on 8-months at 874 (the previous Standard Method) and 4-months at 1,214 (the new method)).

6.61   Within the modelling, migration assumptions have been changed so that across the District the increase in households matches the housing need (including a standard 3% vacancy allowance). Adjustments are made to both in- and out-migration (e.g. if in-migration is increased by 1% then out-migration is reduced by 1%).

6.62   The analysis also considers Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was revised in December 2024, alongside the new Standard Method and provides some indication of why the Government sees a need to increase housing delivery[11]. Paragraph 006 (Reference ID: 2a-006-20241212) states:

'Why is an affordability adjustment applied?

An affordability adjustment is applied as housing stock on its own is insufficient as an indicator of future housing need because:

- *housing stock represents existing patterns of housing and means that all areas contribute to meeting housing needs. The affordability adjustment directs more homes to where they are most needed*

- *people may want to live in an area in which they do not reside currently, for example to be near to work, but be unable to find appropriate accommodation that they can afford.*

The affordability adjustment is applied in order to ensure that the standard method for assessing local housing need responds to price signals and is consistent with the policy objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. The specific adjustment in this guidance is set at a level to ensure that minimum annual housing need starts to address the affordability of homes.'

6.63   The previous PPG also stated that an affordability uplift is required because *'household formation is constrained to the supply of available*

---

[11] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments

properties – new households cannot form if there is nowhere for them to live'.

6.64   Essentially, the Government considers that by providing more homes there is the opportunity for increased migration to an area to fill the homes, whilst equally, one of the Government's core objectives in planning for the delivery of 370,000 homes a year nationally is to improve affordability. Increased housing provision should provide the opportunity for additional household formation.

6.65   The modelling therefore considers the possibility of additional housing delivery allowing the opportunity for additional households to form. For the Standard Method projection it has been modelled that HRRs for age groups up to 44 could return to the levels seen in 2001 (and shown on the figure above).

6.66   In developing this projection, a population increase of around 54,700 people is shown – a 29% increase and higher than the trend-based projection (which is shown in the table below for context).

Table 6.9 Projected population growth under a range of scenarios – Huntingdonshire (2024-46)

	Population 2024	Population 2046	Change	% change
5-year trend	187,953	234,072	46,119	24.5%
Standard Method	187,953	242,631	54,678	29.1%

Source: Iceni analysis

6.67   Below are a series of charts showing past trends and projected population growth and key components of change for each of the projections developed. The first figure looks at overall population growth, before considering natural change and net migration.

6.68   The analysis suggests the population of Huntingdonshire could rise to 242,600 by 2046 (up from 188,000 in 2024 (estimated)), a 29% increase, or 1.3% per annum. For comparison, between 2013 and 2023, the population increased by an average of around 0.8% per annum and so the Standard Method would be projected to provide a boost in population growth.

Figure 6.6 Past trends and projected population – Huntingdonshire
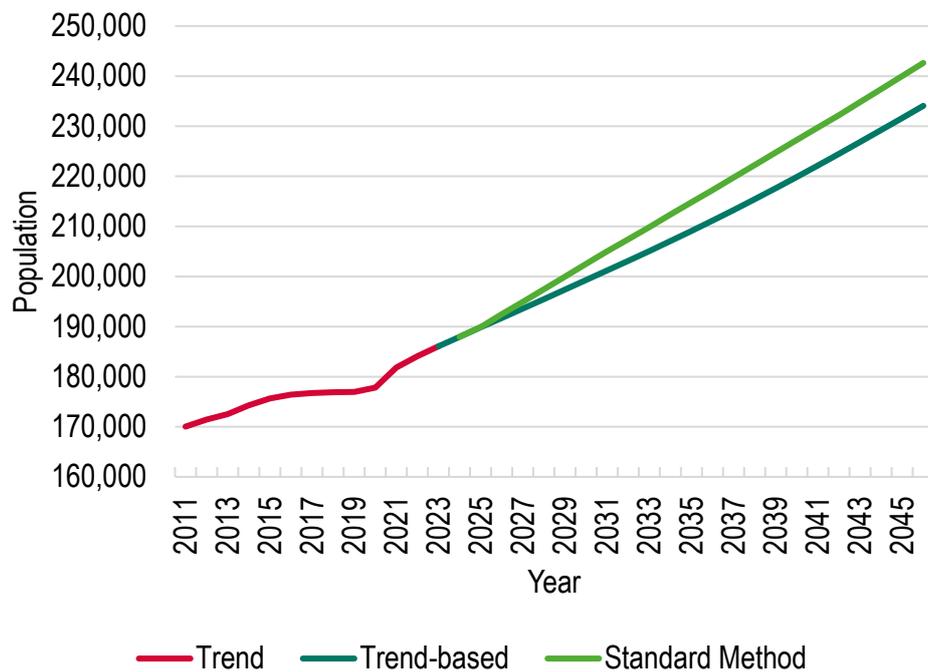
Source: ONS and Iceni analysis

6.69   The main reason for the higher population growth would be due to increased net in-migration, although the decline in natural change (births minus deaths) would also be projected to flatten off or reverse as the population rises (as there will be more females of child-bearing age).

6.70   The figures below show projected natural change and net migration under the scenarios. Focussing on net migration, the analysis suggests that with higher delivery linked to the Standard Method net migration would generally be at a level higher than typical past trends – although generally at the sort of levels seen between 2020 and 2023.

Figure 6.7 Past trends and projected natural change –
Huntingdonshire
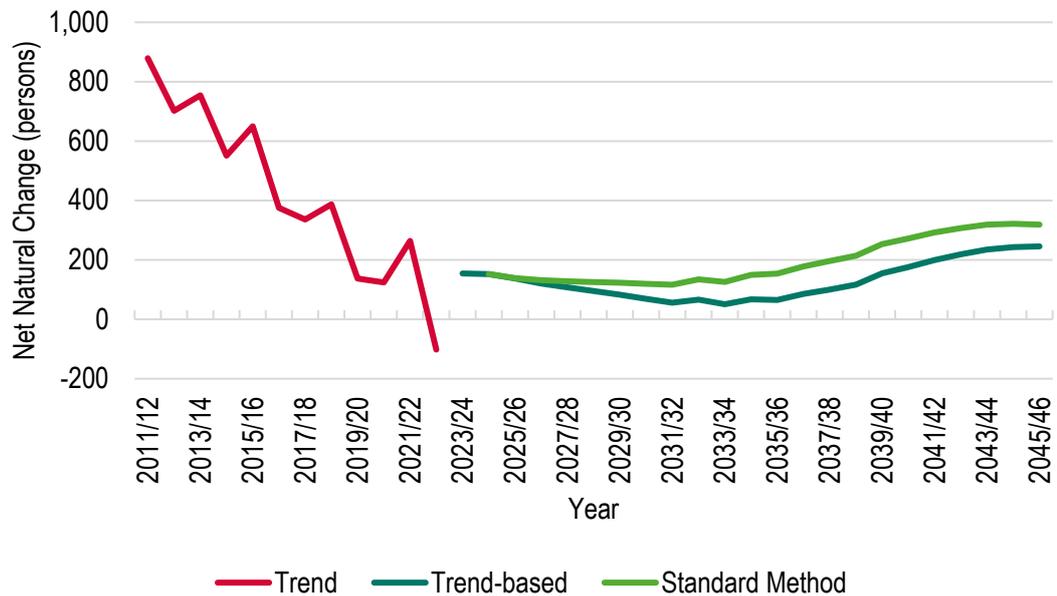
Source: ONS and Iceni analysis

Figure 6.8 Past trends and projected net migration – Huntingdonshire
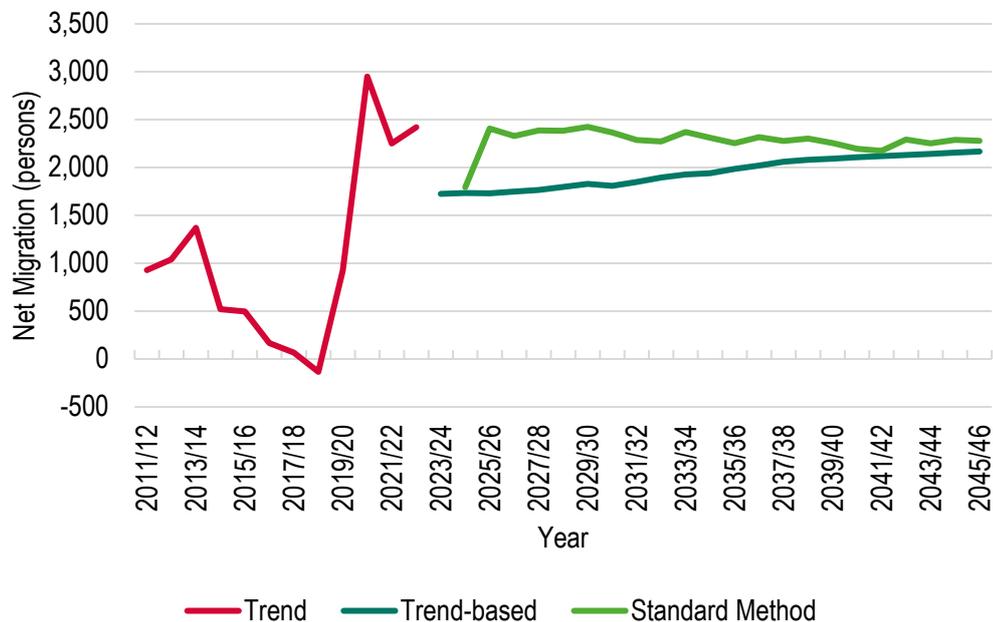
Source: ONS and Iceni analysis

6.71   A final analysis compares age structure changes under each of these
projections. In both cases the projections show an ageing of the
population and that with higher growth there would be higher increases
in the number of children and people of 'working-age' (16-64).

Table 6.10 Projected population change 2024 to 2046 by broad age bands – trend-based – Huntingdonshire

	2024	2046	Change in population	% change
Under 16	34,017	41,186	7,169	21.1%
16-64	115,023	139,331	24,308	21.1%
65 and over	38,912	53,555	14,642	37.6%
Total	187,953	234,072	46,119	24.5%

Source: Iceni analysis

Table 6.11 Projected population change 2024 to 2046 by broad age bands – Standard Method – Huntingdonshire

	2024	2046	Change in population	% change
Under 16	34,017	43,225	9,207	27.1%
16-64	115,023	144,796	29,773	25.9%
65 and over	38,912	54,610	15,698	40.3%
Total	187,953	242,631	54,678	29.1%

Source: Iceni analysis

Relationship Between Housing and Economic Growth

6.72   The analysis to follow considers the relationship between housing and economic growth; seeking to understand what level of jobs might be supported by changes to the local labour supply (which will be influenced by population change). To look at estimates of the job growth to be supported, a series of stages are undertaken. These can be summarised as:

- Estimate changes to the economically active population (this provides an estimate of the change in labour-supply);

- Overlay information about commuting patterns, double jobbing (i.e. the fact that some people have more than one job) and potential changes to unemployment; and

- Bringing together this information will provide an estimate of the potential job growth supported by the population projections.

Growth in Resident Labour Supply

6.73   The approach taken in this report is to derive a series of age and sex specific economic activity rates and use these to estimate how many people in the population will be economically active as projections develop.

6.74   This is a fairly typical approach with data being drawn in this instance from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) – July 2018 (Fiscal Sustainability Report) – this data has then been rebased to information in the 2021 Census (on age, sex and economic activity).

6.75   The table below shows the assumptions made for the District. The analysis shows that the main changes to economic activity rates are projected to be in the 60-69 age groups – this will to a considerable degree link to changes to pensionable age, as well as general trends in the number of older people working for longer (which in itself is linked to general reductions in pension provision).

Table 6.12 Projected changes to economic activity rates (EARs) (2024 and 2046) – Huntingdonshire

	Males			Females		
	2024	2046	Change	2024	2046	Change
16-19	42.6%	43.1%	0.5%	46.2%	46.6%	0.4%
20-24	86.0%	86.1%	0.0%	84.2%	84.2%	0.0%
25-29	90.1%	90.0%	0.0%	84.4%	84.4%	0.0%
30-34	92.2%	92.2%	0.0%	84.4%	84.4%	0.0%
35-39	91.8%	91.7%	-0.2%	82.7%	83.7%	0.9%
40-44	91.2%	90.3%	-0.9%	86.0%	88.0%	2.0%
45-49	91.6%	90.4%	-1.2%	86.4%	89.8%	3.5%
50-54	89.2%	88.4%	-0.8%	82.5%	86.6%	4.1%
55-59	84.1%	83.3%	-0.7%	74.0%	77.2%	3.2%
60-64	71.0%	75.1%	4.1%	58.3%	64.8%	6.5%
65-69	34.9%	48.4%	13.5%	25.9%	39.8%	13.9%
70-74	13.5%	17.5%	4.0%	7.3%	14.6%	7.3%
75-89	6.0%	6.4%	0.4%	2.8%	5.5%	2.7%

Source: Based on OBR and Census (2021) data

6.76   In addition, a sensitivity has been developed where the EARs are held constant at 2021 levels. It is considered the sensitivity is reasonable given data (including from the Census) has shown activity rates to have not grown as they had previously been forecast to do.

6.77   Working through an analysis of age and sex specific economic activity rates it is possible to estimate the overall change in the number of economically active people in the area – this is set out in the table below (linking to the 5-year trend based projections and the Standard Method).

6.78   The analysis shows that a trend-based projection results in growth in the economically-active population of up to 25,500 people – a 26% increase. With the Standard Method the increase in the economically active population is projected to be up to 30,300 – a 31% increase.

Table 6.13 Estimated change to the economically active population (2024-46) – Huntingdonshire

		Econom-ically active (2024)	Econom-ically active (2046)	Total change in econom-ically active	% change
Trend-based	OBR EAR	98,163	123,713	25,549	26.0%
	EAR no change	97,373	118,429	21,056	21.6%
Standard Method	OBR EAR	98,163	128,480	30,316	30.9%
	EAR no change	97,373	123,062	25,688	26.4%

Source: Iceni Analysis

Linking Changes in Resident Labour Supply to Job Growth

6.79   The analysis above has set out potential scenarios for the change in the number of people who are economically active. However, it is arguably more useful to convert this information into an estimate of the number of jobs this would support. The number of jobs and resident workers required to support these jobs will differ depending on three main factors:

- Commuting patterns – where an area sees more people out-commute for work than in-commute it may be the case that a higher level of increase in the economically active population would be required to provide a sufficient workforce for a given number of jobs (and vice versa where there is net in-commuting);

- Double jobbing – some people hold down more than one job and therefore the number of workers required will be slightly lower than the number of jobs; and

- Unemployment – if unemployment were to fall then the growth in the economically active population would not need to be as large as the growth in jobs (and vice versa).

Commuting Patterns

6.80   The table below shows summary data about commuting to and from Huntingdonshire from the 2011 and 2021 Census. Data from both sources is used as the 2011 data is quite old, but the 2021 data could be influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

6.81   Overall, from both sources the data shows a level of net out-commuting (around 15% more people living in the District and working than work in the District in 2011 (a much lower figure of 4% in 2021). This is shown as the commuting ratio in the final row of the table and is calculated as the number of people living in an area (and working) divided by the number of people working in the area (regardless of where they live).

6.82   When comparing the two sources, it is worth reflecting on a large increase in the number of home workers (or those of no fixed workplace) in 2021 compared with 2011.

6.83   In 2011, a total of 16,700 people were recorded as home workers or with no fixed workplace; in 2021 this figure had nearly tripled (to 43,900). As the country has moved away from the pandemic, it is possible this figure has started to reduce slightly with possible implications on commuting dynamics.

Table 6.14 Commuting Patterns – Huntingdonshire

	2011	2021
Live and Work in the District	40,861	27,932
Home Workers or No Fixed Workplace	16,687	43,901
In Commute	20,321	16,139
Out Commute	31,892	19,556
Total Working in Huntingdonshire	77,869	87,972
Total Living in Huntingdonshire and Working Anywhere	89,440	91,389
Commuting Ratio	1.149	1.039

Source: Census 2011, 2021

6.84   The analysis below looks at both sets of Census data with a further sensitivity of a balanced (1:1) commuting ratio (i.e. the increase in the number of people working in the area is equal to the number of people living in the area who are working).

Double Jobbing

6.85   The analysis also considers that a number of people may have more than one job (double jobbing). This can be calculated as the number of people working in the local authority divided by the number of jobs. Data from the Annual Population Survey (available on the NOMIS website) for the past 5-years (for which data exists) suggests across Huntingdonshire that typically about 3.4% of workers have a second job. It has therefore been assumed that around 3.4% of people will have more than one job moving forward.

6.86   This means the number of jobs supported by the workforce will be around 3.4% higher than workforce growth. It has been assumed in the analysis that the level of double jobbing will remain constant over time.

Unemployment

6.87   The last analysis when looking at the link between jobs and resident labour supply, is a consideration of unemployment. Essentially, this is

considering if there is any latent labour force that could move back into employment to take up new jobs. The latest model-based unemployment data from the Annual Population Survey (for October 2023- September 2024) puts unemployment at around 3.4%, which is a level that might be considered as full employment (noting there will always be some level of unemployment as people enter the labour market or move between jobs). No further adjustment is made to the data to take account of unemployment.

Jobs Supported by Growth in the Resident Labour Force

6.88   The tables below show how many additional jobs might be supported by population growth under the different projection scenarios. It is estimated under the Standard Method that up to 31,400 additional jobs could be supported by the changes to the resident labour supply over the 2024-46 period.

Table 6.15 Jobs supported by demographic projections (2024-46) – Huntingdonshire – 5-year trends

		Total change in economically active	Allowance for double jobbing	Allowance for net commuting (= jobs supported)
OBR EAR	2021 commuting	25,549	26,449	25,460
	2011 commuting	25,549	26,449	23,027
	1:1 commuting	25,549	26,449	26,449
EAR no change	2021 commuting	21,056	21,797	20,982
	2011 commuting	21,056	21,797	18,977
	1:1 commuting	21,056	21,797	21,797

Source: Iceni analysis

Table 6.16 Jobs supported by demographic projections (2024-46) – Huntingdonshire – Standard Method

		Total change in economically active	Allowance for double jobbing	Allowance for net commuting (= jobs supported)
OBR EAR	2021 commuting	30,316	31,383	30,210
	2011 commuting	30,316	31,383	27,323
	1:1 commuting	30,316	31,383	31,383
EAR no change	2021 commuting	25,688	26,593	25,598
	2011 commuting	25,688	26,593	23,152
	1:1 commuting	25,688	26,593	26,593

Source: Iceni analysis

Housing Need and Demographics Summary

6.89   Applying the government's Standard Method for assessing housing need to Huntingdonshire results in an annual housing need of 1,214 dwellings per annum.

6.90   At a late stage in the production of the report, this figure was increased to 1,232 dwellings per annum. This change is not considered significant enough to alter the main findings of this report.

6.91   The report has developed a projection linked to the delivery and occupation of 1,214 dwellings per annum, which shows a population increase of around 54,700 people by 2046.

6.92   This equates to a 29.1% increase, which is higher than a trend-based projection based on the last five years (24.5%).

6.93   Further analysis indicates that with the Standard Method, the increase in the economically active population is projected to be up to 30,300, which, taking account of double jobbing, could support up to 31,400 additional jobs.

7. Affordable Housing Need

Introduction

7.1   This section provides an assessment of the need for affordable housing in Huntingdonshire. The analysis follows the methodology set out in Planning Practice Guidance (Sections 2a-018 to 2a-024) and looks at the need from households unable to buy OR rent housing; and also, from households able to afford to rent privately but not buy.

7.2   During an engagement session with the council, a range of housing affordability issues were discussed:

- Affordable Rents (AR), while legally capped at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, are now often out of reach for many households, with growing reports of rent stress.

- Social rent has become a greater priority, but its delivery has slowed since a recent peak year when 100% affordable schemes were made possible through Registered Provider grant funding.

- The persistent need is for more rented homes. Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) is viewed as a supplementary option that helps create mixed-tenure developments, rather than as a substitute for rented housing. Nonetheless there has been demand and LCHO in the form of shared ownership has enabled the Council to achieve the overall quantum of 40% affordable housing.

7.3   On strategic growth sites like Wintringham Park in St Neots, and Alconbury Weald, high infrastructure costs have limited affordable proportions. The Private Rented Sector (PRS) is no longer a viable affordable option due to soaring rents and limited supply, driven by demand from commuters and not eased by declining MOD/USAAF use. Many local workers now rely on benefits to bridge income gaps.

7.4   To further supplement affordable housing delivery, the council is working with institutional investors and pension funds to deliver

affordable rented housing at LHA rates, with full nomination rights and legal protections.

Affordable Housing Sector Dynamics

7.5   The 2021 Census indicated that 13% of households in Huntingdonshire lived in social or affordable rented homes, with the sector accommodating around 9,900 households.

7.6   Data from the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) for 2024 indicates that Registered Providers (RPs) owned 12,500 properties in the District (there is no Council owned stock), of which 77% were for general needs rent; 12% supported housing or housing for older people; and 11% low cost home-ownership homes (such as shared ownership properties).

7.7   The majority of general needs homes are rented out at social rents (84% of all homes) and the rest at affordable rents.

Table 7.1 Stock owned or Managed by Registered Providers – Huntingdonshire

	Total	% of stock
General needs rented	9,626	77.0%
Supported/older persons housing	1,494	12.0%
Low-cost home ownership	1,382	11.1%
Total	12,502	100.0%

Source: RSR Geographical Look-Up Tool 2024

7.8   As of April 2024, there were 2,651 households on the Council's Housing Register. In addition, MHCLG data for December 2024 shows there were 113 households accommodated in temporary accommodation (some 29% (33 households) of these being households with children).

Overview of Method

7.9   In summary, the methodology looks at a series of stages as set out below:

- Current affordable housing need (annualised so as to meet the current need over a period of time);

- Projected newly forming households in need;

- Existing households falling into need; and

- Supply of affordable housing from existing stock

7.10   The first three bullet points above are added together to identify a gross need, from which the supply is subtracted to identify a net annual need for additional affordable housing.

7.11   Examples of different affordable housing products are outlined in the box below.

Affordable Housing Definitions

Social Rented Homes – are homes owned by local authorities or private registered providers for which rents are determined by the national rent regime (through which a formula rent is determined by the relative value and size of a property and relative local income levels). They are low-cost rented homes.

Affordable Rented Homes – are let by local authorities or private registered providers to households who are eligible for social housing. Affordable rents are set at no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges).

Rent-to-Buy – where homes are offered, typically by housing associations, to working households at an intermediate rent which does not exceed 80% of the local market rent (including service charges) for a fixed period after which the household has the chance to buy the home.

Shared Ownership – a form of low-cost market housing where residents own a share of their home, on which they typically pay a mortgage; with a registered provider owning the remainder, on which they pay a subsidised rent.

Discounted Market Sale – a home which is sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value to eligible households, with provisions in place to ensure that housing remains at a discount for future households (or the subsidy is recycled).

First Homes – a form of discounted market sale whereby an eligible First-time Buyer can buy a home at a discount of at least 30% of the market value. Councils can set the discounts and local eligibility criteria out in policies.

Affordability

7.12   An important first part of the affordable needs modelling is to establish the entry-level costs of housing to buy and rent.

7.13   The affordable housing needs assessment compares prices and rents with the incomes of households to establish what proportion of households can meet their needs in the market, and what proportion require support and are thus defined as having an 'affordable housing need'.

7.14   For the purposes of establishing affordable housing need, the analysis focuses on overall housing costs (for all dwelling types and sizes).

7.15   The table below shows estimated current prices to both buy and privately rent a lower quartile home in the District (excluding newbuild sales when looking at house prices). Across all dwelling sizes, the analysis points to a lower quartile price of £240,000 and a private rent of £975 per month.

Table 7.2 Estimated lower quartile cost of housing to buy (existing dwellings) and privately rent (by size) – Huntingdonshire

	To buy	Privately rent
1-bedroom	£120,000	£795
2-bedrooms	£180,000	£950
3-bedrooms	£260,000	£1,200
4-bedrooms	£375,000	£1,500
All dwellings	£240,000	£975

Source: Land Registry and Internet Price Search

7.16   The table below shows how prices and rents vary by location. The analysis shows some variation in prices and rents, with prices (and rents) estimated to be highest in the North & West sub-area; the lower prices and rents are seen in both the East and Central & South areas.

Table 7.3 Lower Quartile Prices and Market Rents, by sub-area

	Lower quartile price (existing dwellings)	Lower Quartile rent, pcm
East	£230,000	£975
Central & South	£240,000	£975
North & West	£280,000	£1,125
TOTAL	£240,000	£975

Source: Land Registry and Internet Price Search

7.17   Next, it is important to understand local income levels as these (along with the price/rent data) will determine levels of affordability (i.e. the ability of a household to afford to buy or rent housing in the market without the need for some sort of subsidy).

7.18   Data about total household income has been based on ONS modelled income estimates, with additional data from the English Housing Survey (EHS) being used to provide information about the distribution of incomes. Data has also been drawn from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) to consider changes since the ONS data was published.

7.19   Overall, the average (mean) household income across Huntingdonshire is estimated to be around £61,200, with a median income of £51,300; the lower quartile income of all households is estimated to be £29,600. There are some differences between areas, with the range of median incomes going from £49,400 in the East, up to £54,700 in the North & West sub-area.

Table 7.4 Estimated average (median) household income

	Median income	As a % of the District average
East	£49,400	96%
Central & South	£51,700	101%
North & West	£54,700	107%
TOTAL	£51,300	-

Source: Iceni analysis

7.20   To assess affordability, two different measures are used; firstly, to consider what income levels are likely to be needed to access private rented housing, and secondly to consider what income level is needed to access owner occupation.

7.21   This analysis therefore brings together the data on household incomes with the estimated incomes required to access private sector housing. For the purposes of analysis, the following assumptions are used:

- Rental affordability – a household should spend no more than 35% of their income on rent; and
- Mortgage affordability – assume a household has a 10% deposit and can secure a mortgage for four and a half times (4.5×) their income.

Need for Affordable Housing

7.22   The sections below work through the various stages of analysis to estimate the need for affordable housing in the District and sub-areas. Final figures are provided as an annual need (including an allowance to deal with current need). As per 2a-024 of the PPG, this figure can then be compared with the likely delivery of affordable housing.

Current Need

7.23   In line with PPG paragraph 2a-020, the current need for affordable housing has been based on considering the likely number of households with one or more housing problems (housing suitability).

7.24   The table below sets out estimates of the number of households within each category. This shows an estimated 3,700 households as living in 'unsuitable housing', with 70% of these being in the Central & South area. Around 430 of these (across the District) currently having no accommodation (homeless or concealed households).

Table 7.5 Estimated number of households living in unsuitable housing (or without housing)

	Concealed and homeless households	Households in overcrowded housing	Existing affordable housing tenants in need	Households from other tenures in need	TOTAL
East	144	272	48	386	850
Central & South	248	1,097	154	1,103	2,602
North & West	37	67	13	141	257
TOTAL	429	1,436	215	1,629	3,709

Source: Iceni analysis

7.25   These figures can also be standardised based on the size of each location (in this case linked to the number of households shown in the 2021 Census).

7.26   This shows a slightly higher proportion of households living in unsuitable housing (or without housing) in the Central & South area; with the lowest figure being seen in the North & West area.

Table 7.6 Standardised level of unsuitable housing

	Number living in unsuitable housing	Estimated households (2021)	% of households in unsuitable housing
East	850	19,823	4.3%
Central & South	2,602	49,868	5.2%
North & West	257	7,183	3.6%
TOTAL	3,709	76,874	4.8%

Source: Iceni analysis

7.27   In taking this estimate forward, the data modelling next estimates the need by tenure and considers affordability. Based on affordability analysis, it is estimated that around half of those households identified above are unlikely to be able to afford market housing; therefore, an estimated current need from around 1,870 households.

7.28   From this estimate, households living in affordable housing are excluded (as these households would release a dwelling on moving and so no net need for affordable housing will arise) and the total current need is estimated to be 1,218 households.

7.29   For the purposes of analysis, it is assumed that the Council would seek to meet this need over a period of time. Given that this report typically looks at needs in the period from 2024 to 2046, the need is annualised by dividing by 22 (to give an annual need for around 55 dwellings).

7.30   This does not mean that some households would be expected to wait 22-years for housing, as the need will be dynamic, with households leaving the current need as they are housed, but with other households developing a need over time.

7.31   The table below shows this data for sub-areas – this is split between those unable to rent OR buy and those able to rent but NOT buy. Given the pricing of housing in Huntingdonshire, this analysis shows a more modest need for those able to rent but not buy and in all cases the number unable to rent OR buy is notably higher.

Table 7.7 Estimated current affordable housing need by affordability

	Number in need (excluding those in AH)	Annualised		
		TOTAL	Unable to rent OR buy	Able to rent but NOT buy
East	300	14	11	2
Central & South	825	37	28	9
North & West	94	4	3	1
TOTAL	1,218	55	43	12

Source: Iceni analysis

Projected Housing Need

7.32   Projected need is split between newly forming households who are unable to afford market housing and existing households falling into

need. For newly forming households, a link is made to demographic modelling, with an affordability test also being applied.

Newly-Forming Households

7.33　The number of newly forming households has been estimated through demographic modelling with an affordability test also being applied. This has been undertaken by considering the changes in households in specific 5-year age bands relative to numbers in the age band below, 5 years previously, to provide an estimate of gross household formation.

7.34　The number of newly-forming households is limited to households forming who are aged under 45 – this is consistent with CLG guidance (from 2007) which notes after age 45 that headship (household formation) rates 'plateau'. There may be a small number of household formations beyond age 45 (e.g. due to relationship breakdown) although the number is expected to be fairly small when compared with formation of younger households.

7.35　In assessing the ability of newly forming households to afford market housing, data has been drawn from the English Housing Survey – this establishes that the average income of newly forming households is typically around 87% of the figure for all households.

7.36　The analysis has therefore adjusted the overall household income data to reflect the slightly lower average income for newly forming households. The adjustments have been made by changing the distribution of income by bands such that the average income level is 87% of the all household average. In doing this, it is possible to calculate the proportion of households unable to afford market housing.

7.37　Overall, it is estimated that 1,648 new households would form each year, and just over half will be unable to afford market housing; this equates to a total of 889 newly forming households that will have a

need per annum on average – the majority are households unable to rent OR buy.

Table 7.8 Estimated Need for Affordable Housing from Newly Forming Households (per annum)

	Number of new households	% unable to afford market housing	Annual newly forming households unable to afford market housing	Unable to rent OR buy (per annum)	Able to rent but NOT buy (per annum)
East	389	53.7%	209	146	63
Central & South	1,135	53.5%	608	403	205
North & West	123	58.7%	72	48	24
TOTAL	1,648	54.0%	889	597	293

Source: Projection Modelling/Affordability Analysis

Existing Households Falling into Affordable Housing Need

7.38   The second element of the newly arising need is existing households falling into need. To assess this, information about households entering the social/affordable rented sector housing has been used to represent the flow of households onto the Housing Register over this period.

7.39   Following the analysis through suggests a need arising from 140 existing households each year – again most are households unable to buy OR rent.

Table 7.9 Estimated Need for affordable housing from Existing Households Falling into Need (per annum)

	Total Additional Need	Unable to rent OR buy	Able to rent but NOT buy
East	30	24	6
Central & South	99	77	22
North & West	11	9	2
TOTAL	140	110	30

Source: Iceni analysis

Supply of Affordable Housing Through Relets/Resales

7.40   The future supply of affordable housing through relets is the flow of affordable housing arising from the existing stock that is available to meet future need. This focusses on the annual supply of social/affordable rent relets. Information from CoRe (which is a government recording system for affordable lets) has been used to establish past patterns of social housing turnover. Data for three-years has been used (2021-22 to 2023-24).

7.41   The figures are for general needs lettings but exclude lettings of new properties and also exclude an estimate of the number of transfers from other social rented homes.

7.42   These exclusions are made to ensure that the figures presented reflect relets from the existing stock. Based on past trend data it has been estimated that 270 units of social/affordable rented housing are likely to become available each year moving forward.

Table 7.10 Analysis of Past Social/Affordable Rented Housing
Supply, 2021/22 – 2023/24 (average per annum) – Huntingdonshire

	Total Lettings	% as Non-New Build	Lettings in Existing Stock	% Non-Transfers	Lettings to New Tenants
2021/22	412	73.8%	304	67.0%	204
2022/23	679	64.1%	435	62.4%	272
2023/24	989	51.8%	512	65.5%	335
Average	693	60.1%	417	64.8%	270

Source: CoRe

7.43   It is also possible to consider if there is any supply of affordable home ownership products from the existing stock of housing. One source is likely to be resales of low-cost home ownership products with data from the Regulator of Social Housing showing a total stock in 2024 of 1,382.

7.44   If these homes were to turnover at a rate of around 5%, then they would be expected to generate around 69 resales each year. These properties would be available for these households and can be included as the potential supply. The table below shows the estimated supply of affordable housing from relets/resales in each sub-area.

Table 7.11 Estimated supply of affordable housing from
relets/resales of existing stock by sub-area (per annum)

	Social/affordable rented	LCHO	TOTAL
East	60	14	74
Central & South	194	53	247
North & West	17	2	18
TOTAL	270	69	339

Source: CoRe/LAHS

7.45   The PPG model also includes the bringing back of vacant homes into use and the pipeline of affordable housing as part of the supply calculation. These have, however, not been included within the modelling in this report.

7.46   Firstly, there is no evidence of any substantial stock of vacant homes (over and above a level that might be expected to allow movement in the stock).

7.47   Secondly, with the pipeline supply, it is not considered appropriate to include this as to net off new housing would be to fail to show the full extent of the need, although in monitoring, it will be important to net off these dwellings as they are completed.

Net Need for Affordable Housing

7.48   The table below shows the overall calculation of affordable housing need. The analysis shows that there is a need for 746 dwellings per annum across the District – an affordable need is seen in all sub-areas. The net need is calculated as follows:

Net Need = Current Need (allowance for) + Need from Newly-Forming Households + Existing Households falling into Need – Supply of Affordable Housing

Table 7.12 Estimated Need for Affordable Housing (per annum)

	Current need	Newly forming house-holds	Existing house-holds falling into need	Total Gross Need	Relet/ resale supply	Net Need
East	14	209	30	252	74	178
Central & South	37	608	99	745	247	498
North & West	4	72	11	88	18	70
TOTAL	55	889	140	1,085	339	746

*Source: Iceni analysis *numbers may not sum due to rounding*

7.49   This can additionally be split between households unable to afford to BUY or rent and those able to rent but not buy. For this analysis it is assumed the LCHO supply would be meeting the needs of the latter group, although in reality there will be a crossover between categories.

7.50   For example, it is likely in some cases that the cost of shared ownership
will have an outgoing below that for privately renting and could meet
some of the need from households unable to buy or rent – the issue of
access to deposits would still be a consideration.

7.51   The table below shows the affordable need figure split between the two
categories. Across the whole District the analysis shows around 64% of
households as being unable to buy OR rent, with this figure varying
slightly from 63% in Central & South and North & West, up to 68% in
the East sub-area – the differences are largely driven by the pricing of
housing in different locations.

Table 7.13 Estimated Need for Affordable Housing (per annum) –
split between different affordability groups

	Unable to buy OR rent	Able to rent but not buy	TOTAL	% unable to buy OR rent
East	121	57	178	68%
Central & South	315	183	498	63%
North & West	44	26	70	63%
TOTAL	480	265	746	64%

Source: Iceni analysis

7.52   These figures can also be standardised based on the size of each
location (in this case linked to the number of households shown in the
2021 Census). This shows a slightly higher need in the Central & South
area; overall, the differences between locations are not substantial.

Table 7.14 Standardised level of affordable housing need

	Net Need	Estimated households (2021)	Net need per 1,000 house-holds
East	178	19,823	9.0
Central & South	498	49,868	10.0
North & West	70	7,183	9.7
TOTAL	746	76,874	9.7

Source: Iceni analysis

7.53   Whilst the need above is provided down to sub-area level, it should be remembered that affordable need can be met across the area as and when opportunities arise, and so specific sub-area data should not be treated as a local target.

Affordable Need and Overall Housing Numbers

7.54   The PPG encourages local authorities to consider increasing planned housing numbers where this can help to meet the identified affordable need. Specifically, the wording of the PPG (housing and economic needs) Ref ID 2a-024 states:

"The total affordable housing need can then be considered in the context of its likely delivery as a proportion of mixed market and affordable housing developments, given the probable percentage of affordable housing to be delivered by market housing led developments. An increase in the total housing figures included in the strategic plan may need to be considered where it could help deliver the required number of affordable homes"

7.55   However, the relationship between affordable housing need and overall housing need is complex. This was recognised in the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Technical Advice Note of July 2015[12]. PAS conclude that there is no arithmetical way of combining the OAN (calculated through demographic projections) and the affordable need. There are several reasons why the two cannot be 'arithmetically' linked.

7.56   Firstly, the modelling contains a category in the projection of 'existing households falling into need'; these households already have accommodation and hence if they were to move to alternative

---

[12] https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/objectively-assessed-need-9fb.pdf. While the technical note produced by PAS is arguably becoming dated, there is no more up-to-date guidance on this matter from a Government source and the remarks remain valid.

accommodation, they would release a dwelling for use by another household – there is, therefore, no net additional need arising.

7.57   The modelling also contains 'newly forming households'; these households are a direct output from demographic modelling and are therefore already included in overall housing need figures (a point also made in the PAS advice note – see paragraph 9.5).

7.58   The analysis estimates an annual need for 480 affordable homes from households unable to buy OR rent housing (see table 7.11). However, as noted, caution should be exercised in trying to make a direct link between affordable need and planned delivery, with the key point being that many of those households picked up as having a need will already be living in housing and so providing an affordable option does not lead to an overall net increase in the need for housing (as they would vacate a home to be used by someone else).

7.59   It is possible to investigate this in some more detail by re-running the model and excluding those already living in accommodation. This is shown in the table below, which identifies that meeting these needs would lead to an affordable need for 346 homes per annum across the District – 72% of the figure when including those with housing.

7.60   This figure is, however, theoretical and should not be seen to be minimising the need (which is clearly acute). That said, it does serve to show that there is a difference in the figures when looking at overall housing shortages.

7.61   The analysis is arguably even more complex than this – it can be observed that the main group of households in need are newly forming households. These households are already included within demographic projections, and so demonstrating of a need for this group again should not be seen as additional to overall figures from demographic projections.

Table 7.15 Estimated Annual Need for Affordable Housing (households unable to buy OR rent), excluding households already in accommodation

	Including existing households	Excluding existing households
Current need	43	20
Newly forming households	597	597
Existing households falling into need	110	0
Total Gross Need	750	616
Re-let Supply	270	270
Net Need	480	346

Source: Iceni analysis

7.62   Additionally, it should be noted that the need estimate is on a per annum basis and should not be multiplied by the plan period to get a total need. Essentially, the estimates are for the number of households expected to have a need in any given year (i.e., needing to spend more than 35% of their income on housing).

7.63   In reality, some (possibly many) households would see their circumstances change over time such that they would 'fall out of need' and this is not accounted for in the analysis.

7.64   One example would be a newly forming household with an income level that means they spend more than 35% of their income on housing. As the household's income rises, they would potentially pass the affordability test and therefore not have an affordable need.

7.65   Additionally, there is the likelihood when looking over the longer-term that, a newly forming household will become an existing household in need and would be counted twice if trying to multiply the figures out for a whole plan period.

7.66   It also needs to be remembered that the affordability test used for analysis is based on assuming a household spends no more than 35% of their income on housing (when privately renting).

7.67   In reality, many households will spend more than this and so would be picked up by modelling as in need, but in fact are paying for a private sector tenancy.

7.68   The English Housing Survey (2022-23) estimates private tenants are paying an average of 32% of their income on housing (including benefit support), and this would imply that approaching half are spending more than the affordable level assumed in this report.

7.69   A further consideration is that some 265 of the 746 per annum affordable need is a need from households able to rent in the market (but not buy). Technically, these households can afford market housing (to rent) and historically would not have been considered as having a need in assessments such as this – until recently, only households unable to buy OR rent would be considered as having a need for affordable housing. For these reasons, these households have not been included in the analysis, looking at households with and without accommodation.

7.70   Finally, it should be recognised that Planning Practice Guidance does not envisage that all needs will be met (whether this is affordable housing or other forms of accommodation such as for older people). Paragraph 67-001 of the housing needs of different groups PPG states:

"This guidance sets out advice on how plan-making authorities should identify and plan for the housing needs of particular groups of people. This need may well exceed, or be proportionally high in relation to, the overall housing need figure calculated using the standard method. This is because the needs of particular groups will often be calculated having consideration to the whole population of an area as a baseline as opposed to the projected new households, which form the baseline for the standard method".

7.71   Notwithstanding these factors the need for affordable housing is sufficient for the Council to maximise affordable housing delivery through the Council's Local Plan policies.

7.72   The current approach of seeking 40% affordable housing on development schemes with 70% being either Affordable Rent or Social Rent and 30% being shared ownership, with the latter aiding viability, would likely be justified based on the needs analysis. However, the Council will need to take into account the latest viability study.

The Role of the Private Rented Sector (PRS)

7.73   The discussion above has already noted that the need for affordable housing does not generally lead to a need to increase overall housing provision.

7.74   However, it is worth briefly thinking about how affordable need works in practice and the housing available to those unable to access market housing without Housing Benefit.

7.75   In particular, the role played by the Private Rented Sector (PRS) in providing housing for households who require financial support in meeting their housing needs should be recognised.

7.76   Whilst the Private Rented Sector (PRS) does not fall within the types of affordable housing set out in the NPPF (other than affordable private rent which is a specific tenure separate from the main 'full market' PRS), it has evidently been playing a role in meeting the needs of households who require financial support in meeting their housing need.

7.77   Government recognises this and indeed legislated through the 2011 Localism Act to allow Councils to discharge their "homelessness duty" through providing an offer of a suitable property in the PRS.

7.78   Data from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has been used
       to look at the number of Housing Benefit supported private rented
       homes. As of November 2024, it is estimated that there were around
       2,900 benefit claimants in the Private Rented Sector in
       Huntingdonshire. From this, it is clear that the PRS contributes to the
       wider delivery of 'affordable homes' with the support of benefit claims.

7.79   Whilst the PRS is providing housing for some households, there are,
       however, significant risks associated with future reliance on the sector
       to meet an affordable housing need. The last couple of years have seen
       rents increase whilst Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels have
       remained static.

7.80   In the Autumn Statement 2023, the then Government increased the
       LHA rent to the 30th percentile of market rents (although this is based
       on existing rents and not rents likely to be payable by those moving
       home).

7.81   However, demand pressure could nonetheless have some impact on
       restricting future supply of PRS properties to those in need,
       emphasising the need to support delivery of genuinely affordable
       homes.

7.82   The figure below shows the trend in the number of claimants in the
       District. This shows there has been a notable increase since March
       2020, which is likely to be related to the Covid-19 pandemic. However,
       even the more historical data shows a substantial number of
       households claiming benefit support for their housing in the private
       sector (typically around 1,800 households).

7.83   The data about the number of claimants does not indicate how many
       new lettings are made each year in the PRS. However, data from the
       English Housing Survey (EHS) over the past three years indicates that
       nationally around 7% of private sector tenants are new to the sector
       each year. If this figure is applied to the number of households claiming

Housing Benefit/Universal Credit, then this would imply around 200 new benefit supported lettings in the sector.

7.84   Whilst we would not recommend including PRS supply as part of the modelling, not least as it is uncertain whether the availability of homes will remain at this level as well as concerns about the security of tenure, it is the case that the sector does provide housing and again the overall analysis does not point to the need to increase overall provision.

Figure 7.1 Number of Housing Benefit/Universal Credit claimants in the PRS in Huntingdonshire
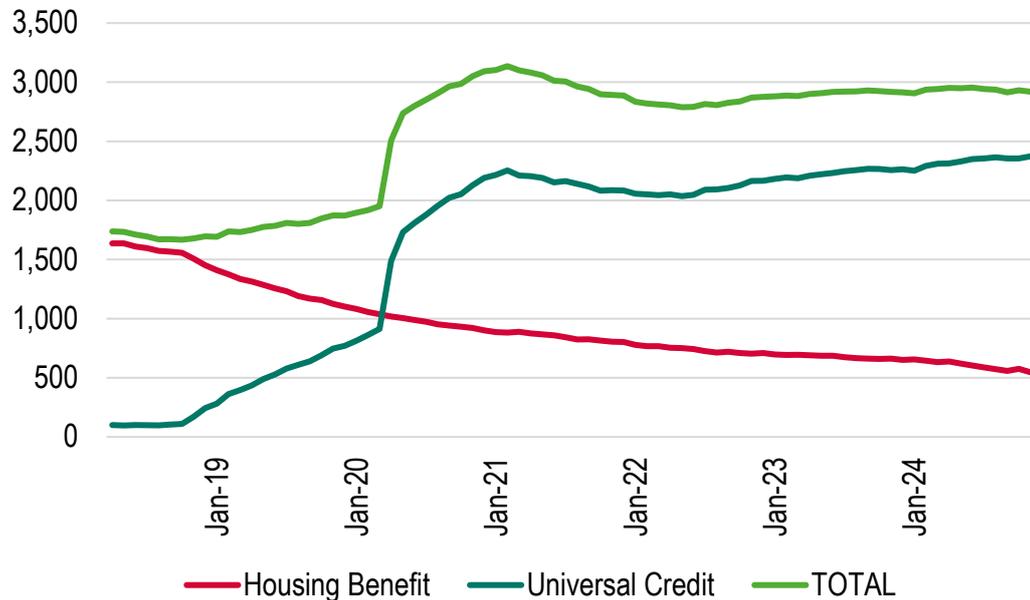
Source: Department of Work and Pensions

7.85   Whilst housing delivery through the Local Plan can be expected to secure additional affordable housing it needs to be noted that delivery of affordable housing through planning obligations is an important, but not the only means, of delivering affordable housing. The Council should also work with housing providers to secure funding to support enhanced affordable housing delivery on some sites and through use of its own land assets.

7.86   Overall, it is difficult to link the need for affordable housing to the overall housing need; indeed, there is no justification for trying to make the link. Put simply the two do not measure the same thing and in interpreting

the affordable need figure, consideration needs to be given to the fact that many households already live in housing, and do not therefore generate an overall net need for an additional home.

7.87   Further issues arise as the need for affordable housing is complex, and additionally, the extent of concealed and homeless households needs to be understood, as well as the role played by the private rented sector.

7.88   Regardless of the discussion above, the analysis identifies a notable need for affordable housing, and it is clear that the provision of new affordable housing is an important and pressing issue across the District.

7.89   It does, however, need to be stressed that this report does not provide an affordable housing target; the amount of affordable housing delivered will be limited to the amount that can viably be provided.

7.90   As noted previously, the evidence does, however, suggest that affordable housing delivery should be maximised where opportunities arise. Rolling forward the current policy position would seem a reasonable starting point for developing new policies as these are known to be viable. Equally, if viability has improved, then the affordable housing contributions should increase and vice versa.

Types of Affordable Housing

7.91   The analysis above has clearly pointed to a need for affordable housing, and particularly for households who are unable to buy OR rent in the market. There are a range of affordable housing options that could meet the need, which will include rented forms of affordable housing (such as social or affordable rents) and products which might be described as intermediate housing (such as shared ownership or discounted market housing/First Homes). These are discussed in turn below.

Social and Affordable Rented Housing

7.92   The table below shows current rent levels in the District for a range of products along with relevant local housing allowance (LHA) rates. Most of Huntingdonshire falls into the Huntingdon Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA) and so this has been used for comparative purposes.

7.93   Data about average social and affordable rents has been taken from the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and this is compared with lower quartile market rents. This analysis shows that social rents are significantly lower than affordable rents; the analysis also shows that affordable rents are well below lower quartile market rents, particularly for larger property sizes.

7.94   The LHA rates for all sizes of home are below lower quartile market rents for all sizes of accommodation. This does potentially mean that households seeking accommodation in many locations may struggle to secure sufficient benefits to cover their rent.

Table 7.16 Comparison of rent levels for different products – Huntingdonshire

	Social rent	Affordable rent (AR)	Lower quartile (LQ) market rent	LHA (Huntingdon)
1-bedroom	£401	£550	£795	£648
2-bedrooms	£464	£666	£950	£793
3-bedrooms	£509	£787	£1,200	£947
4-bedrooms	£583	£983	£1,500	£1,247
ALL	£474	£682	£975	-

Source: RSH and VOA

7.95   To some extent, it is easier to consider the data above in terms of the percentage one housing cost is of another and this is shown in the tables below.

7.96   Focusing on 2-bedroom homes the analysis shows that social rents are significantly cheaper than market rents (and indeed affordable rents)

and that affordable rents (as currently charged) represent 70% of a current lower quartile rent.

Table 7.17 Difference between rent levels for different products – Huntingdonshire

	Social rent as % of affordable rent	Social rent as % of LQ market rent	Affordable rent as % of LQ market rent
1-bedroom	73%	50%	69%
2-bedrooms	70%	49%	70%
3-bedrooms	65%	42%	66%
4-bedrooms	59%	39%	66%
ALL	70%	49%	70%

Source: RSH and VOA

7.97   The table below suggests that around 20% of households that cannot afford to rent privately could afford an affordable rent at 80% of market rents, with a further 11% being able to afford current affordable rents. There are also an estimated 25% who can afford a social rent (but not an affordable one).

7.98   A total of 44% of households would need some degree of benefit support (or spend more than 35% of their income on housing) to be able to afford their housing (regardless of the tenure). This analysis points to a clear need for social rented housing.

Table 7.18 Estimated need for affordable rented housing (% of households able to afford to buy OR rent)

	% of households able to afford
Afford 80% of market rent	20%
Afford the current affordable rent	11%
Afford social rent	25%
Need benefit support	44%
All unable to afford market	100%

Source: Affordability analysis

7.99   The analysis indicates that provision of around 70% of rented affordable housing at social rents could be justified; albeit in setting planning policies, this will need to be considered alongside viability evidence.

Higher provision at social rents will reduce the support through housing benefits required to ensure households can afford their housing costs.

Intermediate Housing

7.100   As well as rented forms of affordable housing, the Council could seek to provide forms of intermediate housing with the analysis below considering the potential affordability of shared ownership and discounted market sale housing (which could include First Homes).

7.101   Generally, intermediate housing will be a newbuild product, sold at a discount (or on a part buy, part rent arrangement with shared ownership) and will therefore be based on the Open Market Value (OMV) of a new home.

7.102   The table below sets out a suggested purchase price for affordable home ownership/First Homes in Huntingdonshire by size. It works through first (on the left-hand side) what households with an affordable home ownership need could afford (based on a 10% deposit and a mortgage at 4.5 times' income).

7.103   The right-hand side of the table then sets out what Open Market Value (OMV) this might support, based on a 30% discount. The lower end of the range is based on households who could afford to rent privately without financial support at LQ rents, with the upper end based on the midpoint between this and the lower quartile house price.

7.104   Focusing on 2-bedroom homes, it is suggested that an affordable price is between £162,900 and £171,400, and therefore the open market value of homes would need to be in the range of £232,700 and £244,900 (if discounted by 30%).

Table 7.19 Affordable home ownership prices – Huntingdonshire

	What households with an affordable home ownership need could afford	Open Market Value (OMV) of Home with 30% Discount
1-bedroom	£120,000	£171,400
2-bedrooms	£162,900-£171,400	£232,700-£244,900
3-bedrooms	£205,700-£232,900	£293,900-£332,700
4+-bedrooms	£257,100-£316,100	£367,300-£451,500

Source: Iceni analysis

7.105   It is difficult to definitively analyse the cost of newbuild homes as these will vary from site to site and will be dependent on a range of factors such as location, built form and plot size.

7.106   We have, however, looked at newbuild schemes currently advertised on Rightmove at the point of undertaking this assessment in May 2025, with the table below providing a general summary of existing schemes.

7.107   This analysis is interesting as it shows the median newbuild price for all sizes of homes is above the top end of the OMV required to make homes affordable to those in the gap between buying and renting. That said, homes at the bottom end of the price range could potentially be discounted by 30% and considered as affordable.

7.108   This analysis shows how important it will be to know the OMV of housing before discount, to be able to determine if a product is going to be genuinely affordable in a local context – providing a discount of 30% will not automatically mean it becomes affordable housing.

7.109   Overall, it is considered the evidence does not support a need for First Homes (or other discounted market products) in a local context.

Table 7.20 Estimated newbuild housing cost by size –
            Huntingdonshire – May 2025

	No. of homes advertised	Range of prices	Median price
1-bedroom	0	-	-
2-bedrooms	27	£240,000-£575,000	£265,000
3-bedrooms	80	£260,000-£850,000	£360,000
4+-bedrooms	136	£375,000-£1,250,000	£500,000

Source: Iceni analysis

7.110   The analysis below moves on to consider shared ownership, for this analysis an assessment of monthly outgoings has been undertaken with a core assumption being that the outgoings should be the same as for renting privately so as to make this tenure genuinely affordable.

7.111   The analysis has looked at what the OMV would need to be for a shared ownership to be affordable with a 10%, 25% and 50% share. To work out outgoings, the mortgage part is based on a 10% deposit (for the equity share) and a repayment mortgage over 25 years at 5% with a rent at 2.75% per annum on unsold equity.

7.112   The findings for this analysis are interesting and do point to the possibility of shared ownership being a more affordable tenure than discounted market housing (including First Homes).

7.113   By way of an explanation of this table (focussing on 2-bedroom homes) – if a 50% equity share scheme came forward then it is estimated the OMV could not be above £252,000 if it is to be genuinely affordable (due to the outgoings being in excess of the cost of privately renting).

7.114   However, given the subsidised rents, the same level of outgoings could be expected with a 10% equity share but a much higher OMV of £367,000.

7.115   Although affordability can only be considered on a scheme by scheme basis, it is notable that we estimate a median 2-bedroom newbuild to cost around £265,000, this points to shared ownership an equity share

level slightly below 50% as being genuinely affordable, although lower shares could increase the number of households able to afford; lower equity shares are likely to be needed for larger (3+-bedroom) homes.

Table 7.21 Estimated OMV of Shared Ownership with a 50%, 25% and 10% Equity Share by Size – Huntingdonshire

	50% share	25% share	10% share
1-bedroom	£210,000	£262,000	£307,000
2-bedroom	£252,000	£313,000	£367,000
3-bedroom	£318,000	£395,000	£463,000
4-bedrooms	£397,000	£494,000	£579,000

Source: Iceni analysis

7.116   A further affordable option is Rent to Buy; this is a Government scheme designed to ease the transition from renting to buying the same home. Initially (typically for five years), the newly built home will be provided at the equivalent of an affordable rent (approximately 20% below the market rate).

7.117   The expectation is that the discount provided in the first five years is saved in order to put towards a deposit on the purchase of the same property. Rent to Buy can be advantageous for some households as it allows for a smaller 'step' to be taken on to the home ownership ladder.

7.118   At the end of the five-year period, depending on the scheme, the property is either sold as a shared ownership product or to be purchased outright as a full market property. If the occupant is not able to do either of these, then the property is vacated.

7.119   To access this tenure, it effectively requires the same income threshold for the initial phase as a market rental property, although the cost of accommodation will be that of affordable rent. The lower-than-market rent will allow the household to save for a deposit for the eventual shared ownership or market property.

7.120   In considering the affordability of rent-to-buy schemes, there is a direct read across to the income required to access affordable home

ownership (including shared ownership). It should therefore be treated as part of the affordable home ownership products suggested by the NPPF.

7.121   The Council has previously supported Registered Provider developments with a proportion of Rent to Buy homes on mixed tenure developments.

Engagement With Housing Team

Housing Register

7.122   Over the past year, the housing register has steadily grown to around 3,000 households/applications.

7.123   This is despite an existing process that removes inactive applicants, particularly those in lower priority bands.

7.124   This group is not broken down geographically by area of choice, limiting spatial analysis. However, the Key Housing Register Statistics (as of May 2025)

- **Total applications:** 3,015 (includes suspended, under offer, and nominated)
- **Household types:** 47% single-person households
- **Bedroom needs:** 54% require 1 bed, 25% need 2 beds, 15% require 3 beds, 4% need 4 beds, and 1% require 5+ beds
- **Age profile:** 33% aged 50+, rising to 51% for 40+
- **Mobility needs:** 23% of households have a member with a mobility issue, 5% require M4(3) compliant housing
- **Priority banding:** 13% Band A, 25% Band B, 31% Band C

7.125   Anecdotally, rural areas, particularly certain villages, experience lower levels of bidding, primarily due to limited services and transport links.

7.126   The overall housing register shows a pressing demand for 1- and 2-bedroom properties for single individuals and couples, reflecting the

broader pressures around homelessness and use of temporary accommodation (TA).

7.127   While larger households needing 4+ bedrooms are few in number, they often present complex housing challenges, especially where disability needs are involved. It also means larger families will sometimes be waiting longer for accommodation to meet their needs.

Ageing Population

7.128   There is a broader trend of ageing demographics on the register—one-third are aged 50+, increasing to half if including those aged 40+. This necessitates age-appropriate housing such as bungalows and homes with accessible layouts. The council promotes inclusive design without moving into supported housing models.

Table 7.22 Population change forecasts for Huntingdonshire per age range

Age range	Year 2021	Year 2041	% Change
0-17	36,545	38,620	6%
18-64	108,200	119,270	10%
65+	36,660	52,245	42.5%

*(Source: Population figures are taken from Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Insight - *Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Insight – Population – Local. Population Estimates and Forecasts (Cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk)*

7.129   The existing housing strategy confirms the Council does not rigidly use a recommended mix which is the same for each development, arguing instead for a more integrated approach to affordable housing that includes the housing register, local strategy, and site-specific characteristics.

7.130   There has been no new Sheltered housing in 25 years. Several older schemes have been repurposed to accommodate homelessness and in two cases, demolished to provide extra care.

7.131   There is a growing recognition of the need for older persons' housing, and ongoing dialogue with county partners around learning disability/mental health (see Cambridgeshire Specialist Supported Accommodation Needs Assessment 2024 – and learning disability housing needs.

Affordable Housing Mix

7.132   Affordable Rents (AR), although technically capped at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels, are increasingly unaffordable for many, with anecdotal evidence showing rising rent stress.

7.133   Social rent is increasingly prioritised, and delivery has slowed following a peak year in which RPs have been able to deliver Social Rent via 100% affordable schemes enabled by grant funding.

7.134   The overwhelming need remains for rented accommodation. LCHO is in demand, supporting mixed tenure development but rented housing remains the priority.

Affordable Housing Delivery

7.135   Recent delivery has occurred on sites throughout the District. On strategic growth sites such as Wintringham Park St Neots, and Alconbury Weald, infrastructure costs have limited the proportion of affordable homes (e.g. only 10 to12.5% at Alconbury Weald during the first phase).

7.136   The Private Rented Sector (PRS) no longer functions as an affordable alternative. PRS rents have become unaffordable due to high demand, particularly from London and Cambridge commuters, and the local PRS stock is limited.

7.137   Declining MOD/USAAF use has not eased the cost pressure, and many employed residents now rely on benefits to bridge income gaps.

7.138   In response, the council is engaging with institutional investors and pension funds to explore the delivery of affordable private rented housing within LHA levels, with full nomination rights and legal agreements ensuring affordability. Parallel plans involve delivering approximately 100 homes across nine council-owned sites

7.139   Several RPs have successfully delivered over 1,000 homes through 100% affordable schemes. Close partnerships are in place to support sustainability and meet local lettings objectives that include those in work or benefiting from shared ownership.

7.140   Direct stock management or buy-back programs are not being pursued.

Accessible Homes

7.141   The council currently seeks M4(3) accessible/ adaptable homes on
          market housing schemes of 50 homes or more dwellings and on
          affordable schemes, subject to negotiation with indicative aspirations of
          9% of eligible market homes and 30% of eligible affordable homes.

7.142   In the 3 years 2022/23 to 2024/25, 156 M4(3) market homes and 358
          M4(3) affordable homes have been permitted.

7.143   Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) are not mandatory, but
          the council feel these should be encouraged, especially given higher
          occupation ratings in affordable units versus market housing. The
          Council has included a preference for these standards in its Affordable
          Housing Advice Note.

Low-Cost Home Ownership

7.144   Low-Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) remains in demand, particularly 2-
          and 3-bedroom homes.

7.145   That said, Registered Providers (RPs) and the council tend to specify
          few 4-bedroom shared ownership (SO) homes due to affordability
          concerns.

7.146   The withdrawal of Help to Buy has not affected demand for SO. Small
          numbers of alternative affordable routes such as rent-to-buy have
          proven successful locally.

7.147   Regarding First Homes, only two developments have involved this
          tenure, and they have been come about as a result of unique
          circumstances rather than a preferred route. Shared Ownership is
          considered more flexible and accessible.

7.148   The previous SHMA potentially downplayed the need for LCHO,
          concluding that just 10% was needed. The council has continued to
          deliver LCHO in the form of Shared Ownership, which historically

performs well. It also provides mixed tenure developments and supports the policy (40%) level of affordable housing, which is achieved on most eligible sites.

Affordable Housing Summary

7.149   The analysis has taken account of local housing costs (to both buy and rent) along with estimates of household income. The evidence indicates that there is an acute need for affordable housing in the District and a need in all sub-areas.

7.150   The majority of need is from households who are unable to buy OR rent and therefore points particularly towards a need for rented affordable housing rather than affordable home ownership.

7.151   Despite the level of need being high, it is not considered that this points to any requirement for the Council to increase the Local Plan housing requirement due to affordable needs.

7.152   The link between affordable need and overall need (of all tenures) is complex, and in trying to make a link, it must be remembered that many of those picked up as having an affordable need are already in housing (and therefore do not generate a net additional need for a home).

7.153   In addition, the private rented sector is providing benefit-supported accommodation for many households. That said, the level of affordable need does suggest the Council should maximise the delivery of such housing at every opportunity.

7.154   The analysis suggests there will be a need for both social and affordable rented housing – the latter will be suitable particularly for households who are close to being able to afford to rent privately and possibly also for some households who claim full Housing Benefit.

7.155   It is, however, clear that social rents are more affordable and could benefit a wider range of households – social rents could therefore be prioritised where delivery does not prejudice the overall delivery of affordable homes.

7.156   The study also considers different types of AHO (notably First Homes and shared ownership) as each may have a role to play.

7.157   Shared ownership is likely to be suitable for households with more marginal affordability (those only just able to afford to privately rent) as it has the advantage of a lower deposit and subsidised rent.

7.158   There was no strong evidence of a need for First Homes or discounted market housing more generally.

7.159   In deciding what types of affordable housing to provide, including a split between rented and home ownership products, the Council will need to consider the relative levels of need and also viability issues. For this reason, the Council has previously supported shared ownership as opposed to First Homes.

7.160   Viability consideration should recognise, for example, which providing AHO may be more viable and may therefore allow more units to be delivered, but at the same time, noting that households with a need for rented housing are likely to have more acute needs and fewer housing options.

7.161   The evidence would justify a policy position of 70% low cost rented and 30% affordable home ownership homes. The evidence indicates that up to 70% of rented affordable housing at social rents could be justified in need terms (therefore about 50% of all affordable housing). Low cost home ownership provision should focus on shared ownership, with no strong evidence of a need for First Homes or discounted market housing identified.

7.162   Overall, the analysis identifies a notable need for affordable housing, and it is clear that the provision of new affordable housing is an important and pressing issue in the area.

7.163   It does, however, need to be stressed that this report does not provide an affordable housing target; the amount of affordable housing delivered will be limited to the amount that can viably be provided.

7.164   The evidence does, however, suggest that affordable housing delivery should be maximised where opportunities arise and that a preference for social rental would be justified.

8. Need for Different Sizes of Homes

Introduction

8.1   This section considers the appropriate mix of housing across Huntingdonshire, with a particular focus on the sizes of homes required in different tenure groups.

8.2   This section looks at a range of statistics in relation to families (generally described as households with dependent children) before moving on to look at how the number of households in different age groups are projected to change moving forward.

Background Data

8.3   The number of families in Huntingdonshire (defined for the purpose of this assessment as any household which contains at least one dependent child) totalled 21,400 as of the 2021 Census, accounting for 28% of households; this proportion is similar to that seen across other areas.

Table 8.1 Households with Dependent Children (2021)

	Huntingdonshire		Cambrid-geshire	East of England	England
	No.	%	%	%	%
Married couple	12,125	15.8%	16.1%	15.5%	14.4%
Cohabiting couple	3,650	4.7%	4.4%	4.8%	4.5%
Lone parent	4,229	5.5%	5.4%	6.3%	6.9%
Other households	1,359	1.8%	2.0%	2.4%	2.7%
All other households	55,517	72.2%	72.1%	71.0%	71.5%
Total	76,880	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total with dependent children	21,363	27.8%	27.9%	29.0%	28.5%

Source: Census (2021)

8.4   The table below shows the same information for each of the sub-areas. There are some variations in the proportion of households with dependent children, this being highest in the Central & East area (29% of households) and lowest in North & West (at 24% of households) – the proportion of lone parent households is particularly low in the North & West compared with other locations.
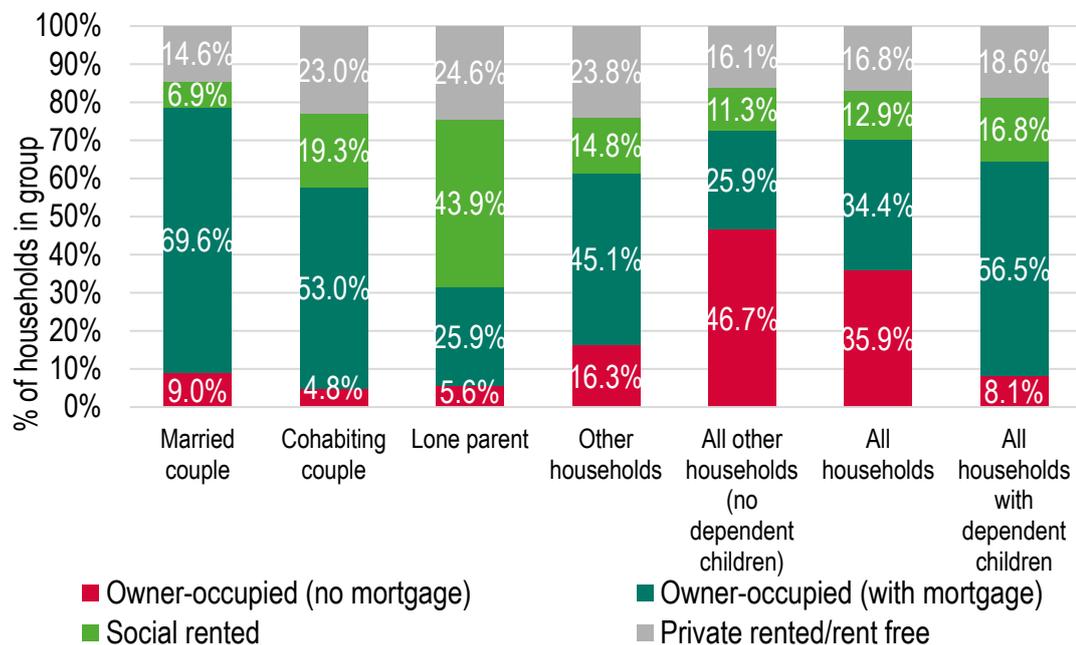
Table 8.2 Households with dependent children (2021) – sub-areas

	East	Central & South	North & West	TOTAL
Married couple	15.4%	15.9%	15.6%	15.8%
Cohabiting couple	4.9%	4.9%	3.3%	4.7%
Lone parent	5.2%	5.9%	3.7%	5.5%
Other households	1.8%	1.8%	1.4%	1.8%
All other households	72.7%	71.5%	76.0%	72.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total with dependent children	27.3%	28.5%	24.0%	27.8%

Source: Census (2021)

8.5   The figure below shows the current tenure of households with dependent children. There are some considerable differences by household type, with lone parents having a very high proportion living in the social rented sector and also in private rented accommodation. Across the District, only 32% of lone-parent households are owner-occupiers compared with 79% of married couples with children.

**Figure 8.1** Tenure of households with dependent children (2021) – Huntingdonshire

Source: Census (2021)

8.6   The figure below shows levels of overcrowding and under-occupancy of households with dependent children. This shows higher levels of overcrowding (minus figure) for all household types with dependent children, with 7% of all lone parents and 24% of 'other' households being overcrowded.

8.7   Overall, some 5% of households with dependent children are overcrowded, compared with less than 1% of other households. Levels of under-occupancy (positive figures) are also notably lower in households with dependent children.

Figure 8.2 Occupancy rating of households with dependent children (2021) – Huntingdonshire
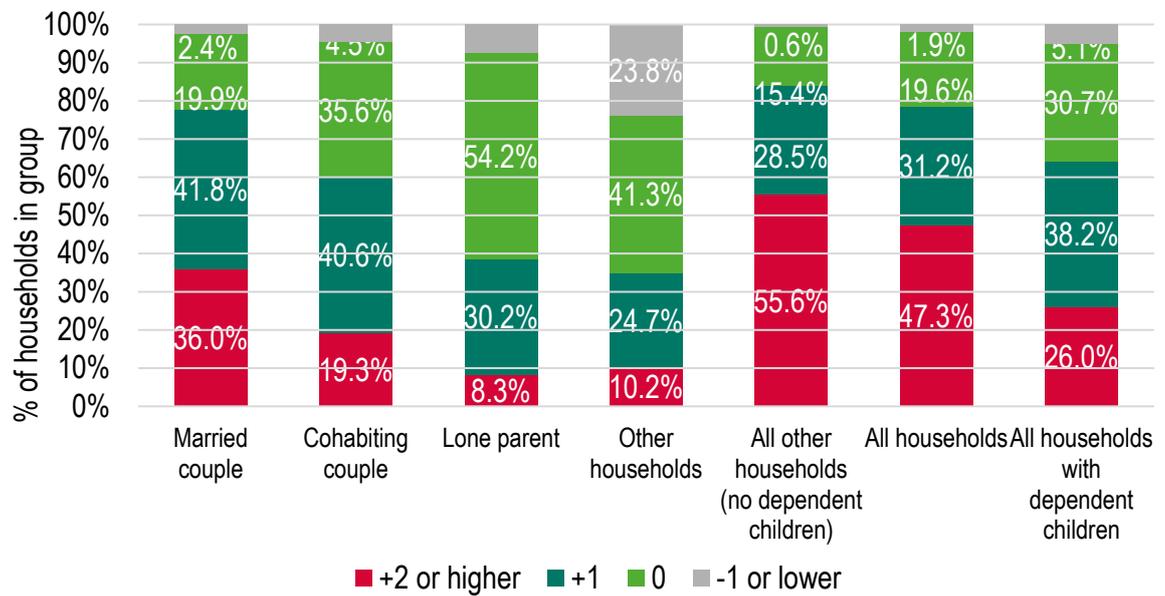
Source: Census (2021)

The Mix of Housing

8.8   A model has been developed that starts with the current profile of housing in terms of size (bedrooms) and tenure. Within the data, information is available about the age of households and the typical sizes of homes they occupy. By using demographic projections, it is possible to see which age groups are expected to change in number, and by how much.

8.9   On the assumption that occupancy patterns for each age group (within each tenure) remain the same, it is therefore possible to assess the profile of housing needed over the assessment period (taken to be 2024-46 to be consistent with other analyses in this report).

8.10   An important starting point is to understand the current balance of housing in the area – the table below profiles the sizes of homes in different tenure groups across areas. The data shows a market stock (owner-occupied) that is dominated by 3+-bedroom homes (making up

82% of the total in this tenure group, a higher proportion to that seen in other areas). The profile of the social rented sector is broadly similar across areas, whilst the private rented sector is generally slightly larger than seen in other locations. Observations about the current mix feed into conclusions about future mix later in this section.

Table 8.3 Number of Bedrooms by Tenure, 2021

		Huntingdon-shire	East of England	England
Owner-occupied	1-bedroom	3%	4%	4%
	2-bedrooms	15%	20%	21%
	3-bedrooms	42%	44%	46%
	4+-bedrooms	40%	32%	29%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Ave. no. beds	3.19	3.05	3.01
Social rented	1-bedroom	25%	29%	29%
	2-bedrooms	38%	35%	36%
	3-bedrooms	31%	32%	31%
	4+-bedrooms	5%	4%	4%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Ave. no. beds	2.17	2.11	2.10
Private rented	1-bedroom	17%	21%	21%
	2-bedrooms	36%	38%	39%
	3-bedrooms	34%	30%	29%
	4+-bedrooms	13%	11%	11%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Ave. no. beds	2.43	2.31	2.30

Source: Census (2021)

Overview of Methodology

8.11   The method to consider future housing mix looks at the ages of the Household Reference Persons and how these are projected to change over time. The sub-sections to follow describe some of the key analyses.

Understanding How Households Occupy Homes

8.12   Whilst the demographic projections provide a good indication of how the population and household structure will develop; it is not a simple task to convert the net increase in the number of households into a suggested profile for additional housing to be provided.

8.13   The main reason for this is that in the market sector, households are able to buy or rent any size of property (subject to what they can afford) and therefore knowledge of the profile of households in an area does not directly transfer into the sizes of property to be provided.

8.14   The size of housing which households occupy relates more to their wealth and age than the number of people they contain. For example, there is no reason why a single person cannot buy (or choose to live in) a 4-bedroom home as long as they can afford it, and hence projecting an increase in single-person households does not automatically translate into a need for smaller units.

8.15   That said, issues of supply can also impact occupancy patterns, for example, it may be that a supply of additional smaller-level accessible homes would encourage older people to downsize but in the absence of such accommodation, these households remain living in their larger accommodation.

8.16   The issue of choice is less relevant in the affordable sector (particularly since the introduction of the social sector size criteria) where households are allocated properties which reflect the size of the household, although there will still be some level of under-occupation moving forward with regard to older person and working households who may be able to under-occupy housing (e.g. those who can afford to pay the spare room subsidy ('bedroom tax')).

8.17   The approach used is to interrogate information derived in the projections about the number of household reference persons (HRPs)

in each age group and apply this to the profile of housing within these groups (data being drawn from the 2021 Census).

8.18   The figure below shows an estimate of how the average number of bedrooms varies by different ages of HRP and broad tenure group for Huntingdonshire and the East of England region.

8.19   In all sectors, the average size of accommodation rises over time to typically reach a peak around the age of 50. After peaking, the average dwelling size decreases – as typically some households downsize as they get older. The analysis confirms Huntingdonshire as having slightly larger dwelling sizes across tenure groups (notably in the owner-occupied sector).

Figure 8.3 Average Bedrooms by Age and Tenure in Huntingdonshire and the region
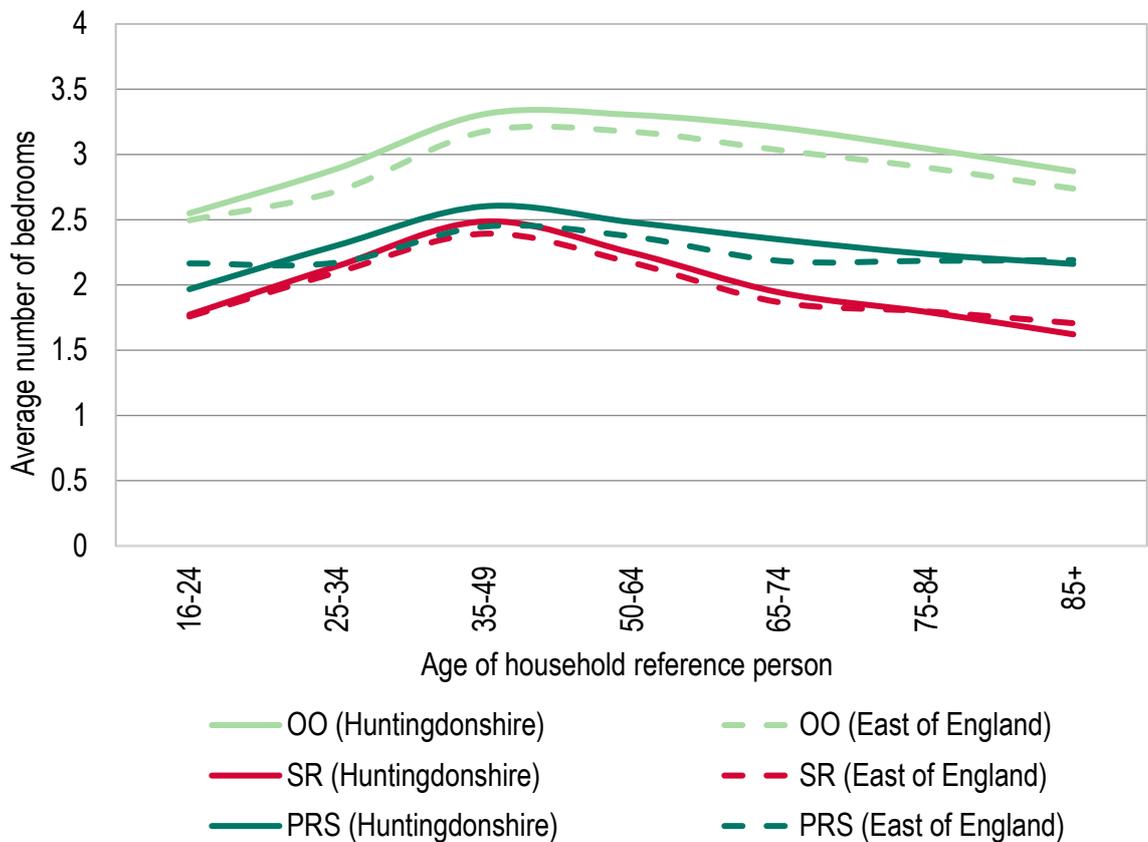
Source: Census (2021)

8.20   The analysis uses the existing occupancy patterns at a local level as a
        starting point for analysis and applies these to the projected changes in
        Household Reference Person by age discussed below. The analysis
        has been used to derive outputs for three broad categories. These are:

   • **Market Housing** – which is taken to follow the occupancy profiles
     in the market sector (i.e. owner-occupiers and the private rented
     sector);

   • **Affordable Home Ownership** – which is taken to follow the
     occupancy profile in the private rented sector (this is seen as
     reasonable as the Government's desired growth in home
     ownership looks to be largely driven by a wish to see households
     move out of private renting); and

   • **Rented Affordable Housing** – which is taken to follow the
     occupancy profile in the social rented sector. The affordable
     sector in the analysis to follow would include social and affordable
     rented housing.

Changes to Households by Age

8.21   The table below presents the projected change in households by age of
        household reference person under the Standard Method. This shows
        growth as being expected in all age groups and in particular older age
        groups (notably 85+), although some high growth is also projected in
        younger age groups, in part due to an assumption that household
        formation could improve over time (and from a low base in the Under 25
        age group).

Table 8.4 Projected Change in Household by Age of HRP in Huntingdonshire

	2024	2046	Change in Households	% Change
Under 25	1,407	2,546	1,139	80.9%
25-34	9,959	13,201	3,242	32.5%
35-49	20,794	26,812	6,017	28.9%
50-64	23,299	27,885	4,586	19.7%
65-74	10,894	13,853	2,959	27.2%
75-84	10,263	14,477	4,215	41.1%
85+	3,734	7,286	3,552	95.1%
TOTAL	80,351	106,060	25,710	32.0%

Source: Iceni Analysis

Modelled Outputs

8.22   By following the methodology set out above and drawing on the sources shown, a series of outputs have been derived to consider the likely size requirement of housing within each of the three broad tenures at a local authority level.

8.23   The analysis is based on considering both local and regional occupancy patterns. The data linking to local occupancy will to some extent reflect the role and function of the local area, whilst the regional data will help to establish any particular gaps (or relative surpluses) of different sizes/tenures of homes when considered in a wider context.

8.24   The table below shows the modelled outputs of need by dwelling size in the three broad tenures. Market housing focusses on 3+-bedroom homes, affordable home ownership on 2- and 3-bedroom accommodation and rented affordable housing showing a slightly smaller profile again.

Table 8.5 Initial Modelled Mix of Housing by Size and Tenure – Huntingdonshire

	1-bedroom	2-bedrooms	3-bedrooms	4+-bedrooms
Market	7%	24%	41%	28%
Affordable home ownership	20%	38%	31%	11%
Affordable housing (rented)	29%	37%	30%	4%

Source: Housing Market Model

Rightsizing

8.25   The analysis above sets out the potential need for housing if occupancy patterns remain the same as they were in 2021 (with differences from the current stock profile being driven by demographic change).

8.26   It is however worth also considering that the 2021 profile will have included households who are overcrowded (and therefore need a larger home than they actually live in) and also those who under-occupy (have more bedrooms than they need).

8.27   There is a case to seek for new stock to more closely match actual size requirements. Whilst it would not be reasonable to expect to remove all under-occupancy (particularly in the market sector) it is the case that in seeking to make the most efficient use of land it would be prudent to look to reduce this over time. Further analysis has been undertaken to take account of overcrowding and under-occupancy (by tenure).

8.28   The table below shows a cross-tabulation of a household's occupancy rating and the number of bedrooms in their home (for owner-occupiers). This shows a high number of households with at least 2 spare bedrooms who are living in homes with 3 or more bedrooms.

8.29   There are also a small number of overcrowded households. In the
        owner-occupied sector in 2021, there were 48,500 households with
        some degree of under-occupation and around 420 overcrowded
        households – some 90% of all owner-occupiers have some degree of
        under-occupancy.

Table 8.6 Cross-tabulation of occupancy rating and number of
bedrooms (owner-occupied sector) – Huntingdonshire

Occupancy rating	Number of bedrooms				
	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+-bed	TOTAL
+2 spare bedrooms	0	0	14,334	18,168	32,502
+1 spare bedrooms	0	6,724	6,323	2,912	15,959
0 "Right sized"	1,394	1,363	2,096	338	5,191
-1 too few bedrooms	57	117	176	71	421
TOTAL	1,451	8,204	22,929	21,489	54,073

Source: Census (2021)

8.30   For completeness the tables below show the same information for the
        social and private rented sectors. In both cases there are more under-
        occupying households than overcrowded, but differences are less
        marked than seen for owner-occupied housing.

Table 8.7 Cross-tabulation of occupancy rating and number of bedrooms (social rented sector) – Huntingdonshire

Occupancy rating	Number of bedrooms				
	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+-bed	TOTAL
+2 spare bedrooms	0	0	808	169	977
+1 spare bedrooms	0	1,669	912	169	2,750
0 "Right sized"	2,389	1,838	1,173	152	5,552
-1 too few bedrooms	93	269	208	37	607
TOTAL	2,482	3,776	3,101	527	9,886

Source: Census (2021)

Table 8.8 Cross-tabulation of occupancy rating and number of bedrooms (private rented sector) – Huntingdonshire

Occupancy rating	Number of bedrooms				
	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+-bed	TOTAL
+2 spare bedrooms	0	0	1,773	1,146	2,919
+1 spare bedrooms	0	3,135	1,721	396	5,252
0 "Right sized"	2,102	1,357	790	97	4,346
-1 too few bedrooms	125	142	107	30	404
TOTAL	2,227	4,634	4,391	1,669	12,921

Source: Census (2021)

8.31   In using this data in the modelling an adjustment is made to move some of those who would have been picked up in the modelling as under-occupying into smaller accommodation. Where there is under-occupation by 2 or more bedrooms, the adjustment takes 25% of this group and assigns to a '+1' occupancy.

8.32   This does need to be recognised as an assumption but can be seen to be reasonable as they do retain some (considerable) degree of under-

occupation (which is likely) but does also seek to model a better match between household needs and the size of their home.

8.33   For overcrowded households a move in the other direction is made, in this case households are moved up as many bedrooms as is needed to resolve the problems (this is applied for all overcrowded households).

8.34   The adjustments for under-occupation and overcrowding lead to the suggested mix as set out in the following tables. It can be seen that this tends to suggest a smaller profile of homes as being needed (compared to the initial modelling) with the biggest change being in the market sector – which was the sector where under-occupation is currently most notable.

Table 8.9 Modelled Mix of Housing by Size and Tenure – Huntingdonshire

	1-bedroom	2-bedrooms	3-bedrooms	4+-bedrooms
Market	7%	30%	41%	22%
Affordable home ownership	19%	41%	30%	10%
Affordable housing (rented)	28%	37%	29%	6%

Source: Housing Market Model

8.35   Across the District, the analysis points to over a quarter of the social/affordable housing need being for 1-bedroom homes and it is of interest to see how much of this is due to older person households.

8.36   Household sizes are projected to drop whilst the population of older people will increase. Older person households (as shown earlier) are more likely to occupy smaller dwellings. The impacts older people have on demand for smaller stock is outlined in the table below.

8.37   This indeed identifies a larger profile of homes needed for households where the household reference person is aged Under 65, with a concentration of 1-bedroom homes for older people. This information can be used to inform the mix required for General Needs rather than Specialist Housing, although it does need to be noted that not all older people would be expected to live in homes with some form of care or support.

8.38   The 2, 3, and 4+-bedroom categories have been merged for the purposes of older persons as we would not generally expect many (if any) households in this category to need (or indeed be able to be allocated) more than 2-bedrooms in the rented affordable housing sector.

Table 8.10 Modelled Mix of Housing by Size and Age – affordable housing (rented) – Huntingdonshire

	1-bedroom	2-bedrooms	3-bedrooms	4+-bedrooms
Under 65	21%	38%	33%	8%
65 and over	44%	56%		
All affordable housing (rented)	28%	37%	29%	6%

Source: Housing Market Model

8.39   A further analysis of the need for rented affordable housing is to compare the need with the supply (turnover) of different sizes of accommodation.

8.40   This links back to estimates of need in the previous section (an annual need for 480 dwellings per annum from households unable to buy OR rent) with additional data from CoRe about the sizes of homes let over the past three years.

8.41   This analysis is quite clear in showing the very low supply of larger homes relative to the need for 4+-bedroom accommodation in

particular, where it is estimated the supply is only around 15% of the need arising each year, whereas for 1-bedroom homes approaching half of the need can be met.

Table 8.11 Need for rented affordable housing by number of bedrooms

	Gross Annual Need	Gross Annual Supply	Net Annual Need	As a % of total net annual need	Supply as a % of gross need
1-bedroom	178	78	100	20.9%	43.7%
2-bedrooms	314	132	183	38.0%	41.9%
3-bedrooms	215	54	161	33.5%	25.1%
4+-bedrooms	43	7	36	7.6%	15.4%
Total	750	270	480	100.0%	36.0%

Source: Iceni analysis

Indicative Targets for Different Sizes of Property by Tenure

8.42   The analysis below provides some indicative targets for different sizes of home (by tenure). The conclusions take account of a range of factors, including the modelled outputs and an understanding of the stock profile and levels of under-occupancy and overcrowding.

8.43   The analysis (for rented affordable housing) also draws on the Housing Register data as well as taking a broader view of issues such as the flexibility of homes to accommodate changes to households (e.g. the lack of flexibility offered by a 1-bedroom home for a couple looking to start a family).

8.44   The Housing Register (see table below) shows a pattern of need which is focussed on 1-bedroom homes but with over a fifth of households requiring 3+-bedroom accommodation.

Table 8.12 Size of Social/Affordable Rented Housing Needed –
Housing Register Information (2024)

	Number of households	% of households
1-bedroom	1,417	53.5%
2-bedrooms	665	25.1%
3-bedrooms	418	15.8%
4+-bedrooms	151	5.7%
TOTAL	2,651	100.0%

Source: Local authority housing statistics

Social/Affordable Rented

8.45   Bringing together the above, a number of factors are recognised. This
includes recognising that it is unlikely that all affordable housing needs
will be met and that it is likely that households with a need for larger
homes will have greater priority (as they are more likely to contain
children).

8.46   That said, there is also a possible need for 1-bedroom social housing
arising due to homelessness (typically, homeless households are more
likely to be younger single people). The following mix of
social/affordable rented housing is therefore suggested:

Table 8.13 Recommended Social/ Affordable Rented Housing Mix

Bedrooms	% of New Social/ Affordable Rented Homes for Under 65	% of New Social/ Affordable Rented Homes for 65 and over
1-bedroom	25%	50%
2-bedrooms	35%	50%
3-bedrooms	30%	
4+ bedrooms	10%	

Source: Iceni Analysis

8.47   Regarding older persons housing, the above recommendations aim to promote the opportunity for older person households to downsize, with a 2-bed offering being more likely to encourage this than 1-bed homes.

8.48   Also, whilst technically most older person households will only have a 'need' for a 1-bed home, a larger property remains affordable as most older person households are not impacted by the bedroom tax / spare room subsidy.

8.49   While we have identified a need for 50% of affordable older person homes to be 2+ bedrooms it is likely that delivery will be focused on those with only 2-bedrooms.

8.50   It should be noted that the above recommendations are to a considerable degree based on projecting the need forward to 2046 and will vary over time. It may be at a point in time the case that Housing Register data identifies a shortage of housing of a particular size/type which could lead to the mix of housing being altered from the overall suggested requirement.

8.51   In terms of the space standards of affordable housing, the supporting text to Local Plan LP25 refers to Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). It outlines the benefits of NDSS in achieving sustainable communities and how (unlike market housing) it should be recognised that affordable homes are likely to be fully occupied.

Affordable Home Ownership

8.52   In the affordable home ownership sector a profile of housing that more closely matches the outputs of the modelling is suggested. It is considered that the provision of affordable home ownership should be more explicitly focused on delivering smaller family housing for younger households and childless couples.

8.53   The conclusions also take account of the earlier observation that it may be difficult to make larger homes genuinely affordable for AHO. Based on this analysis, it is suggested that the following mix of affordable home ownership would be appropriate:

Table 8.14 Recommended Affordable Home Ownership Housing Mix

Bedrooms	% of New AHO Homes
1-bedroom	15%
2-bedrooms	45%
3-bedrooms	30%
4+ bedrooms	10%

Source: Iceni Analysis

Market Housing

8.54   Finally, in the market sector, a balance of dwellings is suggested that takes account of both the demand for homes and the changing demographic profile (as well as observations about the current mix when compared with other locations and also the potential to slightly reduce levels of under-occupancy).

8.55   We have also had regard to the potential for rightsizing but also recognise that in the market sector there is limited ability to control what households purchase. This sees a slightly larger recommended profile compared with other tenure groups.

Table 8.15 Recommended Market Housing Mix

Bedrooms	% of New Market Homes
1-bedroom	5%
2-bedrooms	30%
3-bedrooms	40%
4+-bedrooms	25%

Source: Iceni Analysis

8.56   Although the analysis has quantified this on the basis of the market modelling and an understanding of the current housing market (including the stock profile in different tenures as set out earlier in this section), it does not necessarily follow that such prescriptive figures should be included in the plan making process (although it will be useful to include an indication of the broad mix to be sought across the District) – demand can change over time linked to macro-economic factors and local supply. Policy aspirations could also influence the mix sought.

8.57   The suggested figures can be used as a monitoring tool to ensure that future delivery is not unbalanced when compared with the likely requirements as driven by demographic change in the area.

8.58   The recommendations can also be used as a set of guidelines to consider the appropriate mix on larger development sites, and the Council could expect justification for a housing mix on such sites which significantly differs from that modelled herein.

8.59   Site location and area character are also relevant considerations as to what the appropriate mix of market housing on individual development sites.

Smaller-area Housing Mix

8.60   The analysis above has focussed on overall study District-wide needs with conclusions at the strategic level. It should however be recognised that there will be variations in the need within the area due to the different role and function of a location and the specific characteristics of local households (which can also vary over time).

8.61   This report does not seek to model smaller-area housing mix although data is available that can help inform specific local issues (including

data about household composition, current housing mix and overcrowding/under-occupation).

8.62   Below are some points for consideration when looking at needs in any specific location:

a) Whilst there are differences in the stock profile in different locations this should not necessarily be seen as indicating particular surpluses or shortfalls of particular types and sizes of homes;

b) As well as looking at the stock, an understanding of the role and function of areas is important. For example, areas traditionally favoured by family households might be expected to provide a greater proportion of larger homes;

c) That said, some of these areas will have very few small/cheaper stocks and so consideration needs to be given to diversifying the stock; and

d) The location/quality of sites will also have an impact on the mix of housing. For example, brownfield sites in urban locations may be more suited to flatted development (as well as recognising the point above about role and function) whereas a more suburban/rural site may be more appropriate for family housing. Other considerations (such as proximity to public transport) may impact on a reasonable mix at a local level.

8.63   Overall, it is suggested the Council should broadly seek the same mix of housing in all locations as a starting point in policy; but should be flexible to a different mix where specific local characteristics suggest (such as site characteristics and location).

8.64   Additionally, in the affordable sector it may be the case that Housing Register data for a smaller area identifies a shortage of housing of a particular size/type, which could lead to a different mix.

Housing Mix - Summary

8.65   Analysis of the future mix of housing required takes account of demographic change, including potential changes to the number of family households and the ageing of the population.

8.66   The proportion of households with dependent children in Huntingdonshire is about average with around 28% of all households containing dependent children in 2021 (compared with around 29% regionally and nationally).

8.67   There are notable differences between different types of households, with married couples (with dependent children) seeing a high level of owner-occupation, whereas as lone parents are particularly likely to live in social or private rented accommodation.

8.68   There are a range of factors which will influence demand for different sizes of homes, including demographic changes; future growth in real earnings and households' ability to save; economic performance and housing affordability.

8.69   The analysis linked to future demographic change concludes that the following represents an appropriate mix of affordable and market homes, this takes account of both household changes and the ageing of the population as well as seeking to make more efficient use of new stock by not projecting forward the high levels of under-occupancy (which is notable in the market sector).

Table 8.16 Suggested size mix of housing by tenure – Huntingdonshire

	Market	Affordable home ownership	Affordable housing (rented)	
			Under 65	65 and over
1-bedroom	5%	15%	25%	50%
2-bedrooms	30%	45%	35%	50%
3-bedrooms	40%	30%	30%	
4+-bedrooms	25%	10%	10%	

Source: Iceni Analysis

8.70   In all sectors the analysis points to a particular need for 2- and 3-bedroom accommodation, with varying proportions of 1- and 4+-bedroom homes.

8.71   For rented affordable housing for Under 65s there is a clear need for a range of different sizes of homes, including 40% to have at least 3-bedrooms of which 10% should have at least 4-bedrooms.

8.72   The strategic conclusions in the affordable sector recognise the role which delivery of larger family homes can play in releasing a supply of smaller properties for other households.

8.73   Also recognised is the limited flexibility which 1-bedroom properties offer to changing household circumstances, which feed through into higher turnover and management issues.

8.74   The conclusions also take account of the current mix of housing by tenure and also the size requirements shown on the Housing Register.

8.75   The mix identified above could inform strategic policies although a flexible approach should be adopted. For example, affordable housing registered providers find difficulties selling 1-bedroom affordable home ownership (AHO) homes and therefore the 1-bedroom elements of AHO might be better provided as 2-bedroom accommodation.

8.76   Flats can also present difficulties for affordable home ownership, hence the Council tends to seek houses and a minimum of 2 bedrooms. That said, given current house prices, there are potential difficulties in making (larger) AHO genuinely affordable, so the council may wish to ease these restrictions.

8.77   Additionally, in applying the mix to individual development sites, regard should be had to the nature of the site and character of the area, and to up-to-date evidence of need as well as the existing mix and turnover of properties at the local level. The Council should also monitor the mix of housing delivered.

9. Older and Disabled People

Introduction

9.1   This section studies the characteristics and housing needs of the older person population and the population with some form of disability. The two groups are taken together as there is a clear link between age and disability.

9.2   We respond to Planning Practice Guidance on Housing for Older and Disabled People, published by the Government in June 2019. It includes an assessment of the need for specialist accommodation for older people and the potential requirements for housing to be built to M4(2) and M4(3) housing technical standards (accessibility and wheelchair standards).

Older People

9.3   The table below provides baseline population data about older persons in Huntingdonshire and compares this with other areas. The table shows the District has a very slightly older age structure to that seen regionally and nationally, with 21% of the population being aged 65 and over.

9.4   The proportion of people aged 75 and over is also slightly above equivalent figures for other areas. Overall, differences between locations are not significant.

Table 9.1 Older Persons Population, 2023

	Huntingdon-shire	Cambridge-shire	East of England	England
Under 65	79.5%	81.1%	80.1%	81.3%
65-74	10.3%	9.4%	9.8%	9.5%
75-84	7.7%	6.9%	7.3%	6.7%
85+	2.6%	2.6%	2.8%	2.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total 65+	20.5%	18.9%	19.9%	18.7%
Total 75+	10.2%	9.5%	10.1%	9.2%

Source: ONS

9.5   The table below shows the same data for sub-areas. This is based on the 2022 mid-year population estimates (MYE) and so is slightly different to the 2023 MYE as shown above.

9.6   The analysis points to some variation in the proportion of older people, this being higher in North & West sub-area – Central & South has the lowest proportion of people aged 65+ at 19% of the population.

Table 9.2 Older Persons Population, 2022 – sub-areas

	East	Central & South	North & West	TOTAL
Under 65	78.2%	80.9%	75.2%	79.6%
65-74	11.5%	9.6%	13.4%	10.5%
75-84	7.8%	7.0%	8.8%	7.4%
85+	2.6%	2.4%	2.5%	2.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total 65+	21.8%	19.1%	24.8%	20.4%
Total 75+	10.4%	9.5%	11.3%	9.9%

Source: ONS

Projected Future Change in the Population of Older People

9.7   Population projections can next be used to provide an indication of how the number of older persons might change in the future with the table below showing that Huntingdonshire is projected to see a notable

increase in the older person population – the projection is based on the Standard Method.

9.8   For the 2024-46 period a projected increase in the population aged 65+ of around 38% is shown – the population aged under 65 is in contrast projected to see a more modest increase (of 21%).

9.9   In total population terms, the projections show an increase in the population aged 65 and over of 14,600 people. This is against a backdrop of an overall increase of 46,100 – population growth of people aged 65 and over therefore accounts for 32% of the total projected population change.

Table 9.3 Projected Change in Population of Older Persons, 2024 to 2046 – Huntingdonshire

	2024	2046	Change in population	% change
Under 65	149,041	180,517	31,476	21.1%
65-74	19,161	23,696	4,536	23.7%
75-84	14,820	20,401	5,581	37.7%
85+	4,932	9,457	4,525	91.7%
Total	187,953	234,072	46,119	24.5%
Total 65+	38,912	53,555	14,642	37.6%
Total 75+	19,752	29,858	10,107	51.2%

Source: Iceni Analysis

Characteristics of Older Person Households

9.10   The figure below shows the tenure of older person households. The data has been split between single older person households and those with two or more older people (which will largely be couples).

9.11   The data shows that the majority of older persons households are owner occupiers (83% of older person households), and indeed most are owner-occupiers with no mortgage and thus may have significant equity which can be put towards the purchase of a new home.

9.12   Some 11% of older persons households live in the social rented sector
        and the proportion of older person households living in the private
        rented sector is relatively low (about 6%).

9.13   There are also notable differences for different types of older person
        households with single older people having a lower level of owner-
        occupation than larger older person households – this group also has a
        higher proportion living in the social rented sector.

Figure 9.1 :   Tenure of Older Persons Households in Huntingdonshire,
2021
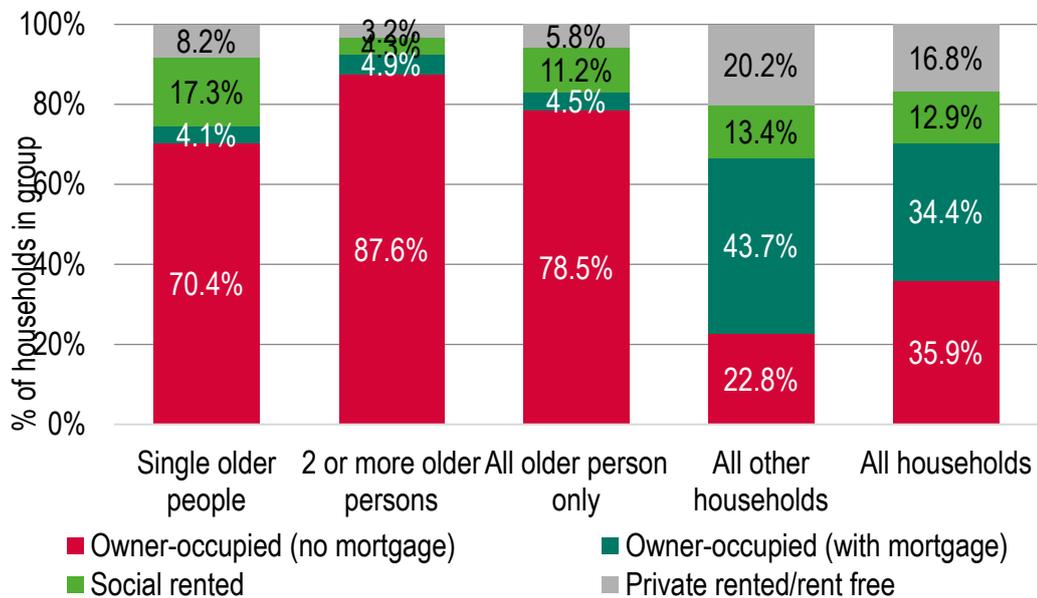
Source: 2021 Census

9.14   The table below shows the tenure of older person households by sub-
        area (figures are for all older person households). This shows modest
        differences between areas, with a range from 83% of older persons
        being owner-occupiers in Central & South, up to 86% in North & West.

9.15   Figures for the proportions living in social rented housing show the
        opposite pattern, varying from 7% in North & West, up to 12% in Central
        & South. There is little variance in the proportions living in the private
        rented sector – between 5% and 7% in all areas.

Table 9.4 Tenure of Older Persons Households in Huntingdonshire, 2021 – sub-areas

	Owner-occupied (no mortgage)	Owner-occupied (with mortgage)	Social rented	Private rented	TOTAL
East	78.5%	4.4%	10.8%	6.3%	100.0%
Central & South	78.1%	4.4%	12.0%	5.4%	100.0%
North & West	80.9%	4.9%	6.9%	7.2%	100.0%
TOTAL	78.5%	4.5%	11.2%	5.8%	100.0%

Source: 2021 Census

Disabilities

9.16   The table below shows the proportion of people who are considered as disabled under the definition within the 2010 Equality Act[13], drawn from 2021 Census data, and the proportion of households where at least one person has a disability.

9.17   The data suggests that some 30% of households in the District contain someone with a disability. This figure is lower than seen nationally and in-line with figures for Cambridgeshire and the East of England. The figures for the population with a disability also show lower levels than nationally – some 16% of the population having a disability.

---

[13] The Census uses the same definition of disability as described in the Equality Act. This defines disability as a person with a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

Table 9.5 Households and People with a Disability, 2021

	Households Containing Someone with a Disability		Population with a Disability	
	No.	%	No.	%
Huntingdonshire	22,915	29.8%	29,577	16.4%
Cambridgeshire	83,500	30.1%	109,908	16.2%
East of England	811,942	30.9%	1,053,832	16.6%
England	7,507,886	32.0%	9,774,510	17.3%

Source: 2021 Census

9.18   The table below shows the same information for sub-areas; this shows similar proportions of the population and households with a disability across all areas – figures being slightly higher in East and lower in Central & South.

Table 9.6 Households and People with a Disability, 2021 – sub-areas

	Households Containing Someone with a Disability		Population with a Disability	
	No.	%	No.	%
East	6,297	31.8%	8,020	17.3%
Central & South	14,516	29.1%	18,496	15.9%
North & West	2,112	29.4%	3,058	17.1%
TOTAL	22,925	29.8%	29,574	16.4%

Source: 2021 Census

9.19   As noted, it is likely that the age profile will impact upon the numbers of people with a disability.

9.20   The figure below shows the age bands of people with a disability. It is clear from this analysis that those people in the oldest age bands are more likely to have a disability.

9.21   The analysis also shows generally slightly lower levels of disability when compared with the regional and national position.

Figure 9.2 : Population with Disability by Age
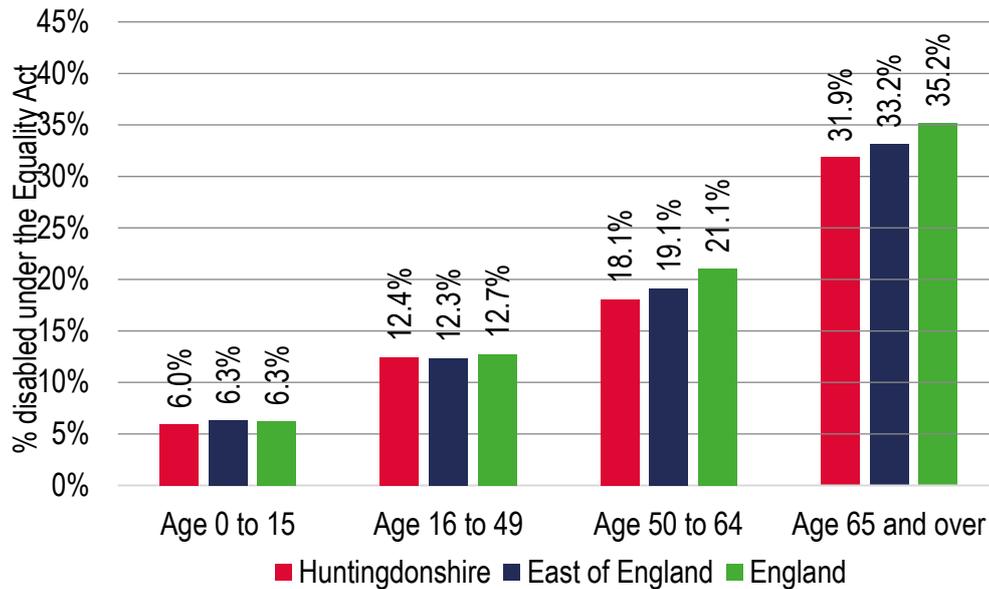
Source: 2021 Census

Health Related Population Projections

9.22   The incidence of a range of health conditions is an important
        component in understanding the potential need for care or support for a
        growing older population.

9.23   The analysis undertaken covers both younger and older age groups
        and draws on prevalence rates from the PANSI (Projecting Adult Needs
        and Service Information) and POPPI (Projecting Older People
        Population Information) websites. Adjustments have been made to take
        account of the age specific health/disabilities previously shown.

9.24   Of particular note are the large increases in the number of older people
        with dementia (increasing by 64% from 2024 to 2046 and mobility
        problems (up 54% over the same period).

9.25   Changes for younger age groups are smaller, reflecting the fact that
        projections are expecting older age groups to see the greatest
        proportional increases in population.

9.26   When related back to the total projected change to the population, the increase of people aged 65+ with a mobility problem represents around 6% of total projected population growth.

Table 9.7 Projected Changes to Population with a Range of Disabilities – Huntingdonshire

Disability	Age Range	2024	2046	Change	% change
Dementia	65+	2,434	3,983	1,549	63.7%
Mobility problems	16-64	6,055	7,393	1,338	22.1%
	65+	6,421	9,893	3,472	54.1%
Autistic Spectrum Disorders	18-64	1,027	1,289	262	25.6%
	65+	333	469	135	40.6%
Learning Disabilities	15-64	2,653	3,339	686	25.9%
	65+	730	1,017	287	39.3%

Source: POPPI/PANSI and Demographic Projections

9.27   Invariably, there will be a combination of those with disabilities and long-term health problems that continue to live at home with family, those who chose to live independently with the possibility of incorporating adaptations into their homes and those who choose to move into supported housing.

9.28   The projected change shown in the number of people with disabilities provides clear evidence justifying delivering 'accessible and adaptable' homes as defined in Part M4(2) of Building Regulations, subject to viability and site suitability.

Need for Specialist Accommodation for Older People

9.29   Given the ageing population and higher levels of disability and health problems amongst older people, there is likely to be an increased requirement for specialist housing options moving forward. The box below shows the different types of older persons housing which are considered.

Definitions of Different Types of Older Persons' Accommodation

Age-restricted general market housing: This type of housing is generally for people aged 55 and over and the active elderly. It may include some shared amenities such as communal gardens but does not include support or care services.

Retirement living or sheltered housing (housing with support): This usually consists of purpose-built flats or bungalows with limited communal facilities such as a lounge, laundry room and guest room. It does not generally provide care services but provides some support to enable residents to live independently. This can include 24-hour on-site assistance (alarm) and a warden or house manager.

Extra care housing or housing-with-care (housing with care): This usually consists of purpose-built or adapted flats or bungalows with a medium to high level of care available if required, through an onsite care agency registered through the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Residents are able to live independently with 24-hour access to support services and staff, and meals are also available. There are often extensive communal areas, such as space to socialise or a wellbeing centre. In some cases, these developments are known as retirement communities or villages - the intention is for residents to benefit from varying levels of care as time progresses.

Residential care homes and nursing homes (care bedspaces): These have individual rooms within a residential building and provide a high level of care meeting all activities of daily living. They do not usually include support services for independent living. This type of housing can also include dementia care homes.

Source: Planning Practice Guidance [63-010]

9.30 The need for specialist housing for older persons is typically modelled by applying prevalence rates to current and projected population changes and considering the level of existing supply. There is no standard methodology for assessing the housing and care needs of older people.

9.31   The current and future demand for elderly care is influenced by a host
        of factors including the balance between demand and supply in any
        given area and social, political, regulatory and financial issues.

9.32   Additionally, the extent to which new homes are built to accessible and
        adaptable standards may over time have an impact on specialist
        demand (given that older people often want to remain at home rather
        than move to care) – this will need to be monitored.

9.33   There are a number of 'models' for considering older persons' needs,
        but they all essentially work in the same way. The model results are
        however particularly sensitive to the prevalence rates applied, which are
        typically calculated as a proportion of people aged over 75 who could
        be expected to live in different forms of specialist housing.

9.34   Whilst the population aged 75 and over is used in the modelling, the
        estimates of need would include people of all ages.

9.35   Whilst there are no definitive rates, the PPG [63-004-20190626] notes
        that 'the future need for specialist accommodation for older people
        broken down by tenure and type (e.g. sheltered housing, extra care)
        may need to be assessed and can be obtained from a number of online
        tool kits provided by the sector, for example SHOP@ for Older People
        Analysis Tool)'.

9.36   The PPG does not specifically mention any other tools and therefore
        seems to be indicating that SHOP@ would be a good starting point for
        analysis. Since the PPG was published the Housing Learning and
        Information Network (Housing LIN) has removed the Shop@ online
        toolkit although the base rates used for analysis are known.

9.37   The SHOP@ tool was originally based on data in a 2008 report (More
        Choice Greater Voice) and in 2011 a further suggested set of rates was
        published (rates which were repeated in a 2012 publications). In 2016,

Housing LIN published a review document which noted that the 2008 rates are 'outdated' but also noting that the rates from 2011/12 were 'not substantiated'. The 2016 review document therefore set out a series of proposals for new rates to be taken forward onto the Housing LIN website.

9.38   Whilst the 2016 review rates do not appear to have ever led to an update of the website, it does appear from reviewing work by Housing LIN over the past couple of years as if it is these rates which typically inform their own analysis (subject to evidence based localised adjustments).

9.39   For clarity, the table below shows the base prevalence rates set out in the various documents described above. For the analysis in this report the age-restricted and retirement/sheltered have been merged into a single category (housing with support).

Table 9.8 Range of suggested baseline prevalence rates (units per 1,000 people aged over 75) from a number of tools and publications

Type/Rate	SHOP@ (2008)[14]	Housing in Later Life (2012)[15]	2016 Housing LIN Review[16]
Age-restricted general market housing	-	-	25
Retirement living or sheltered housing (housing with support)	125	180	100
Extra care housing or housing-with-care (housing with care)	45	65	30-40 ('proactive range')
Residential care homes	65	(no figure apart from 6 for dementia)	40
Nursing homes (care bedspaces), including dementia	45		45

Source: Housing LIN

9.40   In interpreting the different potential prevalence rates, it is clear that:

- The prevalence rates used should be considered and assessed taking account of the authority's strategy for delivering specialist housing for older people;

- The Housing LIN model has been influenced by existing levels of provision and their view on what future level of provision might be reasonable taking account of how the market is developing, funding availability etc. It is more focused towards publicly commissioned provision. There is a degree to which the model and assumptions within it may not fully capture the growing

---

[14] Based on the More Choice Greater Voice publication of 2008 (SHOP@ Tool). It should be noted that although these rates are from 2008, they are the same rates as were being used in the online toolkit when it was taken offline in 2019.
[15] Housing in Later Life
[16] 2016 Housing LIN Review

recent private sector interest and involvement in the sector, particularly in extra care; and

- The assumptions in these studies look at the situation nationally. At a more local level, the relative health of an area's population is likely to influence the need for specialist housing with better levels of health likely to mean residents are able to stay in their own homes for longer.

9.41   These issues are considered to provide appropriate modelling assumptions for assessing future needs. Nationally, there has been a clear focus on strengthening a community-led approach and reducing reliance on residential and nursing care – in particular focussing where possible on providing households with care in their own home.

9.42   This could however be provision of care within general needs housing; but also care which is provided in a housing with care development such as in extra care housing.

9.43   We consider that the prevalence rates shown in the 2016 Housing LIN Review is an appropriate starting point; but that the corollary of lower care home provision should be a greater focus on delivery of housing with care.

9.44   Having regard to market growth in this sector in recent years, and since the above studies were prepared, we consider that the starting point for housing with care should be the higher rate shown in the SHOP@ report (this is the figure that would align with the PPG).

9.45   Rather than simply taking the base prevalence rates, an initial adjustment has been made to reflect the relative health of the local older person population.

9.46   This has been based on Census data about the proportion of the population aged 75 and over who have a long-term health problem or

disability (LTHPD) compared with the England average. In Huntingdonshire, the data shows slightly better health in the 75+ population and so a modest decrease has been made to the prevalence rates (41.2% of the population age 75+ in Huntingdonshire has a LTHPD compared with 43.9% nationally).

9.47   A second local adjustment has been to estimate a tenure split for the housing with support and housing with care categories. This again draws on suggestions in the 2016 Review which suggests that less deprived local authorities could expect a higher proportion of their specialist housing to be in the market sector.

9.48   Using 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data shows Huntingdonshire to be the 247th most deprived local authority in England (out of 317). This is a relatively low level of deprivation and suggests a slightly greater proportion of market housing than a local authority in the middle of the range (for housing with support and housing with care).

9.49   The following prevalence rates, expressed as a need per 1,000 people aged 75 and over have been used in the analysis:

- Housing with support (market) – 65 units;

- Housing with support (affordable) – 52 units;

- Housing with care (market) – 29 units;

- Housing with care (affordable) – 13 units;

- Residential care– 38 bedspaces; and

- Nursing care– 42 bedspaces

9.50   It is also important to understand the supply of different types of specialist accommodation with the tables below showing various categories by sub-area.

9.51   The first table is for housing with support and housing with care, which
        are more likely to be self-contained dwellings with the second table
        looking at residential and nursing care bedspaces. The total figures
        have also been standardised on the basis of the number of units per
        1,000 people aged 75 and over.

9.52   The analysis shows a total current supply of just over 1,600 units of
        housing with support or care, which represents around 90 per 1,000
        people aged 75 and over.

9.53   There is some variation by sub-area with Central & South seeing both
        the highest number (1,318 units) and the highest proportion per
        population aged 75+ (117 units). The supply per 1,000 people aged 75+
        is only 10 in North & West.

9.54   For nursing and residential care, a lower level of supply is shown, with a
        total of 1,100 bedspaces, the highest number being in Central & South
        (885 bedspaces), this area also seeing the highest supply per 1,000
        people aged 75+ (at 79 bedspaces).

Table 9.9 Current supply of housing with support and housing with care by sub-area

	Housing with support		Housing with care		Total	Popn aged 75+ (2022)	Supply per 1,000 aged 75+
	Market	Afford-able	Market	Afford-able			
East	48	257	0	0	305	4,905	62
Central & South	510	685	0	123	1,318	11,246	117
North & West	17	3	0	0	20	2,064	10
TOTAL	575	945	0	123	1,643	18,215	90

Source: Elderly Accommodation Council (EAC)

Table 9.10 Current supply of residential and nursing care bedspaces by sub-area

	Resident-ial care	Nursing care	Total	Popn aged 75+ (2022)	Supply per 1,000 aged 75+
East	149	0	149	4,905	30
Central & South	474	411	885	11,246	79
North & West	64	0	64	2,064	31
TOTAL	687	411	1,098	18,215	60

Source: EAC

9.55   Taking the supply forward and using the prevalence rates suggested the tables below shows estimated needs for different types of housing linked to the population projections.

9.56   The analysis is separated into the various different types and tenures although it should be recognised that there could be some overlap

between categories (i.e. some households might be suited to more than one type of accommodation).

9.57   The analysis suggests for all types and tenures of accommodation there is a current shortfall of provision and with increases in the older person population there is potentially a notable level of additional need over the period to 2046.

9.58   For housing with support (e.g. sheltered/retirement housing) the analysis points to a particular need for market housing (around 70% of the need), whilst for housing with care (e.g. Extra-care) the main need is again likely to be in the market sector but about a quarter being for affordable housing.

Table 9.11 Specialist Housing Need using adjusted SHOP@Review Assumptions, 2024-46 – Huntingdonshire

		Housing demand per 1,000 75+	Current supply	Current demand	Current shortfall / surplus (-ve)	Add-itional demand to 2046	Shortfall /surplus by 2046
Housing with support	Market	65	575	1,293	718	696	1,413
	Affordable	52	945	1,025	80	552	632
Total (housing with support)		117	1,520	2,317	797	1,248	2,045
Housing with care	Market	29	0	582	582	313	895
	Affordable	13	123	253	130	136	266
Total (housing with care)		42	123	834	711	449	1,160
Residential care bedspaces		38	687	742	55	399	454
Nursing care bedspaces		42	411	834	423	449	872
Total bedspaces		80	1,098	1,576	478	848	1,326

Source: Iceni analysis/EAC

9.59   The provision of a choice of attractive housing options to older households is a component of achieving good housing mix. The

availability of such housing options for the growing older population may enable some older households to downsize from homes which no longer meet their housing needs or are expensive to run.

9.60   The availability of housing options which are accessible to older people will also provide the opportunity for older households to 'downsize' which can help improve their quality of life.

9.61   It should also be noted that within any category of need there may be a range of products. For example, many recent market extra-care schemes have tended to be focused towards the 'top-end' of the market and may have significant service charges (due to the level and quality of facilities and services).

9.62   Such homes may therefore only be affordable to a small proportion of the potential market, and it will be important for the Council to seek a range of products that will be accessible to a wider number of households if needs are to be met.

County Council Needs Assessment

9.63   As well as the above assessment Cambridgeshire County Council has produced "District Demand Profiles for Older People's Accommodation 2021 – 2036". This shows a significantly lower level of need than that set out in our modelling and uses a different approach to assessing it.

9.64   The County Council focused on individuals requiring support services (or care packages) rather than solely on accommodation needs, which includes individuals living independently at home.

9.65   That said, when the County Council calculate the need for specialist accommodation, they overlay housing survey data to reflect that the fact that not everyone with a care package wants to live in specialist accommodation.

9.66   The County Council's approach to population growth is also linked to the planned housing stock growth and assumptions around average household size.

9.67   As such, the modelled approach set out herein and summarised in Table 9.11, while compliant with the PPG, could potentially overstate the need within Huntingdonshire. Therefore, any applications for new specialist accommodation for older people should also be assessed against the County Council's needs assessment.

Engagement with Cambridgeshire County Council

9.68   To inform this study, we have engaged with officers within the Adult Social Care Team at Cambridgeshire County Council. A summary of that discussion is set out below.

9.69   Officers highlighted that Cambridgeshire County Council does not directly manage sheltered accommodation but does offer associated care packages. Assessments are available to determine the specific needs of older people and individuals with learning disabilities.

9.70   Officers commented that dialogue is ongoing with residential care home providers concerning unfilled vacancies, which are filtering to the market, resulting in fewer planning applications to the council for care homes.

9.71   Recently, planning applications for extra-care development have been limited. Officers highlighted that while the County Council is not actively pursuing additional block bed contracts, site managers retain the option to apply for spot bed contracts with the County Council, where the mutually agreed price and terms and conditions of care are negotiated individually at the time that the bed is required.

9.72   Officers commented that current trends indicate declining demand for lower-level residential care, contrasted with increased demand for higher-level nursing and complex care.

9.73   Presently, the older person's residential care market is stable according to officers, supported by county-wide block bed contracts negotiated with various providers at fixed rates, supplemented by spot framework placements. Presently, there is minimal waiting time for placements in residential care.

9.74   Officers highlighted that block bed contracts, generally established for 10-15 years, have reached their first extension point. These typically incorporate uplift clauses linked to inflation and real living wage adjustments, thus mitigating financial concerns related to accommodation costs.

9.75   Officers noted that the county has an increasingly ageing population, exceeding the national growth, and the age of those entering nursing and dementia care is now older, predominantly aged 75 and above, compared to those in their late-60s previously.

9.76   Officers highlighted that residential care is declining in the county with the exception of Cambridge City. The County Council has invested significantly in reablement services and domiciliary care packages post-hospitalisation to reduce unnecessary admissions to residential care.

9.77   Officers highlighted that the County Council actively promotes extra care housing, allowing individuals to live independently with onsite carers available.

9.78   These schemes have operated within the county for 15 years, with a pressing requirement for further extra-care developments. This would shift some of the need from residential care to extra-care as demand for these types of accommodation is linked.

9.79   Officers commented that strategies aimed at promoting independent living have been successful, evidenced by decreasing demand for

lower-end residential care. Dementia incidences are rising proportionately with the ageing population.

9.80   The quality of care homes is not a concern, with ratings surpassing national and regional averages according to officers. Nevertheless, some older, smaller properties require modernisation or redevelopment to contemporary standards, a trend being actively pursued by several providers.

9.81   Officers commented that there are no significant issues regarding care standards. Most complex care requirements can be accommodated within county facilities, with only exceptional cases necessitating specialist private arrangements or out-of-area placements.

9.82   Local care homes, as listed on the County Council's website, predominantly provide en-suite accommodation, with most schemes recently updated. The majority of extra-care units are one-bedroom, though there is some demand for two-bedroom units, leading to waiting lists in some facilities.

9.83   Officers highlighted that residential care occupancy rates are declining, whereas nursing and complex care occupancy remains high. Extra-care housing units typically have high occupancy rates aided by council placements.

9.84   Brokerage services generally encounter minimal difficulty in securing residential placements across the county. Placements generally occur promptly, indicating effective demand management.

9.85   Officers highlighted that new builds conform to higher accessibility standards, complemented by the Home Improvement Agency's adaptation services for discharged hospital patients and individuals requiring wheelchair-accessible housing when adaptations to existing homes are not feasible.

9.86   Furthermore, grants have supported improvements to the older stock of specialist accommodation to enhance accessibility within the existing stock.

Wheelchair User Housing

9.87   The analysis below draws on secondary data sources to estimate the number of current and future wheelchair users and to estimate the number of wheelchair accessible/adaptable dwellings that might be required in the future.

9.88   Estimates of need produced in this report draw on data from the English Housing Survey (EHS) – mainly 2020/21 data. The EHS data used includes the age structure of wheelchair users, information about work needed to home to make them 'visitable' for wheelchair users and data about wheelchair users by tenure.

9.89   The table below shows at a national level the proportion of wheelchair user households by the age of the household reference person. Nationally, around 3.1% of households contain a wheelchair user – with around 1% using a wheelchair indoors.

9.90   There is a clear correlation between the age of household reference person and the likelihood of there being a wheelchair user in the household.

Table 9.12 Proportion of wheelchair user households by age of household reference person – England

Age of household reference person	No household members use a wheelchair	Uses wheel-chair all the time	Uses wheel-chair indoors only	Uses wheel-chair outdoors only	TOTAL
24 and under	99.4%	0.4%	0.0%	0.1%	100.0%
25-34	99.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	100.0%
35-49	97.9%	0.4%	0.3%	1.4%	100.0%
50-64	97.1%	0.5%	0.2%	2.2%	100.0%
65 and over	94.3%	1.3%	0.5%	4.0%	100.0%
All households	96.9%	0.6%	0.3%	2.2%	100.0%

Source: English Housing Survey (2020/21)

9.91   The prevalence rate data can be brought together with information about the household age structure and how this is likely to change moving forward – adjustments have also been made to take account of the relative health (by age) of the population. The data estimates a total of 1,973 wheelchair user households in 2024, and that this will rise to 2,675 by 2046.

Table 9.13 Estimated number of wheelchair user households (2024-46) – Huntingdonshire

	Preval-ence rate (% of house-holds)	House-holds 2024	House-holds 2046	Wheel-chair user house-holds (2024)	Wheel-chair user house-holds (2046)
24 and under	0.7%	1,407	2,546	10	18
25-34	0.5%	9,959	13,201	47	62
35-49	1.5%	20,794	26,812	313	403
50-64	1.9%	23,299	27,885	440	527
65 and over	4.7%	24,890	35,616	1,164	1,666
All households	-	80,351	106,060	1,973	2,675

Source: Iceni analysis

9.92   The finding of an estimated current number of wheelchair user households does not indicate how many homes might be needed for this group – some households will be living in a home that is suitable for wheelchair use, whilst others may need improvements to accommodation, or a move to an alternative home.

9.93   Data from the EHS (2014-15) shows that of the 814,000 wheelchair user households, some 200,000 live in a home that would either be problematic or not feasible to make fully 'visitable' – this is around 25% of wheelchair user households.

9.94   Applying this to the current number of wheelchair user households across the District gives a current need for 493 additional wheelchair user homes. If the projected need is also discounted to 25% of the total (on the basis that many additional wheelchair user households will already be in accommodation) then a further need for 175 homes in the 2024-46 period can be identified. Added together this leads to a need

estimate of 669 wheelchair user homes – equating to 30 dwellings per annum.

Table 9.14 Estimated need for wheelchair user homes, 2024-46

	Current need	Projected need (2024-46)	Total current and future need
Huntingdonshire	493	175	669

Source: Iceni Analysis

9.95   Furthermore, information in the EHS (for 2020/21) also provides national data about wheelchair users by tenure. This showed that, at that time, around 6.7% of social tenants were wheelchair users (including 1.8% using a wheelchair indoors/all the time), compared with 2.6% of owner-occupiers (0.8% indoors/all the time).

9.96   These proportions can be expected to increase with an ageing population but do highlight the likely need for a greater proportion of social (affordable) homes to be for wheelchair users.

Table 9.15 Proportion of wheelchair user households by tenure of household reference person – England

Tenure	No household members use a wheel-chair	Uses wheel-chair all the time	Uses wheel-chair indoors only	Uses wheel-chair outdoors only	TOTAL
Owners	97.4%	0.6%	0.2%	1.8%	100.0%
Social sector	93.3%	1.3%	0.5%	4.9%	100.0%
Private renters	98.6%	0.2%	0.2%	1.0%	100.0%
All households	96.9%	0.6%	0.3%	2.2%	100.0%

Source: English Housing Survey (2020/21)

9.97   To meet the identified need, the Council could seek a proportion of all new market homes to be M4(3) compliant and potentially a higher figure in the affordable sector.

9.98   The current policy LP25, means that the proportion of M4(3) compliant homes within affordable developments is open to negotiation with the Council's housing team based on a starting point of 30%. On sites with 50 or more market homes 9% are sought as M4(3). This would seem reasonable if it is delivering the homes necessary.

9.99   These figures reflect that not all sites would be able to deliver homes of this type. In the market sector these homes would be M4(3)A (adaptable) and M4(3)B (accessible) for affordable housing.

9.100   As with M4(2) homes, it may not be possible for some schemes to be built to these higher standards due to built-form, topography, flooding, etc. It is noted that six years after the introduction of the policy requirements for provision of M4(2) and M4(3) homes, the majority of planning applications are now meeting the preferred levels of provision.

9.101   It is worth noting that the Government has now reported on a consultation (Raising Accessibility Standards for New Homes[17]on changes to the way the needs of people with disabilities and wheelchair users are planned for as a result of concerns that, in the drive to achieve housing numbers, the delivery of housing that suits the needs of the households (in particular those with disabilities) is being compromised on viability grounds.

9.102   The key outcome is: "Government is committed to raising accessibility standards for new homes". The government response sets out their

---

[17] Raising accessibility standards for new homes: summary of consultation responses and government response - GOV.UK

plans to mandate the current M4(2) requirement in Building Regulations as a minimum standard for all new homes. This change is due to be implemented shortly through a change to building regulations.

9.103   The consultation outcome still requires a need for M4(3) dwellings to be evidenced, stating 'M4(3) (Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings) would continue as now, where there is a local planning policy in place in which a need has been identified and evidenced. Local authorities will need to continue to tailor the supply of wheelchair user dwellings to local demand.'

9.104   As well as evidence of need, the viability challenge is particularly relevant for M4(3)(B) standards. These make properties accessible from the moment they are built and involve high additional costs that could, in some cases, challenge the feasibility of delivering all or any of a policy target.

9.105   It should be noted that local authorities only have the right to request M4(3)(B) accessible compliance from homes for which they have nomination rights. They can, however, request M4(3)(A) adaptable compliance from the wider (market) housing stock.

Affordability

9.106   Huntingdonshire offers a variety of sheltered and retirement housing options, each with unique features to suit different levels of independence and care needs.

9.107   Typical rents seen for one-bed flats across several sheltered/ retirement/extra care housing in Huntingdonshire are set out in the table below. The average across the supported housing providers listed in the table equates to £690. The average for extra care housing equates to £1,198.

Table 9.16 Average rental figures for sheltered housing

Huntingdonshire Providers/ Schemes	Rental Cost (monthly)
Supported Housing (sheltered or retirement)*	
Hanover Court, Brampton	£644
Broad Leas Court, St Ives	£657
De Ramsey Court, Warboys	£675
Ashleigh Court, Warboys	£683
Skeels Court, Huntingdon	£698
McNish Court, St Neots	£529
Oak Tree Court, Godmanchester	£760
Average	**£668**
Extra Care Housing (monthly)	
Eden Place, St Ives	£1,079
Park View, Huntingdon	£1,317
Average	**£1,198**

Source: Iceni review of multiple online directories[xi]

*Supported housing schemes typically have extra service charges on top of rent, which residents pay monthly as part of their housing costs.

9.108   The cost of supported housing is close to that for a 1-bedroom flat in the general housing stock (£678 per month). However, once an element of care is added prices begin to increase rapidly.

9.109   According to the Regulator of Social Housing data[xii], the average rent for supported housing by social landlords in Huntingdonshire, including service charges, was £156.85 per week, with Affordable Rents at £168.99. The average rent for supported housing by private registered providers in Huntingdonshire, including service charges, was £181.02 per week.

9.110   Data from the care home market database indicates the national average monthly cost of extra care housing ranges between £1,000 and £1,500 (£230-£346 pw), varying by area and care needs. Care home costs in the East of England, which can overlap in services with extra care housing, averaging from around £1,339 per week for residential to £1,595 for nursing care.

9.111   Differences in rent levels are likely influenced by the location of properties, the type of accommodation and the use of private financing for development. However, this does highlight the affordability issues surrounding the existing residential care offering and to a lesser degree extra-care.

Older and Disabled People - Summary

9.112   A range of data sources and statistics have been accessed to consider the characteristics and housing needs of the older person population and the population with some form of disability. The two groups are taken together as there is a clear link between age and disability.

9.113   The analysis responds to Planning Practice Guidance on Housing for Older and Disabled People published by Government in June 2019 and includes an assessment of the need for specialist accommodation for older people and the potential requirements for housing to be built to M4(2) and M4(3) housing technical standards (accessibility and wheelchair standards).

9.114   The data shows that Huntingdonshire has a very slightly older age structure than is seen regionally and nationally, and lower levels of disability compared with other areas.

9.115   The older person population shows high proportions of owner-occupation, and particularly outright owners who may have significant

equity in their homes (79% of all older person households are outright owners).

9.116   The older person population is projected to increase notably moving forward. An ageing population means that the number of people with disabilities is likely to increase. Key findings for the 2024-46 period include:

- a 38% increase in the population aged 65+ (potentially accounting for 32% of total population growth);

- a 64% increase in the number of people aged 65+ with dementia and a 54% increase in those aged 65+ with mobility problems;

- a need for around 2,000 additional housing units with support (sheltered/retirement housing) – around 70% in the market sector;

- a need for around 1,200 additional housing units with care (e.g. extra-care) – the majority (around three-quarters) in the market sector;

- a need for additional nursing and residential care bedspaces (around 1,300 in the period); and

- a need for around 670 dwellings to be for wheelchair users (meeting technical standard M4(3)).

9.117   This would suggest that there is a clear need to increase the supply of accessible and adaptable dwellings and wheelchair-user dwellings, as well as providing specific provision of older persons housing.

9.118   Given the evidence, the Council's current policy requiring all dwellings (in all tenures) to meet the M4(2) standards is justified. A proportion of market sector homes could be required to meet M4(3) – wheelchair user dwellings in the market sector (a higher proportion for affordable housing could be left open to negotiation as under the current policy).

9.119   Where the authority has nomination rights, the supply of M4(3) dwellings would be wheelchair-accessible dwellings (constructed for immediate occupation), and in the market sector, they should be wheelchair-user adaptable dwellings (constructed to be adjustable for occupation by a wheelchair user).

9.120   It should, however, be noted that there will be cases where this may not be possible (e.g. due to viability or site-specific circumstances) and so any policy should be applied flexibly.

9.121   In framing policies for the provision of specialist older persons accommodation, the Council will need to consider a range of issues. This will include the different use classes of accommodation (i.e. C2 vs. C3) and requirements for affordable housing contributions (linked to this, the viability of provision).

9.122   There may also be some practical issues to consider, such as the ability of any individual development being mixed tenure given the way care and support services are paid for.

10.   **Other Specific Groups**

Children in Care

10.1   The Care Standards Act 2000 defines a Children's Home stating 'an establishment is a children's home… if it provides care and accommodation wholly or mainly for children'. 'Wholly or mainly' means that most of the people who stay at a home must be children.

10.2   Key legislation relating to the accommodation and maintenance of a looked-after child is defined and outlined in Sections 22A to 22D of the Children Act 1989.

10.3   The legislation provides a framework within which decisions about the most appropriate way to accommodate and maintain children must be considered:

- Section 22A of the Children Act 1989 imposes a duty on the responsible authority when a child is in their care to provide the child with accommodation.

- Section 22B of the Children Act 1989 sets out the duty of the responsible authority to maintain a looked-after child in other respects apart from providing accommodation.

- Section 22C of the Children Act 1989 sets out the ways in which a looked-after child is to be accommodated.

- Section 22D of the Children Act 1989 imposes a duty on the responsible authority to formally review the child's case prior to making alternative arrangements for accommodation.

- Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 gives a local authority a general duty to secure sufficient accommodation for looked after children and it also requires local authorities to take strategic action in respect of those children they look after and for whom it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation within their own local authority area.

10.4   In a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) made in May 2023, the Housing and Planning Minister reminded local authorities of their requirement to assess the housing need of different groups in the community, including "accommodation for children in need of social services care".

10.5   The WMS said, "Local planning authorities should give due weight to and be supportive of applications, where appropriate, for all types of accommodation for looked after children in their area that reflect local needs and all parties in the development process should work together closely to facilitate the timely delivery of such vital accommodation for children across the country".

10.6   The WMS follows on from the Department for Education (DfE) Implementation Strategy to fix children's social care from February 2023. The "Stable Homes Built on Love" Strategy has undergone a recent consultation, the results of which have not yet been published.

10.7   The strategy outlines an ambition to transform Children's Care through six pillars. The first of these pillars makes it clear that providing support to families is the first priority. This ensures that children can remain in their family home for as long as possible (Pillar 1) and then within their wider family if this is not possible (Pillar 3).

10.8   If both the immediate and wider family cannot look after a child, then Pillar 4 seeks to ensure that "when care is the best choice for a child, it is critical that the care system provides stable, loving homes close to children's communities."

10.9   To achieve this, the strategy aims to increase and support foster carers; develop a programme to support improvements in the quality of leadership and management in the children's homes sector and path-find Regional Care Cooperatives to plan, commission and deliver care places.

10.10   The report sets out a mission to "see an increase of high-quality, stable and loving homes available for every child in care, local to where they are from." To do this, it suggests that an immediate action is to "boost the number of the right homes in the right places available for children as a matter of urgency."

10.11   The strategy notes, "Local authorities have primary responsibility for the children in their care. This includes ensuring there is sufficient accommodation locally to meet the range of needs of children in care in their area," and that there is a "statutory duty to ensure there is sufficient provision for their children in care."

10.12   It also states that the DfE "will continue to build on our work reforming supported accommodation for 16- to 17-year-olds. Semi-independent provision, including supported lodgings, can be the right option for some older children, but only where it is high-quality, and the young person is ready for the level of independence it promotes."

10.13   The DfE will also continue "with the Children's Home Capital Programme, which has seen £259 million of capital funding invested to increase provision in local authority-run open and secure children's homes. We are working with local authorities to create new children's homes and increase provision in their local area."

10.14   At a similar time, the government also launched a consultation on the "Children's Social Care National Framework" and the "Children's Social Care Dashboard".

10.15   The Framework sets out some of the outcomes to be measured, including Outcome 4 relating to those seeking to ensure "children in care and care leavers have stable, loving homes".

10.16   The indicators include the percentage of children in care living in foster care and living in residential care homes, and the distance of placements from home. This is important to ensure the stability of

schooling and contact with their siblings. The framework recognises that this will mean prioritising foster homes rather than residential homes.

10.17   The outcome can also be achieved by leaders undertaking "sufficiency planning and working with other local authorities and partners to jointly invest in care options that meet the future needs of children."

Engagement with Cambridgeshire County Council Children's Services

10.18   To inform this study, we have engaged with officers within the Children's Services at Cambridgeshire County Council. A summary of that discussion is set out below.

10.19   Children's Services currently cover a broad area across the county and Peterborough. The area is mainly rural, although there are large urban areas in Peterborough and Cambridge.

10.20   Cambridgeshire County Council has an old sufficiency strategy, which, according to officers, is no longer relevant, and they are in the process of updating this strategy.

10.21   The County Council's overarching policy is to ensure children are cared for as long as possible within their own families (where it is safe to do so). If this is not possible, then children should be placed in foster care again, where this is available and safe to do so. If not, then children will be placed in residential care homes.

10.22   Officers commented that there are currently around 700 looked-after children within the county and Peterborough (0.4% of the population under 18), of which 63 are placed in residential children's care homes (0.03%).

10.23   Although the county has 32 registered children's care facilities offering 193 residential beds, officers highlighted that a significant proportion of these are filled by placements from outside the area, such as children from London and elsewhere.

10.24   As a result, approximately 53% of children in Cambridgeshire requiring specialised care are placed outside the county due to insufficient local provisions. Officers highlighted a particular lack of provision for single children with more complex needs.

10.25   To address this shortage, officers commented that the County Council is developing its own facilities. They have secured approval to refurbish two council-owned farmhouses, each of which will accommodate two children.

10.26   Because these sites are in remote locations, these homes will specifically cater to children with complex needs and those who are difficult to place, thereby reducing the necessity of sending children out of the area for solo provisions.

10.27   Foster care provision remains inadequate, with only 180 foster carers available in the county, according to officers. To alleviate this issue, offices highlighted that the council is adopting the "Christian Bale model", whereby larger new-build affordable housing is offered to foster families, enabling them to accommodate more children.

10.28   This initiative is particularly crucial as there is an increasing number of siblings requiring placements, necessitating larger homes. Moreover, officers highlighted that the current foster carer population is ageing, leading to a decline in numbers.

10.29   The County Council emphasises the importance of placing children in family environments, and fostering is also encouraged to support children stepping down from residential care home placements.

10.30   Typically, children in care homes range in age from 11-16 before moving into semi-independent accommodation. However, officers commented that fostering aims to allow children to "stay put" until the age of 21.

10.31   The County Council is actively seeking to expand provision and is eager to collaborate with multiple providers to enhance sufficiency. Local

authorities across the County and Peterborough are encouraged to support further proposals to meet growing demands.

10.32   Regionally, there has been a marked increase in children whose assessed care needs remain unmet, often resulting in inappropriate placements in residential care rather than foster families, particularly affecting younger children who then risk becoming institutionalised.

10.33   To better serve local children, officers highlighted that the County Council intends to work proactively with external providers and establish block book provision through a tendering process, thus ensuring local supply for Cambridgeshire children.

10.34   The County Council recognises an urgent need for more single child provision specifically aimed at children aged 12-15 with complex needs.

10.35   Ideally, any new residential children's care homes should be situated near public transport links with easy access to essential services and education.

10.36   This strategic placement aims to reduce dependency on private transport and taxis and ensure minimal disruption to children's educational continuity.

10.37   As well as new provision, officers are seeking to repurpose existing stock. However, when refurbishing council properties for foster carers and residential care, officers noted that considerations must include mitigating property damage from complex-needs children.

10.38   Design recommendations include installing underfloor heating rather than radiators, spotlights rather than hanging lights, and ensuring properties are free from ligatures and potential weapons.

10.39   Finally, officers highlighted that while there is a range of supported accommodation available within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, most Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) prefer placements in Peterborough to remain close to local mosques.

10.40   Efforts are underway to collaborate more closely with mosques in Cambridge to support these children within this locality. For Huntingdonshire, this might mean providing accommodation in the Yaxley area.

Projecting Need

10.41   Engagement with the County Council has revealed the number of Children in Care and looked after children in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. We have translated these into prevalence rates based on the known population aged under 18 in this area.

10.42   These prevalence rates have then been applied to the projected population growth linked to the Standard Method for Huntingdonshire. As shown in the table below, this would result in an increased demand for 3 additional residential beds in children's care homes by 2046.

Table 10.1 Need for Residential Children's Care Homes

Component	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	Hunting-donshire 2024	Hunting-donshire 2046	Change
Under 18s Population	195,148	38,240	48,300	10,060
Children in Care	700	153	193	40
Prevalence	0.40%	0.40%	0.40%	
Residential Care	63	11	14	3
Prevalence	0.03%	0.03%	0.03%	

Source: Iceni Projects based on County Council Data

10.43   However, it should be reiterated that this is a nominal calculation, and the demand for additional residential care bedspaces for children will depend on the success or otherwise of preferred alternatives such as familial care or foster care.

Meeting the Needs Of Looked After Children

10.44   The WMS statement said "Local planning authorities should give due weight to and be supportive of applications, where appropriate, for all

types of accommodation for looked after children in their area that reflect local needs"

10.45   The national and County policy direction is to provide in-situ support, followed by familial and foster support. Therefore, the demand for care homes will largely be determined by the success of these policies. Where this is not possible, then local authorities will be required to provide safe accommodation in the right places.

10.46   When considering future supply, the Council should seek to include such accommodation as part of wider, appropriately located, housing allocations or larger permissions. Typically, these are "ordinary homes."

10.47   This need would be met and managed by a combination of the County Council and through external providers. Such sites should align with the most appropriate locations according to Ofsted's Location Assessment for such accommodation. In summary, this includes ensuring safeguarding concerns are met and that children have access to services.

10.48   There will also be a need for supported accommodation for young adults, and the Council should work with the County Council and Registered Providers to explore opportunities to provide this through developer contributions and in the existing stock.

10.49   The Council may also wish to explore opportunities to access future independent sector supply for local children rather than out-of-area placements. This could be achieved through planning or licensing regulations forcing operators to give first refusal to local children.

Service Personnel

10.50   There are active and former military bases in Huntingdonshire, specifically RAF Wyton, RAF Alconbury and RAF Molesworth. RAF Alconbury is a joint-service base with the US Air Force and the RAF.

10.51   According to data from the Ministry of Defence (MOD), as of April 2024, there are 2,200 military (UK Regular Forces) and MOD Civilian Personnel based in Huntingdonshire. Data was not made available to this study on the number of US military personnel and their dependents resident in the district.

10.52   The proportion of service personnel within Huntingdonshire makes up 13% of all service personnel across the East of England region and 26% of the county.

10.53   The Census also collects data on those who have previously served in the UK armed forces. This shows that Huntingdonshire has an above average level of population who previously served in the UK regular armed forces and similar levels of reservists.

Table 10.2 Previously Served Population (2021)

	Huntingdonshire		Cambridge-shire	East of England	England
	number	%	%	%	%
All usual residents aged 16 and over	148,261	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Previously served in UK regular armed forces	6,769	4.6	3.2	2.9	2.9
Previously served in UK reserve armed forces	1,100	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Previously served in both regular and reserve UK armed forces	295	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Has not previously served in any UK armed forces	140,097	94.5	96.0	96.2	96.2

Source: ONS, Census 2021

10.54   In total, around 8,164 people living in Huntingdonshire have served in the regular or reserved armed forces at one stage.

National Policy

10.55   Annex 2 of the NPPF identifies Military Personnel as Essential Key Workers. Depending on their incomes, this group will already be accounted for within the affordable housing need and will largely not be additional to it.

10.56   The Planning Practice Guidance for First Homes also allows local authorities to set out their own criteria for accessing such housing. One such criterion could be a key worker requirement, which would include service personnel. Although it is unlikely that First Homes will be delivered in Huntingdonshire or indeed anywhere as the tenure has not been met with much success.

10.57   The most acute and pressing issue is likely to be finding accommodation for those transitioning out of the forces. Low Cost Home Ownership routes could play a part in meeting this demand.

10.58   While there are issues with homeless veterans, the scale of this need is potentially overstated according to MOD representatives. One reason for this perception is that some beggars portray themselves as veterans when often they are not. Data shows that service personnel are less likely to be homeless and have greater access to help.

10.59   The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations ensure that Service personnel (including bereaved spouses or civil partners) are not required to have a local connection in order to access housing.

10.60   This means that ex-service personnel would not suffer a disadvantage from any 'residence' criteria chosen by the Local Authority in their allocations policy.

10.61   Furthermore, any ex-armed forces personnel with mental health issues who present themselves to the Council as homeless would be assisted as a vulnerable group and would be given priority need for housing.

10.62   The Council is a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant, which is a promise between the Council and the armed forces and their families to ensure they will be prioritised, including for housing need and supporting adjustments made to homes if disabled in service.

Engagement with USAAF

10.63   To inform this study, we have engaged with the USA Air Force. However, they were unable to say how many service personnel were based in Huntingdonshire as their report system does not pick up the continuous movement of service members moving in and out the area

10.64   They noted that they had no barracks on RAF Alconbury; however, their dorms are currently running at 100% occupancy, and government-owned housing (on-base) is at 82%.

10.65   They noted that prices are rising off-base, meaning service members are finding it difficult to find something that fits their needs within the price limitations they have. Contracting costs are also rising, meaning on-base properties are harder to 'turn around' to get them ready for new occupiers.

10.66   They noted that off-base housing is becoming limited as new laws come in for landlords, and a number of them are choosing to sell and move on from being a landlord meaning fewer rentals are available for service members.

10.67   They did not have any plans to change the number of personnel stationed in Huntingdonshire. Service members have the right to choose where they live when moving off-base, but are advised to stay close to work for commuting purposes.

Custom and Self-build Register

10.68   As of 1ˢᵗ April 2016, and in line with the 2015 Act and the Right to Build, relevant authorities in England are required to have established and publicised a self-build and custom housebuilding register which records those seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the authority's area to build their own self-build and custom houses.

10.69   Huntingdonshire Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register was introduced on the 1ˢᵗ ᵒᶠ April 2016, and there have now been eight and a half base periods up to 30ᵗʰ October 2024.

10.70   A base period is a period of typically 12 months in which demand for custom and self-build is recorded. However, the first base period began on the day on which the register was established and ended on 30 October 2016 in accordance with national requirements.

10.71   Each subsequent base period is the period of 12 months beginning immediately after the end of the previous base period. Subsequent base periods will therefore run from 31 October to 30 October each year.

10.72   The Council is required to grant sufficient planning permissions to meet the demand identified on the Register as per the 2015 Act (as amended) within 3 years of the end of each base period.

10.73   There is no reporting mechanism to know if self-built homes have actually been delivered or if the people on the register have secured a plot. It should be noted that people can register on as many local authorities' Custom and Self-build Registers as they choose to.

10.74   The table below provides a base period breakdown of those individuals who have expressed demand for serviced plots of land in Huntingdonshire. We have also included data on the number of plots permitted three years after each base period.

10.75   Huntingdonshire's Custom and Self-Build Register is divided into two parts: Part One records local demand from those who meet the Local Connections Test, while Part Two tracks general demand without requiring a local connection. For plan-making purposes, both Part 1 and Part 2 need to be considered.

10.76   In total, around 356 people have registered an interest in a self and custom build plot in Huntingdonshire over the last eight and a half base periods.

10.77   This averages out at 42 per base period, although registration numbers have declined in recent years, with an average of only 13 individuals on Part One and Part Two for the two most recent base periods (2022-2024).

10.78   Although this indicates the future need for plots, the actual requirement will depend on the numbers entering the register. There will also be a need to address any backlog.

10.79   Since 2016, there have been 378 Custom and Self-Build permissions granted at an average of 44 per base period. The table below outlines registrations and permission figures for each base period.

Table 10.3 Summary of self-build registrations and commencement figures

Base Period	Part 1	Part 2	Total Annual Entries	Permissions
Base Period 1 (1st April 2016 to 30th October 2016)	10	2	12	18
Base Period 2 (31st October 2016 to 30th October 2017)	23	2	25	39
Base Period 3 (31st October 2017 to 30th October 2018)	47	21	68	55
Base Period 4 (31st October 2018 to 30th October 2019)	43	30	73	55
Base Period 5 (31st October 2019 to 30th October 2020)	27	16	43	50
Base Period 6 (31st October 2020 to 30th October 2021)	36	26	62	49
Base Period 7 (31st October 2021 to 30th October 2022)	31	16	47	43
Base Period 8 (31st October 2022 to 30th October 2023)	15	1	16	40
Base Period 9 (31st October 2023 to 30th October 2024)	9	1	10	29
Total	**241**	**115**	**356**	**378**
Average (8.5 base periods)			42	44
Timed Out Requirements (excluding the last three years)			283	378
Supply and Demand Balance				**95**

Source: Annual Monitoring Report, 2023/24

10.80   Under the current legislation, local authorities have three years to respond to the identified need. This means that if we exclude the last three years of demand, the council will have been required to permit 283 suitable plots against which there has been a delivery of 378. This includes permissions up to the current year, as anything in the last three years can address historic need.

10.81   Overall, there has been an oversupply of permitted plots in the region of 95 dwellings. This would also address the need in the interim period, which stands at around 73 people.

Annual Monitoring Report

10.82   The annual monitoring report also examines several qualitative aspects of custom and self-build demand in Huntingdonshire. This has revealed:

- The most common reasons for interest in self-build are given as higher environmental performance (24%), larger home (18%) and improving or learning building and construction skills (15%).

- Demand is found across the district, but the greatest demand is for smaller settlements (32%) and in the countryside (28%).

- Half of those registered have said they are interested in building a home greater than 500 sqm, with 40% seeking 5+ bedrooms.

- Around 61% are seeking a detached house and 23% a detached bungalow; and

- Around 80% said they anticipated spending more than £400,000.

Broader demand evidence

10.83   To supplement the data from the authority's' register, we have looked to secondary sources as recommended by the PPG, which for this report is data from NaCSBA - the national association for the custom and self-build housing sector.

10.84   First, it is worth highlighting that the October 2020 survey undertaken by YouGov on behalf of NaCSBA found that 1 in 3 people (32%) are interested in building their own home at some point in the future, including 12% who said they were very interested.

10.85   Notably, almost half (48%) of those aged between 18 and 24 were interested in building their own home, compared to just 18% of those aged 55 and over.

10.86   This is notable as, traditionally, self-build has been seen as the reserve of older members of society aged 55 and over, with equity in their property[xiii].

10.87   Secondly, we can draw on NaCSBA data to better understand the level
of demand for serviced plots in Huntingdonshire in relative terms. The
association published an analysis with supporting maps and
commentary titled "Mapping the Right to Build" in 2020.

10.88   This document includes an output on the demand for serviced plots as
a proportion of the total population relative to all other local authorities
across England (see Figure below).

Figure 10.1 Total registrations per 100,000 population in
Huntingdonshire in 2020
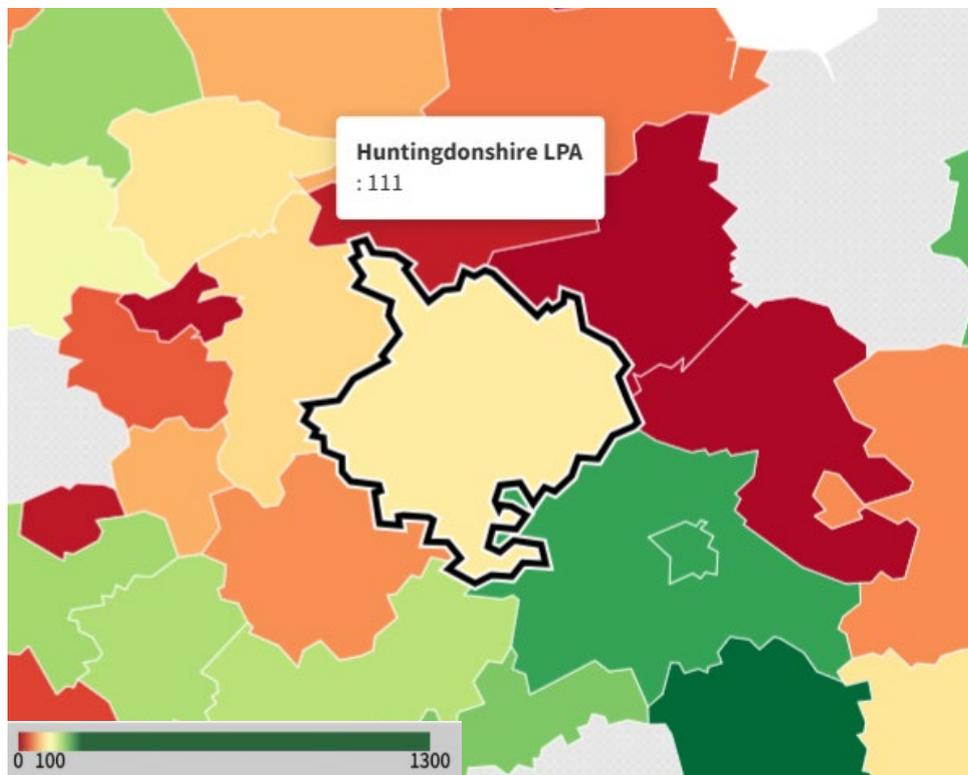
Source: NaCSBA

10.89   This shows that the demand in Huntingdonshire was 111 per 100,000
population. Based on the population of the district in 2024 of around
188,000, this would equate to a need for around 208 units.

10.90   With the population projected to increase to 234,000, this would
generate a need for 260 dwellings. This is slightly lower than the
identified need on the register.

10.91   Despite the figure from NaCSBA being lower than the level of demand
         shown on the register, the council still have a duty to permit enough
         plots for self and custom build as indicated by the register.

Potential Policy Response

10.92   The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding PPG sets out how authorities
         can increase the number of planning permissions which are suitable for
         self-build and custom housebuilding and support the sector.

10.93   The PPG is clear that authorities should consider how local planning
         policies may address identified requirements for self and custom
         housebuilding to ensure enough serviced plots with suitable permission
         come forward, and can focus on playing a key role in facilitating
         relationships to bring land forward.

10.94   There are several other measures which can be used to meet demand,
         including but not limited to:

   •   supporting Neighbourhood Planning groups where they choose to
       include self-build and custom-build housing policies in their plans;

   •   working with Homes England to unlock land and sites in wider public
       ownership to deliver self-build and custom-build housing;

   •   when engaging with developers and landowners who own sites that
       are suitable for housing, encouraging them to consider self-build and
       custom housebuilding, and facilitating access to those on the
       register where the landowner is interested; and

   •   working with local partners, such as Housing Associations and third
       sector groups, to custom build affordable housing for veterans and
       other groups in acute housing need.

10.95   An increasing number of local planning authorities have adopted
         specific self-build and custom housebuilding policies in their respective
         Local Plans to encourage delivery, promote and boost housing supply.

10.96   There are also several appeal decisions in the context of decision-
         making which have found that paragraph 11(d) of the Framework is

engaged in the absence of specific policy on self-build housing when this is the focus of a planning application.

10.97   At present, the Local Plan Policy LP25 states, "Where appropriate, the Council will work with developers, registered providers, landowners and relevant individuals or groups to address identified local requirements for self and custom-build homes as identified in the Huntingdonshire self and custom-build register." This would be classed as a general encouragement policy.

10.98   Another policy option would typically require that a minimum proportion of plots within development schemes (often over a certain size) are offered to self-builders or as custom-build plots and/or allocation of sites solely for their use. This is often known as the "Teignbridge Rule" after the first District Council to adopt the first self-build policy. In that instance, 5% of all developable housing land is allocated for custom and self-build on larger sites.

10.99   Iceni consider that to respond to demand in the sector and in response to the PPG's requirements, the Council should continue to support, through planning policy, the submission and delivery of self-build and custom housebuilding sites, where land opportunities arise and where such schemes are consistent with other planning policies.

Co-Living

10.100   There is no accepted planning definition of "co-living" in either the NPPF or planning practice guidance. However, Co-living developments generally involve private rooms or studios with access to shared communal facilities like kitchens, living areas and workspaces. They are often large-scale developments.

10.101   While the NPPF does not specifically mention co-living, it highlights that the needs of specific housing groups should be addressed with

reference to the size, type and tenure of housing (paragraph 63) they require.

10.102   Savills' research[xiv] indicates that demand for co-living accommodation is concentrated in London and other major regional cities and estimates the potential size of the target market for Co-living across the UK to be around 725,000 units. There are currently no Co-living developments in Huntingdonshire.

10.103   The closest co-living scheme to the district is the Marmalade Lane co-housing scheme, located in Orchard Park in Cambridge, which offers 42 units with a focus on community and a wide mix of homes. The development is suitable for residents of all ages and a mix of family types. When available, units are available to buy or rent.

The Profile of Co-Living Tenants

10.104   Target residents of co-living developments are typically students, recent graduates and young professionals and most development is located in city centres.

10.105   Savills also profiled a co-living development in Guildford and noted that it has attracted residents working in "healthcare, gaming, and technology."

10.106   In another co-living development in Wembley, the same research showed that only around 41% of residents had lived in London previously, and 35% of residents were from overseas.

10.107   Although open to all ages, residents of co-living developments are predominantly aged 18–40 years old. However, Co-living is also increasingly seen as a valuable option for older people, offering frameworks for older adults that address the risks of loneliness and social isolation while providing affordable accommodation. Of the limited case studies available for older persons, these tend to be in the form of cohousing rather than co-living.

10.108   Given the above, there is only likely to be limited demand for Co-living in Huntingdonshire. Although engagement with the USAAF suggests that the cost and availability of rental accommodation is becoming an issue and this suggests that there could be a market for transient military personnel stationed nearby.

Benefits of Co-Living

10.109   As well as addressing housing need, co-living benefits young professionals facing affordability pressures, as well as those who are new to an area, as it allows them to establish roots and make friendships when otherwise they might face a degree of isolation.

10.110   The Savills research also stated that co-living has several pull factors (extensive amenities, interaction with fellow residents, flexible leases and all-inclusive bills) but demand is also aided by the push factors of high house prices, a lack of PRS stock, high rents and people seeking to avoid house-shares, some of which are not relevant to Huntingdonshire.

Co-living Potential Policy Response

10.111   The PPG on Build to Rent (of which Co-living is a component) recognises that where a need is identified that local planning authorities should include a specific plan policy relating to the promotion and accommodation of Build to Rent.

10.112   At the present time, we do not think that it would be necessary for the Council to consider a policy to respond to future applications.

10.113   However, if the council do think otherwise, given that the sector is still evolving, we would recommend that the Council is not overly prescriptive on the mix of dwelling sizes within new such developments.

10.114   The Council should also recognise that the viability of Co-living schemes is likely to differ relative to other forms of development, as income is generated over time rather than when the market properties are sold.

10.115   Therefore, the Council's policy on affordable housing provision in such schemes should be informed by up-to-date viability evidence which recognises this.

10.116   This may mean seeking a different contribution of affordable housing than the wider general housing policies.

Students

10.117   There are no higher education providers/facilities in Huntingdonshire and the 2021 Census reported only 19 all-student households in the District. There is therefore no justification for a specific policy relating to student housing in the District.

Other Specific Groups – Summary

Looked After Children

10.118   The County Council's overarching policy is to ensure as few children as possible will be placed in residential care homes.

10.119   There are currently around 700 looked-after children within the county and Peterborough (0.4%), of which 63 are placed in residential children's care homes (0.03%).

10.120   Although the county has 32 registered children's care facilities, a significant proportion of these are filled by placements from outside the area. As a result, there is insufficient local provision.

10.121   To address this shortage, the County Council is developing its own facilities and actively seeking to expand provision through collaboration with the independent sector.

10.122   If current prevalence rates continue, the projected population growth, linked to the Standard Method, would result in an increased demand for 3 additional residential beds in children's care homes by 2045 (a total of 14).

10.123   But additional demand for residential care bedspaces for children will depend on the success or otherwise of preferred alternatives such as familial care or foster care.

10.124   Regardless, the Council are encouraged to support further proposals to meet growing demands.

10.125   There will also be a need for supported accommodation for young adults, and the Council should work with the County Council and Registered Providers to explore opportunities to provide this.

Service Families

10.126   The Huntingdonshire is home to several military establishments, including RAF Wyton, RAF Alconbury and RAF Molesworth. RAF Alconbury is a joint-service base with the US Air Force and the RAF.

10.127   According to data from the Ministry of Defence (MOD), as of April 2024, there are 2,200 military (UK Regular Forces) and MOD Civilian Personnel based in Huntingdonshire.

10.128   Overall, the presence of regular forces in Huntingdonshire is not considered to be significant and is unlikely to have any implications on overall affordability, but it may be driving demand in local areas.

10.129   It is considered that the most pressing issue is likely to be finding accommodation for those transitioning out of the forces, as well as existing personnel who are seeking to buy in the District.

10.130   Provision of Low-Cost Home Ownership can help account for this, as well as the Allocation of Housing regulations, which allow military personnel to establish local connections to the area.

10.131   Overall, this group are likely to already be accounted for within affordable housing need and is not considered to be additional to it.

Custom and Self-Build

10.132   The Council is required to grant sufficient planning permissions to meet the demand identified on the Register within 3 years of the end of each base period.

10.133   There has been a total of 356 registered expressions of interest in a serviced plot of land in Huntingdonshire. This is an average of 42 registrations per base period (12 months, but not a calendar year). Although recent registrations have fallen.

10.134   Although this indicates the future need for plots, the actual requirement will depend on the numbers entering the register and any unmet need, of which to date there is none.

10.135   There will also be a more stringent requirement for the Council to demonstrate that this supply is being occupied by those commissioning or customising the build before it can be counted towards the supply.

10.136   The Council may wish to consider a policy for self and custom build as a proportion of new homes on larger developments, as well as its current policy supporting it.

Students and Co-living

10.137   We do not consider it to be necessary to develop a policy to address the need for students or Co-living.

11. **Glossary**

Affordable Home Ownership	A variety of sub-market home ownership products. This category includes shared ownership, shared equity and First Homes.
Affordable Housing Need	All households whose needs are not met by the market can be considered in affordable housing need.
Base Period	A specific timeframe used for monitoring self and custom build dwellings (typically 1st November to 31st of October)
Bedroom Standard	The Bedroom Standard is an ONS definition of the ideal number of bedrooms a household needs based on its composition and sets criteria for when a home is overcrowded, ideally occupied or under-occupied. It allocates bedrooms by age, sex and relationships among household members to assess housing.
Build to Rent	Residential developments, constructed specifically for the purpose of being rented out, rather than sold.
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. It is an important tool for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area.
Co-living	A form of Build to Rent this is a modern living arrangement where someone rents a room or studio apartment within a communal

	property, benefiting from shared amenities and activities.
Custom and Self-Build	Self-build and custom housebuilding cover a wide spectrum, from projects where individuals are involved in building or managing the construction of their home from beginning to end, to projects where individuals commission their home, making key design and layout decisions, but the home is built ready for occupation
HMA	Housing Market Area is a functional geography effectively replicating typical areas of search
HMO	Houses in Multiple Occupation – Shared accommodation among unrelated adults within a single dwelling
Household	The Census defines a household as "either one person living alone or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address with common housekeeping – that is, sharing at least one meal a day or sharing a living room or sitting room."
Housing Need	The quantum of homes need in an area and is calculated using the standard method
Housing Requirement	The quantum of homes being planned for within an area also known as a housing target. This may differ from the housing need.
Household Reference Person	A household member who is effectively head of a household. If there are joint householders, the one with the highest income is the household reference person under the ONS definition

Housing with Care	Housing, which comes with an element of care from a third party includes tenures such as extra care housing, assisted living, retirement villages, independent living, assisted living, close care and sheltered living.
Housing with Support	Housing, which comes with an element of support from a third party, including sheltered accommodation.
Labour Supply	The number of people who are available for work in a given area
Looked After Children	A child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a looked-after child.
LURA	Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 which provided additional legislation in relation to housing issues including self and custom build.
Median Incomes	Midpoint of all incomes if sorted from highest to lowest
M4(2)	A building regulation standard where dwellings are accessible and adaptable.
M4(3)	A building regulation standard where dwellings are fully suitable for those who use a wheelchair.
MYE	Mid-year population estimates produced annual by ONS
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework is the UK government's national policy for England's planning system, outlining policies for housing, economic development, and the environment
Occupancy rating	Whether a household's accommodation is overcrowded,

	ideally occupied or under-occupied. This is calculated by comparing the number of bedrooms the household requires (see bedroom standard) to the number of available bedrooms. Occupancy rating of -1 or less implies the accommodation has fewer bedrooms than required, +1 implies more bedrooms than required and 0 suggests there are an ideal number of bedrooms.
Older person	Individuals over the age of 65
PBSA	Purpose Built Student Accommodation
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance provide further guidance on how the NPPF is applied
SNPP	Subnational Population Projections produced by ONS
Service Families	Families of individuals serving or previously served in the UK armed forces.
Standard Method	The standard method is a formula for determining housing need it uses a formula that incorporates a baseline of local housing stock, which is then adjusted upwards to reflect local affordability pressures to identify the minimum number of homes expected to be planned for.

References

[i] Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Memorandum of Co-operation. Supporting the Spatial Approach 2011-2031.
[ii] Office for National Statistics, 2011. Census.

[iii] Office for National Statistics, 2024. Population estimates for England and Wales:mid-2023.
[iv] Office for National Statistics, 2021. Census.
[v] MHCLG, 2025. Dwelling Stock Estimates.
[vi] Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan, 2023/24. Annual Monitoring Report – Part 2 (Policy Analysis)
[vii] HM Land Registry, 2025. Price Paid Data.
[viii] Office for National Statistics, 2025. Housing affordability in England and Wales.
[ix] Valuation Office Agency, 2023. Private rental market statistics.
[x] MHCLG, 2025. Housing and economic needs assessment.
[xi] Housing21.org.uk; housingcare.org; Huntingdonshire.gov.uk/housing; carehome.co.uk; helpinghandshomecare.co.uk; platformhg.com; anchor.org.uk; housing.org.uk; Huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media; rightmove.co.uk
[xii] Regulator of Social Housing, 2023. Registered providers stocks and rent.
[xiii] NaCSBA, 2020. Self and Custom Build: Consumer Survey of Self-Build Intentions & The Effect of COVID-19 on How We See Our Homes.
[xiv] Savills, 2022. UK Co-living: a market poised for huge growth.

Page 280

Housing Estimates

Overview

New data has been published on housing including the types of accommodation people live in, whether they own or rent the property, information about rooms and bedrooms, central heating and car or van availability. This report summarises the latest estimates for Huntingdonshire and how these compare to other areas and to 2011 estimates, where possible. This dataset can help to answer questions such as:

- how many households reported living in accommodation with more than one bedroom?
- how many households owned their accommodation compared with those who rent?
- how many households used renewable energy for their central heating?
- did more households have use of a car or van than in 2011?

Accommodation type

These estimates classify households by accommodation type, as at Census Day on 21 March 2021. Although the ONS have compared Census 2021 data on household spaces with at least one usual resident to Census 2011 data of the same title, there are differences in how the data has been categorised. For example, in the Census 2011 a separate category for 'Shared dwelling' was included within the dataset, however this category is not separated in Census 2021 data. Therefore, any comparisons made between Census 2011 and Census 2021 below are caveated to this degree.

Across Huntingdonshire, 88.0% (67,656) of households lived in a house or bungalow, 11.2% (8,627) lived in a flat, maisonette or apartment and 0.8% (595) lived in a caravan, or other mobile or temporary structure.

While 2021 Census data separates those households living in a flat, maisonette or apartment from those living in a caravan or other mobile or temporary structure, the data released from the 2011 Census combined them. Combining Census 2021 data for this district about households who lived in a caravan, or other mobile or temporary structure with those living in flats, maisonettes or apartments shows a 14.3% increase in the proportion of households in this category since 2011. The number of households in this type of accommodation increased from 7,277 in 2011 to 9,222 in 2021. The table below shows how the numbers and percentages of homes by accommodation type compared to our local authority neighbours, the East of England and England.

| Location	Number and percentage lived In House or Bungalow		Number and percentage lived In Flat, maisonette or apartment including caravans or other mobile temp structures	
	2011	2021	2011	2021
England	17,235,610 (78.1%)	18,128,595 (77.4%)	4,749,803 (21.5%)	5,307,490 (22.6%)
East of England	2,017,702 (83.3%)	2,150,834 (81.8%)	401,675 (16.6%)	477,948 (18.2%)
Cambridgeshire	218,075 (86.8%)	236,693 (85.3%)	32,551 (13.0%)	40,941 (14.7%)
Peterborough	62,110 (83.9%)	69,770 (82.5%)	11,848 (16.0%)	14,763 (17.5%)
Cambridge	31,612 (67.7%)	34,021 (64.8%)	14,590 (31.2%)	18,451 (35.2%)
East Cambs	31,860 (92.0%)	33,871 (91.0%)	2,742 (7.9%)	3,333 (9.0%)
Fenland	36,838 (90.7%)	39,657 (90.0%)	3,734 (9.2%)	4,424 (10.0%)
Huntingdonshire	62,036 (89.5%)	67,656 (88.0%)	7,277 (10.5%)	9,222 (12.0%)
South Cambs	55,729 (92.5%)	61,488 (91.8%)	4,208 (7.0%)	5,507 (8.2%)

In 2021, there were 76,880 households in Huntingdonshire, in which 178,376 usual residents (98.6% of all usual residents) lived. The number of households has increased by 11% since 2011.

The proportions of households living in different types of accommodation remained similar across the decade from 2011 to 2021, with almost 9 in 10 households living in houses or bungalows. The proportion living in houses or bungalows decreased across the decade but the number increased (from 89.5%, 62,036 in 2011 to 88.0%, 67,656 in 2021).

More detailed data showed the proportions of households living in different types of houses or bungalow including:

- 23,248 households (30.2% of all households) were in semi-detached properties, the same proportion in 2011 but with an increase in numbers (30.2%, 20,929)
- 30,548 (39.7%) were in detached properties, which is a smaller proportion but an increase in numbers from 2011 (40.4%, 28,013)
- 13,860 (18.0%) were in terraced properties, which is also a smaller proportion but an increase in numbers from 2011 (18.9%, 13,094)

The graph below shows the proportions per accommodation type in 2021 for Huntingdonshire, our local authority neighbours, the East of England and England.

Census 2021 - Accomodation Type, All Households
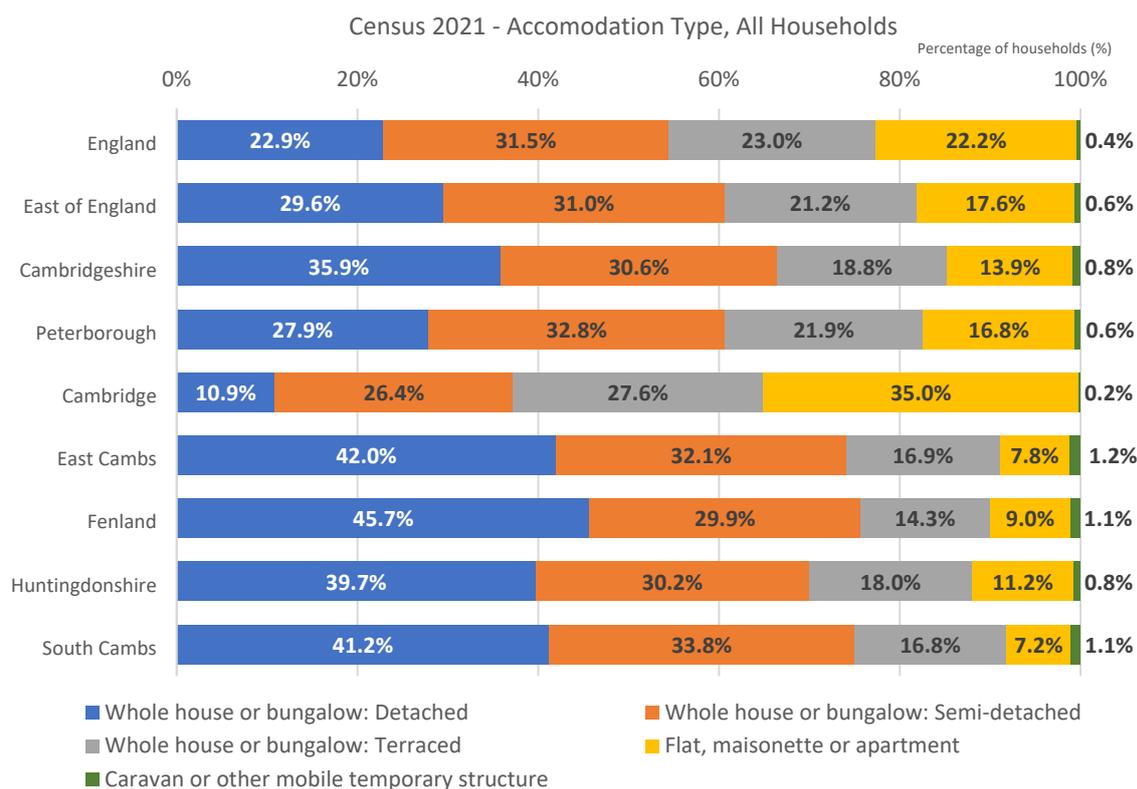
Data from the Census 2021 shows that the proportion of different accommodation types is relatively similar across our local authority neighbours. The biggest exception is Cambridge; more than one in three households in Cambridge lived in a flat, maisonette or apartment (35.0%, 18,372). This is considerably higher than East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (varying from 7.8% in East Cambridgeshire to 16.8% in Peterborough).

Housing Tenure

Tenure is whether a household rents or owns the accommodation that it occupies.

Owner-occupied accommodation can be:

- owned outright, which is where the household owns all of the accommodation,
- owned with a mortgage or loan, or
- part-owned on a shared ownership scheme

Rented accommodation can be:

- private rented (for example, rented through a private landlord or letting agent, or
- social rented through a local council or housing association

This information is not available for household spaces with no usual residents.

In 2021, 70.3%, (54,074) of households in Huntingdonshire owned the accommodation they lived in, 29.6% (22,783) rented their accommodation and 23 households of households (0%) lived rent free.

Households that rent their accommodation were asked what type of landlord owns or manages it. As in the 2011 Census, there is evidence of people incorrectly identifying their type of landlord between two of the response options. Those two options were "Council or local authority" and "Housing association, housing co-operative, charitable trust, registered social landlord". This issue is particularly clear in results for Huntingdonshire as we have no local authority housing stock since it was transferred more than 20 years previously. Despite this, over 1,800 respondents chose the option "Council or local authority", similar to the 2011 Census estimate. Therefore, these two categories have been added together for analysis of data using this variable. Further information is available from the ONS on the housing quality information for Census 2021 methodology.

The census data on tenure in Huntingdonshire shows:

- a decrease in the proportion of households that owned their accommodation, to 70.3%, 54,074 in 2021 (from 72.0%, 49,906, in 2011)
- an increase in the proportion of households that rented their accommodation, to 29.6%, 22,783, in 2021 (from 27.0%, 18,709, in 2011)
- a decrease in the proportion of households that lived rent free, to 0 %, 23, in 2021 (from 1%, 718, in 2011)

The data on accommodation ownership (the percentage of households who owned their accommodation outright or with a mortgage, loan or shared ownership) and renting can be broken down further to show that:
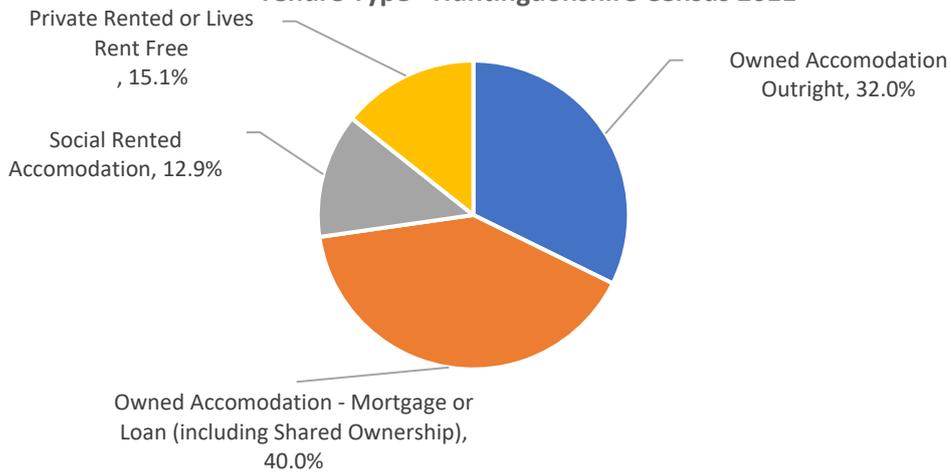
- 35.9% of households (27,621) owned the accommodation they lived in outright, an increase from 32.0% (22,171) in 2011
- 34.4% (26,453) owned their accommodation with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership, which is a smaller proportion than in 2011 (40.0%, 27,735)
- 16.8% (12,897) rented their accommodation privately, up from 14.1% (9,770) in 2011
- 12.9% (9,886) were in the social rented sector, for example through a housing association; this is the same proportion compared to 2011 but is an increase in numbers (12.9%, 8,939)

The pie charts below show how the proportion of housing tenure types in Huntingdonshire has changed since the 2001 Census.
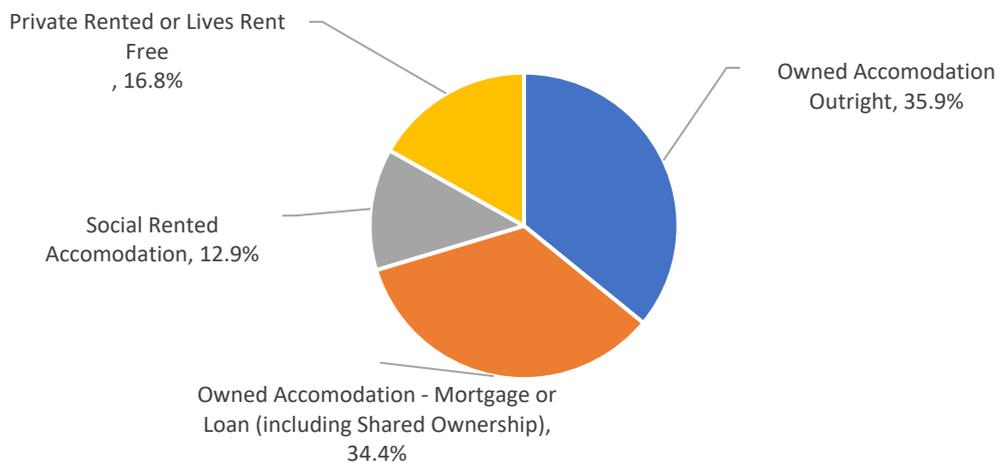
Tenure Type - Huntingdonshire Census 2001

Private Rented or Lives Rent Free

Owned Accomodation Outright, 27.0%

Social Rented Accomodation, 13.0%

Owned Accomodation - Mortgage or Loan (including Shared Ownership), 49.1%

Tenure Type - Huntingdonshire Census 2011

Private Rented or Lives Rent Free , 15.1%

Owned Accomodation Outright, 32.0%

Social Rented Accomodation, 12.9%

Owned Accomodation - Mortgage or Loan (including Shared Ownership), 40.0%

Tenure Type - Huntingdonshire Census 2021

Private Rented or Lives Rent Free , 16.8%

Owned Accomodation Outright, 35.9%

Social Rented Accomodation, 12.9%

Owned Accomodation - Mortgage or Loan (including Shared Ownership), 34.4%

The following graph shows how the number of households by tenure type in Huntingdonshire has changed since the 2001 Census.

How Tenure Type Has Changed In Huntingdonshire Since 2001

Legend: ■ 2001 ■ 2011 ■ 2021
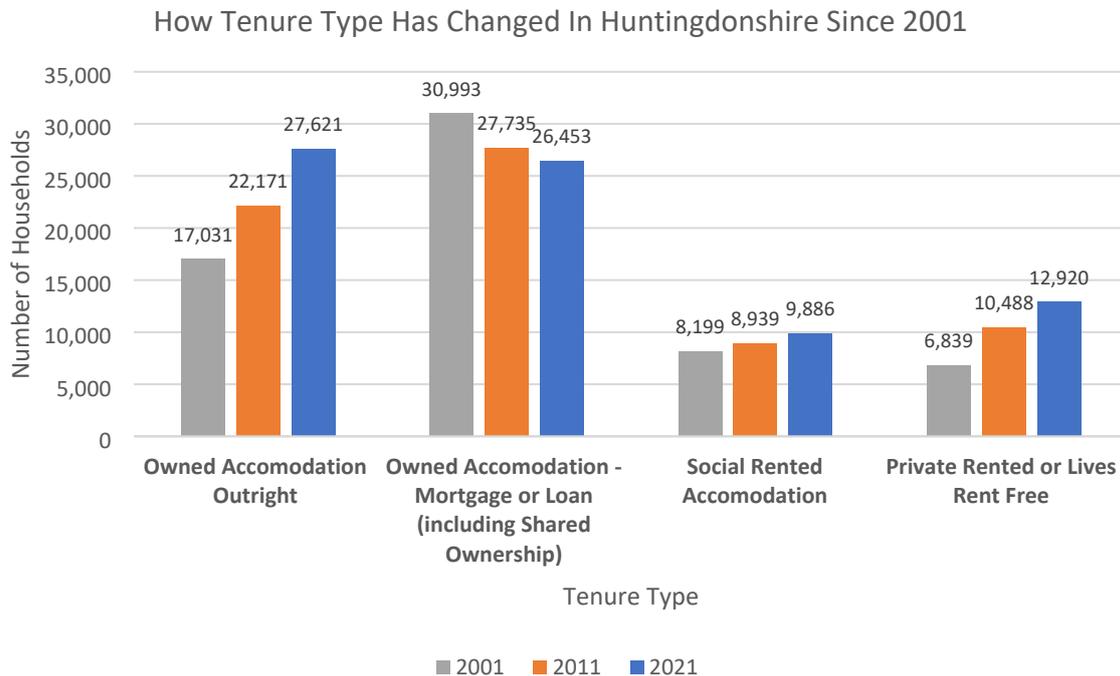
How Tenure Varied In Different Locations

Overall home ownership (the percentage of households who owned their accommodation outright or with a mortgage, loan or shared ownership) was the second highest in Huntingdonshire (70.3%) when compared to our local authority neighbours. South Cambridgeshire was the only district to have a higher proportion of overall home ownership (71.4%) as shown in the graph below.

Census 2021 Tenure Type - All Households

Location	% Owned or Shared Ownership	% Social Rented Sector	% Private Rented or Lives Rent Free
England	62.3%	17.1%	20.6%
East of England	66.2%	15.5%	18.3%
Cambridgeshire	65.4%	15.2%	19.4%
Peterborough	56.9%	18.6%	24.5%
Cambridge	45.7%	22.7%	31.6%
East Cambs	69.5%	14.0%	16.5%
Fenland	67.3%	12.7%	20.0%
Huntingdonshire	70.3%	12.9%	16.8%
South Cambs	71.4%	14.5%	14.1%

Legend: ■ % Owned or Shared Ownership ■ % Social Rented Sector ■ % Private Rented or Lives Rent Free

The overall level of home ownership among all households has decreased in all our nearest local authority neighbours, the Cambridgeshire county, the Eastern region and England since 2011 as shown in the table below. However, all areas have higher numbers than in 2011.

Location	Total Households 2011	2011 Respondents Who Owned The Accommodation They Lived In		Total Households 2021	2021 Respondents Who Owned The Accommodation They Lived In		Percentage Difference 2021 vs 2011	Percentage Change 2021 vs 2011
		Number	%		Number	%	%	%
England	22,063,368	14,148,784	64.1%	23,436,085	14,605,016	62.3%	-1.8%	3.2%
East of England	2,423,035	1,655,621	68.3%	2,628,782	1,740,802	66.2%	-2.1%	5.1%
Cambridgeshire	251,241	168,856	67.2%	277,634	181,476	65.4%	-1.8%	7.5%
Peterborough	74,023	44,566	60.2%	84,533	48,059	56.9%	-3.4%	7.8%
Cambridge	46,714	22,697	48.6%	52,474	24,003	45.7%	-2.8%	5.8%
East Cambs	34,614	24,225	70.0%	37,202	25,872	69.5%	-0.4%	6.8%
Fenland	40,620	28,641	70.5%	44,083	29,688	67.3%	-3.2%	3.7%
Huntingdonshire	69,333	49,906	72.0%	76,880	54,074	70.3%	-1.6%	8.4%
South Cambs	59,960	43,387	72.4%	66,996	47,839	71.4%	-1.0%	10.3%

The percentage of those who owned their home outright in Huntingdonshire (35.9%) was higher than the national (32.5%), regional (34.6%) and Cambridgeshire county (34.2%) averages and was similar to rates in South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland districts.

Over a third of owned accommodation (26,453 households) in the district were those with mortgages, loans or part of Shared Ownership (34.4%), which is higher than the national (29.8%), regional (31.6%) and Cambridgeshire county (31.1%) averages.

Huntingdonshire had a lower proportion of households that rented privately (16.8%) or in the social rented sector (12.9%) compared to national (20.5% private, 17.1% social), regional (18.2% private, 15.5% social) and Cambridgeshire county (19.3% private, 15.2% social) averages.

The number of households in Huntingdonshire that were living rent free in March 2021 fell from 718 in 2011 to just 23 in 2021. This mirrors decreases seen in other neighbouring local authorities such as East Cambridgeshire (down to 10 in 2021 from 869 in 2011) and Fenland (down to 19 in 2021 from 584 in 2011).

Rooms

The number of rooms dataset provides Census 2021 estimates that classify all household spaces with at least one usual resident by the number of rooms they have. For Census 2021, the ONS used Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data to count the number of rooms in a dwelling. This was rather than using the approach from previous censuses of asking the question on the census form. All rooms in a dwelling apart from bathrooms, toilets, halls or landings, kitchens, conservatories, or utility rooms are counted. For households living in a shared dwelling, the number of rooms are counted for the whole dwelling and not the individual household.

In Huntingdonshire, 7.3% (5,637) of households had one or two rooms, 67.5% (51,920) had three, four or five rooms, 23.8% (18,324) had six, seven or eight rooms and 1.3% (999) had nine or more rooms. The district had a lower proportion of households with one or two rooms (7.3%) than the England (11.1%), Eastern region (10.2%) and Cambridgeshire county (8.8%) averages. This was also the case when comparing the proportion of households in Huntingdonshire with three, four or five rooms (67.5%) to national (74.0%), regional (72.2%) and county (69.4%) estimates. Huntingdonshire

had higher proportions of households with six, seven or eight rooms (23.8%) and nine or more rooms (1.3%) than the national average (13.8% and 1.1%).

The VOA method for counting number of rooms differs in several ways from the method used in the 2011 Census. For example, the VOA method includes storage rooms (excluded in the 2011 Census) but excludes kitchens, conservatories, and utility rooms (included in the 2011 Census). For this reason, Census 2021 data on number of rooms should not be directly compared with the equivalent 2011 Census data. For more information, please refer to the ONS article: Estimating the number of rooms in Census 2021: an update on imputation methods for Valuation Office Agency data.

Bedrooms

The number of bedrooms dataset provides Census 2021 estimates that classify all household spaces with at least one usual resident by number of bedrooms. As in 2011, the Census 2021 form directly asked about the number of bedrooms available to the household.

The data show that the proportion of households in Huntingdonshire with one, two and four or more bedrooms increased across the decade from 2011 to 2021, whereas the proportion with three bedrooms decreased:

- 8.0% (6,160) of households had one bedroom (up from 7.6%, 5,302 in 2011)
- 21.6% (16,616) had two bedrooms (up from 21.4%, 14,842 in 2011)
- 39.6% (30,420) had three bedrooms (down from 41.3%, 28,602 in 2011)
- 30.8% (23,684) had four or more bedrooms (up from 29.7%, 20,587 in 2011)

The percentage of households in Huntingdonshire with one bedroom (8.0%) was lower than England (11.6%), Eastern region (10.7%) and county (9.7%) estimates. Whereas the percentage of households in the district that had four or more bedrooms in 2021 (30.8%) was higher than in England (21.1%), the Eastern region (23.9%), Cambridgeshire (28.2%) and most of our local authority neighbours. Only South Cambridgeshire had a higher proportion of households in this category than Huntingdonshire (35.6%).

Overcrowding and under-occupancy

Occupancy rating provides a measure of whether a household's accommodation is overcrowded or under-occupied. An occupancy rating of negative 1 or less implies that a household has fewer bedrooms than the standard requirement, positive 1 implies that they have more bedrooms than required, and 0 implies that they met the standard required. For further information on the definition for bedroom occupancy, please refer to the Glossary section below.

The occupancy rating for bedrooms dataset provides estimates that classify households by occupancy rating based on the number of bedrooms in the household. In Huntingdonshire, a smaller proportion of occupied households had fewer bedrooms than required in 2021 (1.9%, 1,432) compared with 2011 (2.3%, 1,594). 19.6% (15,090) had the required number of bedrooms, which is slightly higher than estimated at 2011 (19.3%), and the remaining 78.5% (60,359) of occupied households had more bedrooms than required, which is similar to results from 2011 (78.4%).

The proportion of occupied households with fewer bedrooms than required in Huntingdonshire (1.9%, 1,432) was lower than it was in England (4.4%, 1.02 million), in the Eastern region (3.4%, 89,764) and in Cambridgeshire (2.4%%, 6,714).
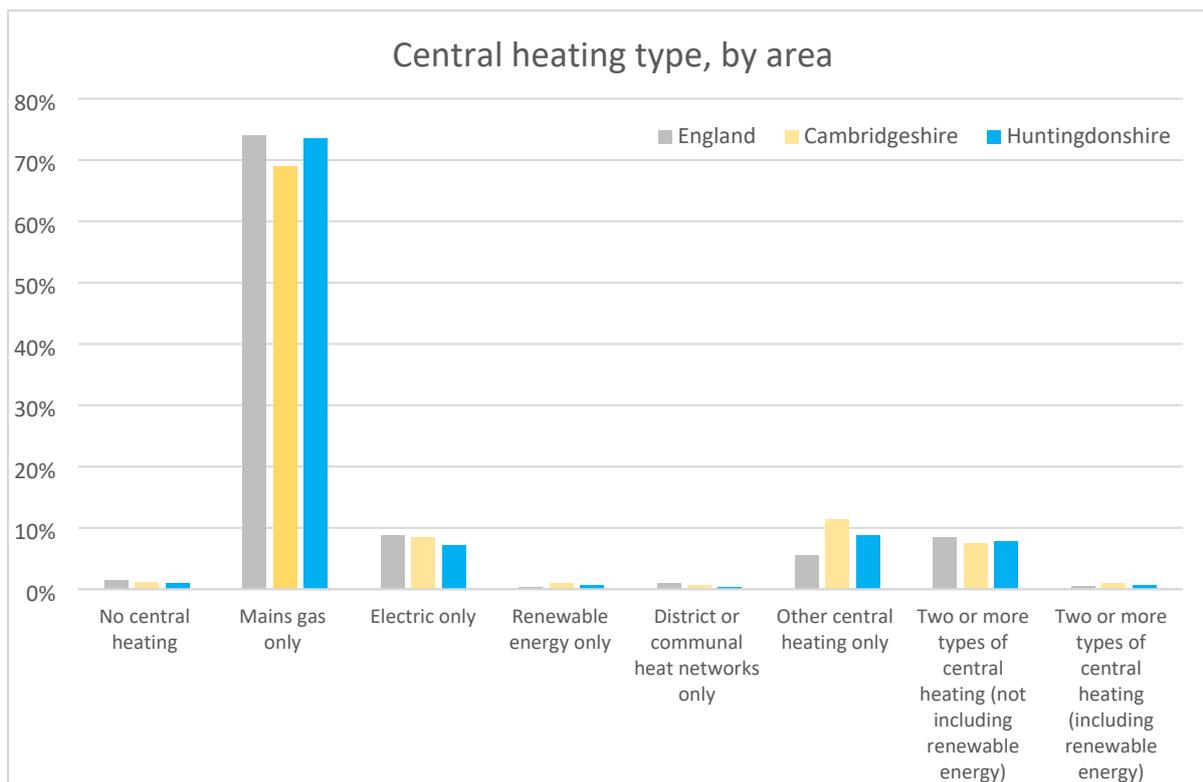
Census 2021 - Percentage of Households by Bedroom Occupancy Rating

Area	Under-occupied	Met the Required Standard	Overcrowded
England	68.8%	26.8%	4.4%
East of England	71.4%	25.2%	3.4%
Cambridgeshire	74.7%	22.8%	2.4%
Peterborough	65.4%	28.6%	6.1%
Cambridge	60.2%	35.3%	4.5%
East Cambs	79.0%	19.2%	1.8%
Fenland	73.6%	23.5%	2.9%
Huntingdonshire	78.5%	19.6%	1.9%
South Cambs	80.2%	18.4%	1.4%

■ Under-occupied
(Occupancy Rating Of +1 Or Higher)
■ Met the Required Standard
(Occupancy Rating Of 0)
■ Overcrowded
(Occupancy Rating Of -1 Or Lower)

The only local area to report an increase since 2011 in the proportion of overcrowded households with fewer bedrooms than required was Peterborough, where the proportion increased from 5.1% a decade ago to 6.1% in 2021. The proportion of under-occupied households that had more bedrooms than required in Huntingdonshire was slightly higher in 2021 when compared to 2011, an increase from 78.4% (54,346 households) to 78.5% (60,359 households) in 2021. This is similar to the change reported nationally in this category, with the England average up from 68.7% in 2011 to 68.8% in 2021. The only other local area to see an increase in the proportion of households that had more bedrooms than required was East Cambridgeshire, up from 78.4% in 2011 to 79.0% in 2021.

Central Heating

The vast majority of occupied households across Huntingdonshire reported that they had central heating in 2021 (99%, 76,094). However, 1.0% (787) had no central heating.

The most common types of central heating among occupied households in Huntingdonshire were mains gas only (73.6%, 56,557), two or more types of central heating (not including renewable energy; 7.9%, 6,068), electric only (7.2%, 5,546) and oil only (6.9, 5,307).

Huntingdonshire had a lower proportion with no central heating (1.0%) compared with the national average (1.5%). The proportions with other types of central heating were mostly similar to the proportions reported for England, with the exceptions of electric only (7.2% in Huntingdonshire compared to 8.7% nationally) and oil only (6.9% in Huntingdonshire compared to 3.2% nationally). These differences are likely to be related to the rural nature of parts of the district. In the following graph, the "Other central heating" category also includes the categories "Tank or bottled gas only", "Oil only", "Wood Only" and "Solid Fuel only".

Central heating type, by area

Legend: England, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire

Categories (x-axis): No central heating; Mains gas only; Electric only; Renewable energy only; District or communal heat networks only; Other central heating only; Two or more types of central heating (not including renewable energy); Two or more types of central heating (including renewable energy)

2021 Census data on central heating has been described as 'broadly comparable' to 2011 data due to the latest form adding the categories "Renewable energy (for example, solar thermal or heat)" and "District or communal heat network", splitting the category "Gas" into "Mains gas" and "Tank or bottled gas" and separating the category "Wood (for example, logs, waste wood or pallets)" from "Solid fuels".

We can reasonably compare data on households in Huntingdonshire without central heating (the number has fallen by over 500 from 1,292 in 2011 to 787 in 2021, and the proportion has fallen from 1.9% to 1.0%), with gas only central heating (fallen from 77% to 74.7%) and with oil central heating (fallen from 8.5% to 6.9%). The proportion of the district's households with two or more types of central heating has also changed, more than doubling from 3.9% in 2011 to 8.6% in 2021.

Renewable energy

For the first time, Census 2021 recorded whether a household's central heating used renewable energy sources. Overall, 1.3% of occupied households in Huntingdonshire (984) used at least one renewable energy source. A total of 0.7% (511) reported using renewable energy alongside another type of central heating, and the remaining 0.6% (473) used only renewable energy sources.

Huntingdonshire's proportion of households using at least one renewable energy source (1.3%) was higher than the national average (0.9%) but lower than the levels reported in all other districts within Cambridgeshire. Cambridge had the next lowest proportion of households using at least one renewable energy source at 1.4% but also had a higher proportion of households with central heating provided by district or communal heat networks only at 2.1% compared to 0.2-0.3% for all other districts in Cambridgeshire. South Cambridgeshire had the highest proportion of households using at least one renewable energy source in Cambridgeshire at 3.1%. South Cambridgeshire has the 10th highest proportion of households using at least one renewable energy source of all lower tier local authority areas in England and Wales.

East Cambridgeshire, Fenland and South Cambridgeshire are among just 29 lower tier local authority areas out of 331 across England and Wales where the number of households centrally heated by renewable energy only outnumbered those with no central heating. Huntingdonshire had 473 households centrally heated by renewable energy only and 787 households with no central heating.

Car or Van Availability

As in previous censuses, Census 2021 asked households how many cars or vans the household owned or had available to them. In 2021:

- 13.1% (10,040) of occupied households in Huntingdonshire had no cars or vans (down from 13.6% in 2011, although the number has increased from 9,441)
- 40.1% (30,862) had one car or van (down from 40.8%, number up from 28,269 in 2011)
- 34.3% (25,363) had two cars or vans (up from 34.7%, 24,048 in 2011)
- 12.5% (9,615) had three or more cars or vans (up from 10.9%, 7,575 in 2011)

Huntingdonshire had a lower percentage of occupied households with no cars or vans than the national average (23.5%). The proportion with 2 cars or vans was above the national average of 26.1% and the proportion with 3 or more cars or vans was also above the national average (9.2%). The graph below compares Huntingdonshire with the other districts in Cambridgeshire.
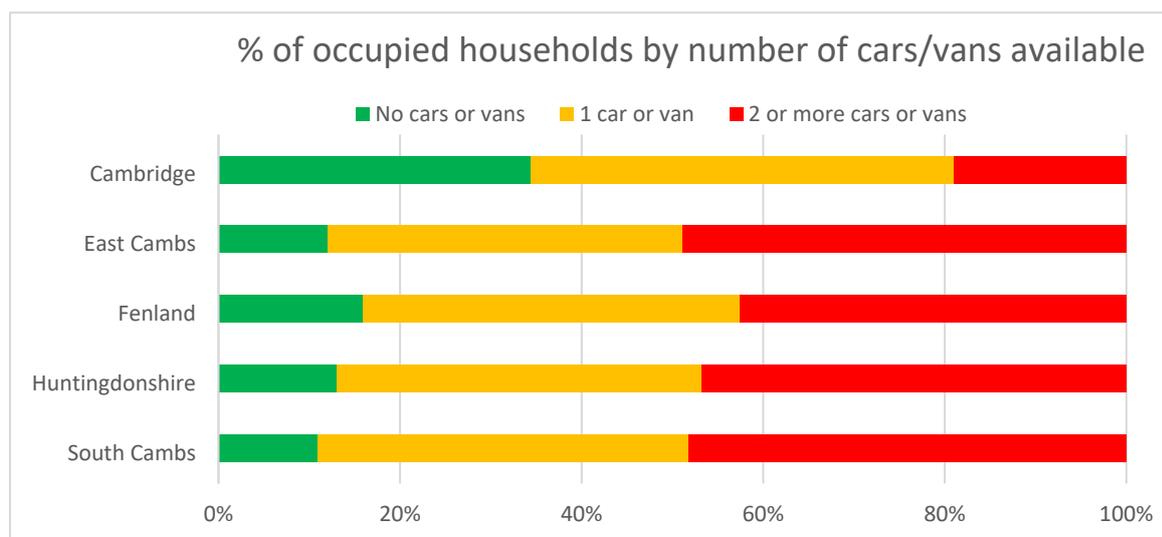
Links for further reading

2021 Census, HDC intranet:
https://councilanywhereorg.sharepoint.com/sites/HDC/SitePages/Census-2021.aspx

People with second addresses report on Census 2021 data for Huntingdonshire: People With Second Addresses Report.docx (sharepoint.com)

Communal establishment residents report on Census 2021 data for Huntingdonshire: Communal Establishment Residents Report.docx (sharepoint.com)

Office for National Statistics statistical bulletin on Housing: Housing, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

Office for National Statistics how homes are heated in your area publication : How homes are heated in your area - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

Office for National Statistics statistical bulletin on people with second addresses : People with second addresses, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

Office for National Statistics statistical bulletin on Communal establishment residents: Communal establishment residents, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

Glossary

Usual resident: A usual resident is anyone who on Census Day, 21 March 2021, was in the UK and had stayed or intended to stay in the UK for a period of 12 months or more, or had a permanent UK address and was outside the UK and intended to be outside the UK for less than 12 months. References to 'residents' will relate to usual residents unless otherwise stated.

Accommodation type: The type of building or structure used or available by an individual or household. This could be:

- the whole house or bungalow
- a flat, maisonette or apartment
- a temporary or mobile structure, such as a caravan

Whole house or bungalow

This property type is not divided into flats or other living accommodation. There are three types of whole houses or bungalows.

- Detached - None of the living accommodation is attached to another property but can be attached to a garage.
- Semi-detached - The living accommodation is joined to another house or bungalow by a common wall that they share.
- Terraced - A mid-terraced house is located between two other houses and shares two common walls. An end-of-terrace house is part of a terraced development but only shares one common wall.
- Flats (apartments) and maisonettes - An apartment is another word for a flat. A maisonette is a 2-storey flat.

This information is not available for household spaces with no usual residents.

Household tenure – whether a household owns or rents the accommodation that it occupies:

Owner-occupied accommodation can be:

- owned outright, which is where the household owns all of the accommodation
- with a mortgage or loan
- part-owned on a shared ownership scheme

Rented accommodation can be:

- private rented (for example, rented through a private landlord or letting agent
- social rented through a local council or housing association

This information is not available for household spaces with no usual residents.

Household: A household is defined as:
- one person living alone, or
- a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room or sitting room, or dining area

This includes:
- all sheltered accommodation units in an establishment (irrespective of whether there are other communal facilities), and
- all people living in caravans on any type of site that is their usual residence; this will include anyone who has no other usual residence elsewhere in the UK

A household must contain at least one person whose place of usual residence is at the address. A group of short-term residents living together is not classified as a household, and neither is a group of people at an address where only visitors are staying.

Number of bedrooms: The number of bedrooms available for use in a household's accommodation. This number is not available for household spaces with no usual residents.

Number of rooms (VOA): A room can be any room in a dwelling apart from bathrooms, toilets, halls or landings, kitchens, conservatories, or utility rooms. All other rooms, for example, living rooms, studies, bedrooms, separate dining rooms and rooms that can only be used for storage are included. If two rooms have been converted into one, they are counted as one room.
The number of rooms is recorded by address. This means that for households living in a shared dwelling, the number of rooms are counted for the whole dwelling and not the individual household. This definition is based on the Valuation Office Agency's (VOA) definition.

Occupancy rating bedrooms: Whether a household's accommodation is overcrowded, ideally occupied or under-occupied. This is calculated by comparing the number of bedrooms the household requires to the number of available bedrooms.

The number of bedrooms the household requires is calculated according to the Bedroom Standard, where the following should have their own bedroom:
1. married or cohabiting couple
2. single parent
3. person aged 16 years and over
4. pair of same-sex persons aged 10 to 15 years
5. person aged 10 to 15 years paired with a person under 10 years of the same sex
6. pair of children aged under 10 years, regardless of their sex
7. person aged under 16 years who cannot share a bedroom with someone in 4, 5 or 6 above

An occupancy rating of:
- -1 or less implies that a household's accommodation has fewer bedrooms than required (overcrowded)
- +1 or more implies that a household's accommodation has more bedrooms than required (under-occupied)
- 0 suggests that a household's accommodation has an ideal number of bedrooms

Central heating: Central heating is a heating system used to heat multiple rooms in a building by circulating air or heated water through pipes to radiators or vents. Single or multiple fuel sources

can fuel these systems. Central heating systems that are unused or not working are still considered. No information is available for household spaces with no usual residents.

Renewable Energy Source: examples include solar thermal or heat pumps.

Number of cars or vans: owned or available for use by household members. Vehicles included:

- pick-ups, camper vans and motor homes
- vehicles that are temporarily not working
- vehicles that have failed their MOT
- vehicles owned or used by a lodger
- company cars or vans if they're available for private use

Vehicles not included:

- motorbikes, trikes, quad bikes or mobility scooters
- vehicles that have a Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN)
- vehicles owned or used only by a visitor
- vehicles that are kept at another address or not easily accessed

The number of cars or vans in an area relates only to households. Cars or vans used by communal establishment residents are not counted. Households with 10 to 20 cars or vans are counted as having only 10. Households with more than 20 cars or vans were treated as invalid and a value imputed.

Further data releases

The Office for National Statistics has announced provisional release dates for a range of topic summaries between November 2022 and January 2023. These topic summaries include sets of data, or datasets, most of which include data from a single variable (a particular characteristic of a person or household, for example, religion or accommodation type). Topics are currently expected to be released in this order:

- Education
- Health, disability and unpaid care

Reports on each of these topics will be produced after data is published and will be available on our intranet here: https://councilanywhereorg.sharepoint.com/sites/HDC/SitePages/Census-2021.aspx

Source: Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright 2023

Prepared by: Business Intelligence and Performance Management, Huntingdonshire District Council

This page is intentionally left blank

Public - Yes
Key Decision – Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title:　　　　　　　Self-Designation of the Great Ouse Valley Way

Meeting/Date:　　　Informal Cabinet – 16th March 2026
Overview and Scrutiny – Wednesday 1st April 2026

Executive Portfolio:　Councillor Sarah Conboy – Executive Leader, Chair of the Cabinet and Executive Councillor for Place, Group Leader, Liberal Democrats

Report by:　　　　　Harriet Robinson – Place and Climate Lead
Kirsten Taylor-Scarff – Projects and Policy Officer

Ward(s) affected:　　All

Executive Summary:

Work to secure formal landscape recognition for the Great Ouse Valley and Washes has been ongoing for more than a decade. The Great Ouse Valley Trust (GOVT) submitted a case for Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) status in 2014 at Natural England's request and by 2019 the area was listed as a potential future AONB. Since 2023, Natural England has prioritised selections of new national parks and is not advancing further AONBs, now known as 'National Landscapes' designations.

Given this pause and in light of Cambrigeshire's rapid growth, low levels of land managed for nature and the absence of any protected landscape – the GOVT and other partners are exploring a self-designation approach. This is based on the belief that this would strengthen nature recovery, protect landscape character and support health, wellbeing and the local economy, with excellent accessibility from Cambridge via the Guided Busway.

In order to establish whether there was an evidence base for this approach, and to consider its suitability, HDC agreed to work with GOVT. A joint business case commissioned by both organisations (£10,000 each) – the outcome of which is the work undertaken by Arkwood (hereafter referred to as the Arkwood Report or AR), which is Appendix 1 accompanying this report. The AR assesses 3 boundary options and indicates that the 'Option 2 - Core Valley plus Ouse Washes' option provides the best balance of ecological coherence, scale, deliverability and strategic fit.

Economic modelling suggests self-designation under Option 2 could safeguard between £98 million and £593 million of annual economic revenue, with indicative annual running costs of £840,000-£1.06 million, implying a strong cost-to-value ratio. The analysis is based on local official datasets and extrapolated pre-Covid studies. However, further local evidence is recommended to refine estimates.

To move from concept to deliverable programme, the report indicates further work would be required, including a time-bound development phase to establish partnership governance; complete targeted evidence gathering (business survey, visitor survey and natural capital account); prepare a draft management plan and develop a funding and communications plan and seeking CPCA involvement where appropriate. The AR also identifies the implications of self-designation, including ongoing revenue considerations relating to management of the designation; these along with risks, are important to consider in the context of the AR report, to ensure a balanced view against the benefits identified by it.

The AR aligns with and supports HDC's Place, Climate Strategies and within the local plan as follows:
- Climate Strategy: increase biodiversity and natural capital and sustainable travel with low emissions
- Corporate Plan Action 53 – expand positive climate action support for local businesses, celebrating, enabling and influencing best practice and sharing knowledge
- Current Local plan, LP3: Green Infrastructure – Great Ouse Valley
- Place Strategy: incorporation of all 5 journeys: Pride in Place, environmental innovation, inclusive economy, health embedded and travel transformed

Work connected with the GOV and the GOVT, specifically the taking forward of any proposals relating to self-designation, do not form part of any identified activities within the existing Corporate Plan; nor the 26/27 variation of the same which has been approved for adoption from 1st April 2026. The continued support of HDC in relation to broad collaboration and working in partnership, do however broadly align with the Enable or Influence aspects of those plans. It is clear however, that these are discretionary activities.

Since the work was commissioned, there have been other changes which are relevant to how the work with the GOVT is taken forward in light of the AR. HDC currently lacks capacity and funding (based on the recently agreed budget) to lead the programme independently. Additionally, Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is a significant factor, both in terms of strain on resources, but also in terms of what is realistically achievable in the context of HDC ceasing to exist from 2028, and decisions being prudent and appropriate in the context of not binding the future authority.

Having considered the AR and recognising that this is not a formal validation or review of its findings, HDC has identified a number of concerns that shape its current position. While the work is valuable and the desirability of enhanced recognition for the GOV is acknowledged, questions remain about the overall value of a self-designation approach and the practicalities of taking the work forward. The potential benefits must be balanced against uncertainties around resourcing, deliverability and the wider strategic context. It is there suggested that

2

HDC continues to work closely with the GOVT to explore ways of addressing these underlying concerns but that it would not be appropriate at this stage to commit to any enduring governance or operational delivery arrangements.

Recommendation(s):

The Overview & Scrutiny Panel is invited to consider and comment on the Report..

Public - Yes
Key Decision – Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title:	Self-Designation of the Great Ouse Valley Way
Meeting/Date:	Informal Cabinet – 16th March 2026 Overview and Scrutiny – Wednesday 1st April 2026 Cabinet – Tuesday 21st April 2026
Executive Portfolio:	Councillor Sarah Conboy – Executive Leader, Chair of the Cabinet and Executive Councillor for Place, Group Leader, Liberal Democrats
Report by:	Harriet Robinson – Place and Climate Lead Kirsten Taylor-Scarff – Projects and Policy Officer
Ward(s) affected:	All

Executive Summary:

Work to secure formal landscape recognition for the Great Ouse Valley and Washes has been ongoing for more than a decade. The Great Ouse Valley Trust (GOVT) submitted a case for Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) status in 2014 at Natural England's request and by 2019 the area was listed as a potential future AONB. Since 2023, Natural England has prioritised selections of new national parks and is not advancing further AONBs, now known as 'National Landscapes' designations.

Given this pause and in light of Cambrigeshire's rapid growth, low levels of land managed for nature and the absence of any protected landscape – the GOVT and other partners are exploring a self-designation approach. This is based on the belief that this would strengthen nature recovery, protect landscape character and support health, wellbeing and the local economy, with excellent accessibility from Cambridge via the Guided Busway.

In order to establish whether there was an evidence base for this approach, and to consider its suitability, HDC agreed to work with GOVT. A joint business case commissioned by both organisations (£10,000 each) – the outcome of which is the work undertaken by Arkwood (hereafter referred to as the Arkwood Report or AR), which is Appendix 1 accompanying this report. The AR assesses 3 boundary options and indicates that the 'Option 2 - Core Valley plus Ouse Washes' option provides the best balance of ecological coherence, scale, deliverability and strategic fit.

Economic modelling suggests self-designation under Option 2 could safeguard between £98 million and £593 million of annual economic revenue, with indicative annual running costs of £840,000-£1.06 million, implying a strong cost-to-value ratio. The analysis is based on local official datasets and extrapolated pre-Covid studies. However, further local evidence is recommended to refine estimates.

To move from concept to deliverable programme, the report indicates further work would be required, including a time-bound development phase to establish partnership governance; complete targeted evidence gathering (business survey, visitor survey and natural capital account); prepare a draft management plan and develop a funding and communications plan and seeking CPCA involvement where appropriate. The AR also identifies the implications of self-designation, including ongoing revenue considerations relating to management of the designation; these along with risks, are important to consider in the context of the AR report, to ensure a balanced view against the benefits identified by it.

The AR aligns with and supports HDC's Place, Climate Strategies and within the local plan as follows:
- Climate Strategy: increase biodiversity and natural capital and sustainable travel with low emissions
- Corporate Plan Action 53 – expand positive climate action support for local businesses, celebrating, enabling and influencing best practice and sharing knowledge
- Current Local plan, LP3: Green Infrastructure – Great Ouse Valley
- Place Strategy: incorporation of all 5 journeys: Pride in Place, environmental innovation, inclusive economy, health embedded and travel transformed

Work connected with the GOV and the GOVT, specifically the taking forward of any proposals relating to self-designation, do not form part of any identified activities within the existing Corporate Plan; nor the 26/27 variation of the same which has been approved for adoption from 1st April 2026. The continued support of HDC in relation to broad collaboration and working in partnership, do however broadly align with the Enable or Influence aspects of those plans. It is clear however, that these are discretionary activities.

Since the work was commissioned, there have been other changes which are relevant to how the work with the GOVT is taken forward in light of the AR. HDC currently lacks capacity and funding (based on the recently agreed budget) to lead the programme independently. Additionally, Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is a significant factor, both in terms of strain on resources, but also in terms of what is realistically achievable in the context of HDC ceasing to exist from 2028, and decisions being prudent and appropriate in the context of not binding the future authority.

Having considered the AR and recognising that this is not a formal validation or review of its findings, HDC has identified a number of concerns that shape its current position. While the work is valuable and the desirability of enhanced recognition for the GOV is acknowledged, questions remain about the overall value of a self-designation approach and the practicalities of taking the work forward. The potential benefits must be balanced against uncertainties around resourcing, deliverability and the wider strategic context. It is there suggested that

2

HDC continues to work closely with the GOVT to explore ways of addressing these underlying concerns but that it would not be appropriate at this stage to commit to any enduring governance or operational delivery arrangements.

Recommendation(s):

Councillors are asked to:
1. Review and comment on the attached document entitled 'Arkwood Report' (AR) which sets out the rationale, options and implications of pursuing self-designation for the Great Ouse Valley and Washes.
2. Note the financial and resource commitments required to progress this work, including the significant Officer time need for coordination, engagement and governance development.
3. Note and accept that the majority of the Ouse Valley Way lies outside Huntingdonshire's administrative boundary, requiring cross-authority collaboration and limiting the HDC's direct influence.
4. Note and consider uncertainties arising from forthcoming local government reorganisation, including the lack of clarity on future revenue streams and HDC's ability to resource this work sustainably over the medium term.
5. Decide whether HDC should continue to explore further exploration of the self-designation proposal at this time:

   A. **It is recommended that HDCI should not proceed with further, detailed work with the GOVT in respect of self-designation at this time** for the reasons set out in this report. As such, it is recommended that HDC limits its involvement to limited activities relating to partnership and collaboration with the GOVT based on the principles of Influence and Enable within the Corporate Plan; and

   B. Delegate to the Place and Climate Lead in consultation with the Executive Leader, to formally write to the GOVT, to outline the position and thank them for their partnership and engagement to date; to provide confirmation that HDC recognises the value of the GOV within Huntingdonshire as a result of the various contributory formal designations (e.g. ecological and heritage) and its relationship with our Place ambitions; and to advise that HDC will continue to collaborate with them on the basis of the "Enable" and "Influence" principles from the Corporate Plan.

   OR

   C. If it is determined that HDC should proceed with further detailed work, and deeper collaboration with the GOVT in respect of self-designation; Members are asked to recognise the concerns and risks as set out in this report, including recognition of the financial and resource implications and the uncertainty of the medium/longer-term appropriateness of the work in light of LGR.

3

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update on partnership working with the GOVT and outline the case for self-designation of the GOV and Washes as a national landscape – based on the outputs derived from a jointly commissioned piece of work undertaken by Arkwood, (see Appendix 1).

1.2 Appendix 2 shows the difference between a statutory designation and a self-designation, lifted from Page 5 of the AR.

1.3 Self-designation could provide a proactive, locally led mechanism to manage the area as one connected landscape, which has the potential to bring environmental, social and economic benefits. However, it must be noted that self-designation does not have status through a formal governance or statutory designation process and has no legal powers, protections or planning controls.

1.4 The AR sets out the further work required to move forward with self-designation – including the next steps of the self-designation process, and long-term implications.

1.5 This report seeks to bring a Council lens to the work that has been undertaken. It does not seek to diminish or undermine the work. However, there must be a recognition that involvement in this work firmly sits within the Councils discretionary activities.

1.6 Since the work was commissioned, there have been changes in resourcing, and it must be recognised that continued support of the work is not directly aligned to the agreed Corporate Plan (existing and 26/27). The report therefore seeks to set out the implications of continuing to support the work from HDC's perspective, including estimated cost and time.

1.7 Further, it must be noted that LGR will make a self-designation of a national landscape impractical in the short-term. This includes uncertain geographical scope; unclear future governance and priorities; difficulty seeking cross-authority agreement; risk of misalignment with future structures (e.g. on existing District boundaries), and uncertainty over long-term funding and sustainability of the management of the designation.

1.8 This report seeks to provide a balanced analysis of the work to date, and the implications for HDC, in order to allow Members to consider if and how this work should be taken forward.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The GOV and Washes are one of the UK and Europe's most important wetland habitats, created as a 33km engineered flood storage system that produces seasonally flooded washlands. These conditions support rare species, extensive wet grassland and internationally significant bird

populations, which is why the area already carried multiple overlapping environmental designations:

- Ramsar site: it is recognised as one of Europe's most important wetland complexes, supporting rare and migratory waterbirds and internationally significant wetland habitats
- Sites of special, scientific interest (SSSI): designated for their biological value, they include large areas of wet meadow, grazing marsh and wetlands that support rare flora and fauna
- Special area of conservation (SAC): protected for its habitats of European importance, such as wet grasslands, wet woodland and species-rich meadows
- Special protection area (SPA): identified for supporting internationally important populations of rare and migratory birds, including whooper swans, wigeon, garganey, avocet, black-tailed godwit and spotted crake

2.2 The GOV and Ouse Washes contain nationally and internationally significant habitats, alongside distinctive floodplain meadows, engineered washlands, heritage sites and cultural landscapes that together form one of the most ecologically important rivers-valley systems in England.

2.3 The area is under increasing pressure from climate change, habitat fragmentation, pollution, peatland loss, flood risk and housing development.

2.4 Current management is fragmented across multiple authorities and landowners, limiting the ability to coordinate nature recovery, active travel improvements, heritage management and long-term investment.

2.5 At the time AR was commissioned, LGR had not yet been announced and both the political and economic landscapes were more stable. Given the long-standing working relationship between HDC and the GOVT, an opportunity arose to develop the business case and explore the potential for a self-designation of the GOV.

2.6 There are priorities in the corporate plan which support the creation of the business case: 'lowering carbon emissions' and improving the environment' and 'happiness and wellbeing.' Enabling and influencing this business case represented a partnership attempting to secure outcomes beyond statutory duties and continuing a collaboration with the GOVT. Alongside this, action 53 in the corporate plan has a target of 'supporting climate action by local businesses,' which aligns with the GOV's potential for environmental enterprise such as sustainable tourism and green business initiatives.

2.7 HDC's Place Strategy's 5 journeys; Pride in Place, Environmental Innovation, Heath-Embedded, Inclusive Economy and Travel Transformed all align with the broad direction of the GOV designation.

2.8 In HDC's current local plan, policy LP3, Green Infrastructure designates the GOV as a Green Infrastructure Priority Area, setting out a strategic framework for habitat protection, enhancement, access and landscape-

scale ecological networks. The local plan also identifies the GOV as having key biodiversity corridors and nature recovery areas. There is an acknowledged importance in protecting flood meadows, river corridors and connected landscapes.

2.9 Self-designation could provide a proactive, locally led mechanism to manage the area as one connected landscape, which could bring substantial environmental, social and economic benefits. It would help establish governance to protect and enhance the valley's distinctive character, and build resilience to future climate pressures, and ensure that the landscape delivers long-term economic and environmental value.

2.10 Notwithstanding the above, the understanding of the landscape is already an important consideration in respect of matters pertaining to Council activities such as Planning and the Local Plan. In Huntingdonshire alone, there are already 4 SSSIs, 3 SACs and 2 Ramsar sites. This highlights there is already a keen interest in conservation and improving biodiversity in the GOV area.

3. KEY BUSINESS CASE FINDINGS – FROM ARKWOOD REPORT

3.1 The full report is attached to this report for Members to comment on. The work was undertaken by Arkwood who were jointly commissioned by HDC and GOVT, with funding being provided from HDC. The AR has been presented as an attachment to this report should Members wish to make any comments on it.

3.2 This section of the report seeks to identify key findings from the AR.

3.3 The GOV and Washes form one of the most distinctive, ecologically significant and culturally rich landscapes in Eastern England. The AR presents the strategic and economic rationale for self-designation. It describes coordinated landscape-scale protection and enhancement led locally by HDC and the GOVT.

3.4 The landscape currently lacks formal recognition as a whole - despite its nationally and internationally important habitats, heritage assets and environmental functions. The suggestion of self-designation offers a proactive, place-based mechanism to:

3.4.1 Safeguard and restore vulnerable wetland and floodplain ecosystems
3.4.2 Increase resilience to climate change – especially flooding, drought and soil loss
3.4.3 Strengthen coordination across multiple local authorities, landowners and agencies
3.4.4 Build public identity, access and pride in a landscape not widely recognised as 'whole' i.e. 'The Great Ouse Valley Way'

3.5 The following points describe key areas of ecosystems within the GOV that provide carbon sequestration, biodiversity support, water regulation and

6

natural flood management. These are all critical for one of England's most nature-depleted counties and are located in Huntingdonshire:

Table 1: Summary of GOV's Key Ecosystems

Ouse Washes	One of Europe's most important wetlands containing specific Ramsar, special areas of conservation (SACs), special protection areas (SPAs), and sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs)
Wicken Fen	The National Trust's oldest reserve containing Ramsar, SACs and SSSIs
Portholme Meadow	The UK's largest traditional managed floodplain meadow

3.6 The landscape faces escalating pressures including climate change (flooding, heat, drought), degraded peat soils, pollution, invasive species, development pressure, habitat fragmentation and limited access infrastructure. Current management is dispersed across multiple authorities, creating gaps and inefficiencies.

3.7 The business case assessed 3 options, visuals of which are shown in Appendix 3.

Table 2: Great Ouse Valley Designation Boundary Options

Boundary Option	Area and Size	Estimated Gross Value Added (GVA)
Option 1	Core Great Ouse Valley – 14,972 hectares	£1.57 billion
Option 2	Great Ouse Valley + Ouse Washes – 33,131 hectares	£1.98 billion
Option 3	External landscape including Ely Ouse and Fen Isles – 54,305 hectares	£ 2.88 billion

3.8 The business case recommended pursuing Option 2 for self-designation as it captures the full ecological and hydrological system. This includes internationally designated sites, supports sustainable tourism and is comparable to established National Landscapes.

3.9 Option 2 estimates a self-designation partnership would cost £840,000 to £1.06 million per annum to run. **Option 2 does include areas outside the administrative boundary of HDC.**

3.10 The AR includes a table showing the projected impacts on the wider economy through GVA estimates, highlighting potentially significant economic benefits to the area. However, these benefits would not translate into direct income for HDC. At present, these are hypothetical estimates and it is unclear how much additional revenue HDC itself would receive. This could be through business rates or other funding mechanisms and

7

could assist to support this self-designation in the long term. While the broader place and economy may benefit, the financial return to HDC remains uncertain. Further, it also remains unclear how long-term funding sustainability to support the designation would be achieved or supported.

4. KEY IMPACTS / CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 The self-designation allows strong alignment with HDC's local plan and strategies such as the Climate and Place Strategies as highlighted in the 'Background' section of this report. HDC's role would be as an 'enabler' and an 'influencer' for this work.

4.2 This work is not included specifically within the agreed Corporate Plans for the current or future year but does support actions within these strategies. Further investment is required for further management plans and stakeholder collaboration. This is broken down into estimated costs as mentioned in section point 9.2. HDC has not currently planned for any further, or significant engagement with this work as part of its immediate priorities as established by the Corporate Plan or the budget decisions. Supporting this work would fall within the discretionary business of the Council, and given it only broadly aligns with the Influence and Enable principles within the Corporate Plan; Officers consider that the implementation of the recommendations and outcomes from the AR could have unnecessary and unaccounted for burdens upon the Council. It would have the potential to take away from other, priority work.

4.3 The AR articulates that self-designation is rarely seen in public or policy but could drive local recognition. It does not afford any formal protection to the landscape nor demonstrate a clear return on investment to HDC. It does not represent a valuable tool in respect of decision-making and development of future plans and strategies – for example within Local Plan making or Planning decision-making. Its weight would be limited and would not be as significant as formal designations. In some ways the existing designations (ecological and heritage) which currently form part of this landscape would be of greater significance and use than self-designation. At best, the self-designation would be an early or material consideration.

4.4 The self-designation could have a balanced impact when it comes to considering growth potential. The AR identifies a number of ways in which the designation could contribute towards growth, particularly in relation to the visitor economy. In this area, both the Local Growth Plan and Local Plan (existing and emerging) have ambitions for growth to occur; and both HDC and the CPCA want to encourage economic growth and support the visitor economy. The designation is not expected to hinder progress but is also unlikely to deliver significant added value. It could however set unreasonable expectations, particularly when looking at restricting inappropriate growth, with stakeholders and the public considering that self-designation would afford a significant level of protection, which it would not. These expectations would need careful management.

4.5 Part of the case in support relates to the opportunities to restore over 400 hectares of degraded habitat, strengthen biodiversity networks and

enhance flood resilience which may be delayed or missed entirely. The absence of a shared identity and governance structure would also mean reduced stability to attract funding, which could in turn limit investment in conservation, sustainable tourism and active travel improvements. However, it does automatically follow that these negative impacts would occur, as HDC has already seen investment in conservation and climate change as a result of programmes such as Biodiversity4All; and its proposed Habitat Banking. HDC's economic development team continue to support growth in the visitor economy through activities such as our Tourism Action Plan and working with the CPCA on the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP). This takes a District wide view, as opposed to the narrow view relating to the GOV. HDC continues to use its role in supporting those objectives relating to conservation, active travel, and tourism.

4.6   The AR outlines the estimated GVA allocated across Options 1, 2 and 3. It notes that most of this benefit would accrue to the wider area and businesses located outside Huntingdonshire. The report also highlights uncertainty around how HDC could capture any indirect benefits, such as through business rates. The lack of security regarding long-term funding is also a risk to the management of the self-designation and also represents a future liability in terms of management of expectations and expectations regarding future funding. This is of particular importance given that this is a matter falling within discretionary activities.

4.7   If the self-designation does not go ahead, the existing status quo would be maintained - the area would remain vulnerable to ongoing habitat fragmentation, climate-related flood risk and the deterioration of rare wetland and meadow ecosystems. The lack of strategic coordination between multiple authorities and landowners at a landscape-scale could mean that existing issues such as declining water quality, peatland loss, invasive species and inconsistent access provision are likely to continue and potentially worsen. There is however no guarantee that self-designation would contribute significantly to addressing these concerns; further, the value it would add over and above the existing consideration of these factors is questionable.

4.8   The AR proposes Option 2 as the recommended solution. This covers areas beyond HDC's administrative boundary. Without commitment from other Councils, it is unlikely that the full benefits of the Option could be achieved. It is our understanding that the GOVT proposals do not form a key priority of neighbouring councils.

4.9   Neighbouring councils have tried to achieve similar including the Fenland Biosphere bidding for a UNESCO designation but were unable to receive council backing owing to the expense and uncertain stated return on investment. These same factors apply here.

4.10   There are also a number of further unknowns which create uncertainty for the Council. In order to make a formal decision regarding formal commitments, more detail is required setting out the full financial, legal and governance implications of self-designation. This would need to include

liabilities, staffing, funding responsibilities and ongoing operational costs. At present these are all unclear, although estimations have been made in this report by Officers regarding the potential implications relating to the next steps.

4.11   Further sections of this report deal with the legal and resourcing risks in more detail, as such, they have not been repeated here.

4.12   The core issue relates to the balance between the costs and the benefits. While the AR identifies that HDC will incur costs, it also notes that partners are likely to face additional financial requirements to progress the work. Although some of these costs could potentially be mitigated through grants or other funding sources, the absence of a long-term plan to manage the ongoing revenue implications of the designation means the proposals are not financially sustainable at present and could pose a future financial risk to HDC. There may be limited gains through business rates but there is currently no certainty that this income would be sufficient to offset costs. Given the current financial climate and uncertainty around LGR, the expectation that non-statutory and discretionary activity should at least break even or generate revenue. As a result, it is difficult to support taking the project forward at this time.

4.13   **The Key Reality is that m**ost AONB-style partnerships that recover their costs do so because they:
- run **major funded environmental projects**
- actively manage **visitor infrastructure**
- use **biodiversity funding and developer contributions**

4.14   Furthermore, given the uncertain landscape for HDC as a result of upcoming elections; LGR; and emerging work being undertaken by the CPCA through the Local Visitor Economic Partnership (LVEP) work; it is considered that the timing of this proposition makes it difficult for HDC to commit to. It is suggested that a more balanced approach would be to note the report, and recognise the potential to keep this under review, but also recognise that the work falls within the Enable and Influence areas of work for the Council, and not the Do – as set out in the Corporate Plan.

5.   LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

5.1   Corporate Plan: *Corporate Plan*

5.2   Climate Strategy: Climate Strategy Appendix 1

5.3   Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy: Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy

5.4   HDC's current local plan: Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036

5.5   HDC's emerging local plan: Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 HDC and the GOVT have collaborated under their initial memorandum of understanding (MoU) created back in March 2025. Pursuing self-designation will require cross-authority collaboration as the majority of the Ouse Valley Way lies outside HDC's current geographical boundary. This MOU was required in order for the AR to be jointly funded by HDC and GOVT.

6.2 The MoU states that both HDC and the GOVT are expected to contribute equally to the governance structure, share responsibility for project outcomes and communicate openly about risks, changes or opportunities.

6.3 The MoU recognises that each party may have different levels of resource available at different times, giving HDC's flexibility to scale involvement while still maintaining the collaborative spirit of the agreement.

6.4 It is likely that HDC Officer resource will be significantly higher than initially suggested in the MoU as there would need to be immediate and ongoing engagement and development work. This would involve working with all councils and landowners involved along the Ouse Valley Way.

6.5 Further engagement with partner councils, stakeholders, landowners, residents and businesses will need to be undertaken during this further development phase.

6.6 The GOVT are obviously keen for HDC to continue to support this work. Both Officers and Members have been in dialogue with representatives of the trust. They have identified:

- A desire for the long-standing co-operation with HDC to continue
- Acknowledgement of the conclusions of the AR
- HDC to join the GOVT and other significant partners in the formation of an Action Group to look at potential governance and funding.
- GOVT are happy to take on the role of secretariat for the Group
- No funding is being asked for at this time
- They seek support in principle to the concept of the Great Ouse Heritage Landscape as a key marker as we head towards LGR.

HDC notes the GOVT's ambition to broaden its circle of partners and secure further funding for which the Council offers its full support for this endeavour.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Upon consultation with HDC's legal team, they have advised that there are significant legal, governance and organisational risks associated with progressing self-designation at this stage, particularly in the context of LGR.

7.2 A cautious approach is essential, as any future responsibility for overseeing the designated landscape (whatever governance

11

arrangements are agreed to) would represent a substantial, long-term commitment for whichever new unitary or unitaries ultimately inherits the function. LGR will reshape structures, budgets and service priorities, which elevates the significant risk that the project could be deprioritised, delayed or require full consideration by the incoming unitary administrations.

7.3   These concerns alone are considered to represent significant reasons for why HDC should not continue with the work towards self-designation.

8.   LOCAL PLAN IMPLICATIONS

8.1   The proposed GOV self-designation could provide a useful evidence base to inform decision-making and future policy development. Shaping or restricting development would remain limited as a self-designation carries minimal formal influence and would not, on its own, provide a robust basis for refusing development proposals.

8.2   As set out earlier, many of the individual features and designations (ecological and heritage) already provide a more robust basis for local planning policy and planning decision-making; and there is already a wider recognition of the landscape value.

8.3   For the current local plan, the designation would have very little relevance or policy impact. Those policies being already established, and moreover there is already recognition of the landscape.

8.4   For the emerging local plan, the designation may offer some limited alignment, particularly where it overlaps with the work on the Nature Recovery Network (NRN), Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and the emerging policy LP12 in the emerging local plan. Initial mapping suggests that the proposed area largely avoids major strategic allocations, aside from Huntingdon Racecourse. This could present opportunities for green infrastructure linkages.

8.5   Option 1 as shown in orange in Appendix 2 raises concerns about consistency with existing evidence, emerging policy frameworks, and potential unintended implications for development expectations. As set out earlier in this report, there could be unintended consequences in respect of management of expectations from stakeholders and the public.

8.6   Overall, the advantages of pursuing self-designation appear limited when considered alongside the resources required and the potential for it to be attributed greater weight than is warranted. On its own, the self-designation is unlikely to provide a sufficiently robust basis for policy formulation or decision-making, particular in relation to proposals involving development constraints.

9.   RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

9.1   HDC's role in any future work would require focus on structured project management, governance assurance, financial accountability, coordination with partner authorities and ensuring that work aligns with

wider local policy frameworks e.g. Local Plan, the Council's Climate priorities and nature-recovery duties

9.2 The following table outlines the estimated cost from the Council of staffing resource to initiate further progress of the GOV self-designation:

Table 3: Estimated Resource for further progression of GOV self-designation

Resource	Estimated Amount	Description
Officer Time	£12,000	Core work undertaken by Place, Climate, Policy, Communications and Democratic Services teams. Covers material prep, boundary refinement, internal and external engagement and report drafting.
Senior Management and Corporate Leadership	£2,000	Limited but necessary oversight from Directors and statutory officers to ensure alignment with corporate priorities and governance requirements
Legal Resource	£1,000	Focussed internal legal input required to review implications and confirm compliance
Room Hire, Diary Coordination and Stakeholder Management	£2,000	Making use of Council venues where possible with modest costs for facilitated sessions and targeted engagement meetings
Development of Governance Framework	£2,000	Creation of proportionate governance structures largely prepared in-house, with minimal need for external consultancy or facilitation
Total estimated resource	**£19,000 per annum**	

9.3 In addition, the Ouse Business Case recommends further strengthening of the evidence base. This would be done by further locally specific studies, which are recommended as the following:
- A survey of businesses along the Ouse (150-300 responses) ~ £10,000
- A visitor opinion survey ~ £15,000
- Natural capital account ~ £5,000-£10,000
- A landscape charter assessment
- Further engagement with stakeholders and residents to assess feasibility of proposed options

9.4 Given that this project and work fall within the discretionary areas of work for HDC; it is not identified in the Corporate Plan as a priority; and that there has been no budget identified within the 26/27 budget process; it is

considered that these financial implications would be significant. Furthermore, the resource expectations would draw away from other work which has been prioritised, and this is particularly pertinent as we move forward post elections in May and towards LGR.

9.5   The final version of the AR was received on 22nd December 2025 following requested changes by both the GOVT and HDC. This arrived after HDC's budget-setting process was already well advance. Regardless, it is important to note that this work sits within HDC's discretionary activities rather than its statutory responsibilities, meaning there is no requirement for HDC to fund it.

9.6   Based on the financial and resource implications alone, it is considered that there are not grounds for moving forward at this stage.

9.7   Should Members wish to proceed with recommendation C highlighted in the front of this report under 'Recommendations,' a more detailed piece of work will be required to set out the next steps and the resourcing implications. Necessary funding and associated decisions would need to be secured and would represent a further phase of work.

10.   HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

10.1   Improved access to green and blue spaces is well-evidenced to support reductions in stress, anxiety and social isolation.

10.2   There are no significant health impacts anticipated. However, should increased recognition lead to higher visitor numbers, careful coordination will be required to ensure that routes remain safe, well-maintained and accessible for all users, including those with mobility changes. Effective visitor management and infrastructure planning would mitigate any associated risks but would come with an additional cost.

10.3   If self-designation does not proceed, the area may continue to experience fragmented management, potentially resulting in declining ecological quality and reduced accessibility over time. This would diminish the landscape's value as a health-promoting resource for local residents and visitors. However, this is not guaranteed to occur and in essence the status quo would be maintained.

11.   ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

11.1   Self-designation would support coordinated nature recovery across more than 40 wildlife sites, enhance ecological connectivity and strengthen flood resilience across the washlands. A partnership management plan could help address pressures including habitat fragmentation, water quality, peatland loss and improve long-term resilience to climate change.

11.2   As set out elsewhere, if it does not proceed, the existing status quo is likely to be maintained.

12. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

12.1 The report provides an opportunity to update on and allow Members visibility of the latest work relating to the potential self-designation of the GOV.

12.2 The AR is considered to be a well-produced and helpful piece of work, which recognises the potential benefits arising from self-designation; along with setting out various steps, issues, and considerations that need to be evaluated as part of determining how things move forward. In particular it notes additional work (and cost) required.

12.3 The report has been evaluated by Officers, and it is recognised that whilst there could be benefits arising, there are significant areas of concern; in particular, any progression of a self-designation proposal has significant implications for staffing, resourcing, and legal risks.

12.4 Given the substantial Officer implications and the complexity of the work, Members are asked to consider whether continuation is justified at this time. This decision is required to ensure that resources are directed towards Corporate Plan priorities and statutory services, and that any new commitments are taken on only where the benefits clearly outweigh the costs. It also provides clarity to officers and partners about HDC's position.

12.5 The majority of the recommended Option 2 lies outside HDC's administrative area, meaning HDC cannot deliver change unilaterally. Acknowledging this constraint is essential to ensure Members understand the need for collaboration with other authorities and bodies, and the limited direct control HDC has. This recognition supports transparent decision-making and helps set realistic expectations around influence, delivery and outcomes.

12.6 The emerging reorganisation landscape creates genuine uncertainty around future responsibilities, revenue streams and capacity. These factors may affect HDC's ability to resource prolonged development work on the proposal. Noting these uncertainties ensures that Members make informed decisions in a changing organisational context and avoid committing to new workstreams that may become unsustainable or unviable in the medium term. Further, with the complexity of forthcoming reorganisation through LGR, there may be more appropriate opportunities in the future if the area in its entirety were to fall within the responsibility of a single authority; or moreover a role for the CPCA as a result of devolution.

12.7 Despite the current concerns and uncertainties arising from LGR, it is recommended that HDC remains open to future opportunities that can support our shared ambitions. There is recognition of the potential benefits associated with protecting the GOV, as well as the linked economic opportunities such as sustainable or "quiet" tourism. This aligns well with the Corporate Plan principles of "Influence" and "Enable," while remaining mindful of the resources available.

12.8   In summary, for the reasons set out in the report it is recommended that HDC should not proceed with further, detailed work with the GOVT in respect of self-designation for the reasons set out in the report. As such, it is recommended that HDC limits its involvement to limited activities relating to partnership and collaboration with the GOVT based on the principles of Influence and Enable within the Corporate Plan.

12.9   Given the uncertainty around the return on investment for the new unitary authority following LGR, it would not be appropriate to commit a future authority to further work at this stage.

12.10   However, HDC may wish to keep this under review and agree to continue to work with the GOVT on a limited basis under the principles of Influence and Enable as set out within the Corporate Plan.

13.   **LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

        Appendix 1 – Copy of the Arkwood Report, this is a separate file to this report
        Appendix 2 - Statutory Designation vs Self-Designation (taken from the Arkwood Business Report
        Appendix 3 – Final Boundary Options (taken from the Arkwood Report)
        Appendix 4 – GVA Estimations (taken from the Arkwood Report)

CONTACT OFFICER

Name/Job Title: Harriet Robinson – Place and Climate Lead
Tel No: 01480 388388
Email: harriet.robinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Appendix 2 – Statutory Designation vs Self-Designation

	Statutory Designation	Self-Designation
Protection	**Legal protections** from inappropriate development • National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 • Countryside and Rights of Way act 2000 • Town and Country Planning Act 1947	**Commitment** between stakeholders to protect landscape value **Integration** with Local Plan and council strategies
Recognition	Political as well as public awareness, especially locally (e.g. through **signage and maps**), plus evidence of local businesses awareness in research*	Self-designation rarely seen in public or policy now but could drive **local** recognition • Areas of Great Landscape Value – Surrey Hills • Special Landscape Areas • Areas of Special Landscape Importance
Management	Legally required up-to-date **management plans** and **legal duty** to conserve and enhance landscape	Management plan could be commissioned depending on priorities and resources, potential for **stakeholder collaboration**
Governance	Designated landscapes can either be run internally within **local authorities** or externally as a **charity or partnership**	Freedom to choose governance model, will **influence funding availability** and flexibility
Funding	Core funding provided by **Defra**, able to bid for special funding pots through other sources e.g. Lottery	Not funded by Defra, potential to access funding through other sources e.g. Lottery, but **dependent on form of governance** and partnership working
Place Identity	Awareness and identity is **not the goal** of statutory designation but may be a secondary effect that builds over time	**Branding, identity and signage** could be developed as part of the self-designation to build momentum around landscape protection

*See section 5.1

Appendix 3 – Final Boundary Options

3.6 Final boundary options

The criteria were applied in the study areas to define three options for self-designation, from the minimum area to an extended area. The options are nested such that the area of the "core" option 1 is included in all options, and option 2 is also included in option 3 (Figure 22).

Note that these boundaries will be subject to further review and refinement, and can be adapted in the context of Local Government Reorganisation (see Section 6 - Next Steps).

Option 1: Core Great Ouse Valley

Option 2: Core Great Ouse Valley plus Ouse Washes

Option 3: Extended Great Ouse Valley, including the Ely Ouse, Fen Isles and Ouse Washes
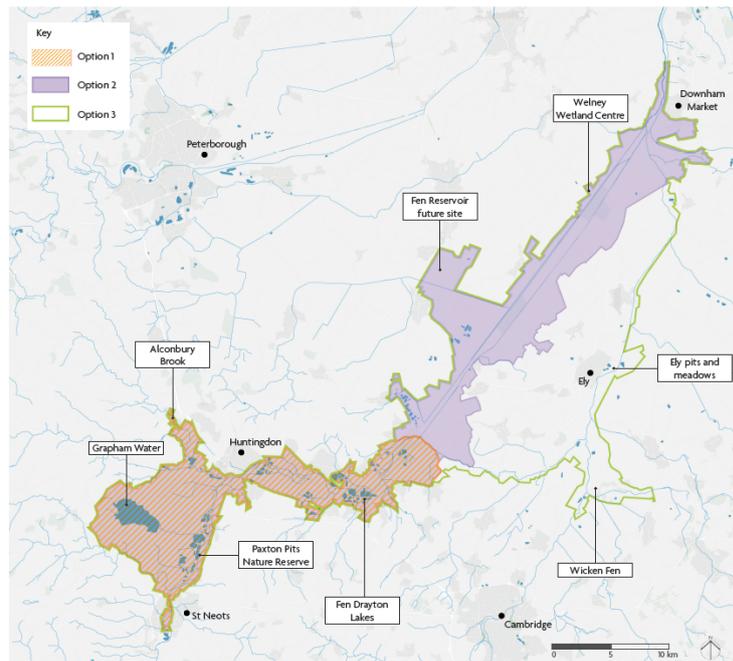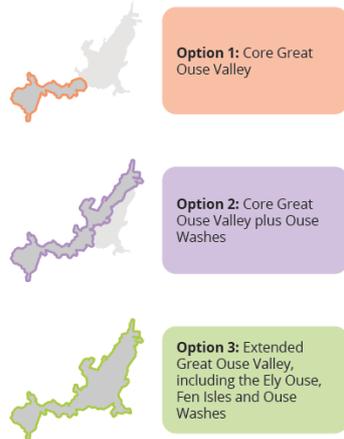
Figure 22. Map of the three nested boundary options

Great Ouse Valley and Washes Landscape Self-Designation – Strategic Business Case | 23

18

Appendix 4 – GVA Estimations

Defining the area(s) by MSOAs	Estimating current GVA	Assigning proportion of GVA to designation

KPI	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Size (Hectares)	14,972	33,131	54,305
MSOAs covered (in part or full)	21	30	37
Employment (apportioned estimate)	20,083	25,267	37,614
Annual employment pay (estimate)	£650,148,793	£808,053,092	£1,205,868,928
Annual direct GVA (estimate) - see below	£1,573,217,148	£1,979,040,349	£2,882,717,531

Table 1. Estimated current GVA for each option

Annual Direct GVA by Local Authority (£m est.)	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Bedford	0	0	0
East Cambridgeshire	0	136	985
Fenland	-	120	120
Huntingdonshire	1,457	1,526	1,526
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	-	77	91
South Cambridgeshire	117	119	161
Total	**1,573**	**1,979**	**2,883**

Table 2. Estimated GVA for each option by local authority coverage

This page is intentionally left blank

The Great Ouse Heritage Landscape

Business Case for Landscape Self-Designation

September 2025

Stage 2, V0

Great Ouse Valley Trust
Our landscape for life

Huntingdonshire
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Arkwood

Version	Date	Version Details	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by Principal
V0	29/9/2025	DRAFT	EA	GW	JS
V1	22/12/2025	Updated with new title, addressed comments and expanded conclusion	EA	JS	JS

STUDY TEAM:

Arkwood Ltd

Jon Sheaff
Gemma Woodfall
Emily Amas

Counterculture

Stephen Escritt

This document has been prepared by:

Arkwood Ltd
Unit 33B, Regent Studios
8 Andrews Road
London
E8 3SE

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

This report presents Stage 2 of the Business Case for the self-designation of the Great Ouse Valley and Washes landscape.

Building on the work completed in Stage 1, which established the strategic case for self-designation, this stage sets out the economic case, assessing the costs, benefits, and overall value associated with different designation options.

Background and Vision

Stage 1 confirmed a strong and growing case for recognising the Great Ouse Valley and Washes as a coherent and valued landscape. It demonstrated that protecting and enhancing the area's environmental, cultural, and economic value aligns closely with local, regional, and national policy including priorities around nature recovery, flood resilience, heritage protection, and wellbeing.

Through research and stakeholder engagement, Stage 1 also developed a shared vision statement that captures the character and ambition of the landscape:

"An inspiring landscape of vast horizons and dynamic wetlands, where big ideas meet bold stewardship. A place where land, water and people are deeply connected and thriving."

This vision underpins the mission, values, and objectives that guide the self-designation proposal.

Purpose and Approach

The purpose of self-designation is to recognise and manage the Great Ouse Valley and Washes as one cohesive landscape, ensuring its assets are protected and enhanced for future generations. Cambridgeshire currently has one of the lowest proportions of land

designated for nature in the UK, with no National Landscapes within its boundaries. Self-designation provides a proactive, locally led approach to address this gap and unlock environmental, social, and economic benefits for the region.

Stage 2 begins by restating the purpose of the business case and summarising the strategic alignment of the proposal. It highlights the ecological, environmental, cultural, and social value of the landscape and the growing need to protect this value from increasing pressures such as climate change, development, and habitat fragmentation.

Options Development

The report outlines the methodology and criteria used to define boundary options for the self-designated landscape. These criteria draw on national designation guidance, adapted to reflect the unique context of the Great Ouse Valley and Washes.

Three options are presented, each encompassing different scales and features of the landscape. The advantages and disadvantages of each are assessed in relation to landscape coherence, deliverability, and potential value.

Economic Analysis

An economic analysis follows, estimating the potential benefits and delivery costs of self-designation. Drawing on studies of existing designated landscapes across the UK, the analysis establishes a method for valuing landscape protection and enhancement. The results show that all three options deliver excellent value, with clear potential for economic, environmental, and wellbeing gains across the region.

While this study does not constitute a full HM Treasury Green Book business case, its structure aligns with government guidance for early-stage programme development. It provides a clear, evidence-based rationale for change, setting out a foundation for coordinated action and investment.

The evidence presented demonstrates a strong strategic, environmental, social, and economic case for recognising, protecting, and managing the Great Ouse Valley and Washes as one coherent and connected landscape.

By pursuing self-designation, stakeholders have the opportunity to safeguard a landscape of, strengthen its resilience to future pressures, and deliver lasting benefits for communities, nature, and the local economy.

1.0 Introduction

This section introduces the context, background and purpose of the business case. It defines what we mean by self-designation, and what this can help us to achieve.

The business case for landscape self-designation was jointly commissioned by Huntingdonshire District Council and the Great Ouse Valley Trust, which is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Number 117977).

Arkwood Ltd was appointed as the project consultant to develop the business case in collaboration with Counterculture.

The work builds on previous research and engagement by the Great Ouse Valley Trust, as well as previous efforts to designate the landscape as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), with a submission made to Natural England in 2014.

In 2022, the Great Ouse Valley and Washes was identified as a proposed new AONB in a Natural England Future Landscape Designation Prioritisation Process Map. However, the Trust was later told that Natural England are not currently considering new AONBs. In 2023, Natural England re-branded AONBs as National Landscapes (NLs).

Since this point, the Trust has continued to drive efforts to conserve and celebrate the landscape, pursuing self-designation as an important step to protect the value of the Great Ouse Valley.

	Statutory Designation	**Self-Designation**
Protection	**Legal protections** from inappropriate development • National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 • Countryside and Rights of Way act 2000 • Town and Country Planning Act 1947	**Commitment** between stakeholders to protect landscape value **Integration** with Local Plan and council strategies
Recognition	Political as well as public awareness, especially locally (e.g. through **signage and maps**), plus evidence of local businesses awareness in research*	Self-designation rarely seen in public or policy now but could drive **local** recognition • Areas of Great Landscape Value – Surrey Hills • Special Landscape Areas • Areas of Special Landscape Importance
Management	Legally required up-to-date **management plans** and **legal duty** to conserve and enhance landscape	Management plan could be commissioned depending on priorities and resources, potential for **stakeholder collaboration**
Governance	Designated landscapes can either be run internally within **local authorities** or externally as a **charity or partnership**	Freedom to choose governance model, will **influence funding availability** and flexibility
Funding	Core funding provided by **Defra**, able to bid for special funding pots through other sources e.g. Lottery	Not funded by Defra, potential to access funding through other sources e.g. Lottery, but **dependent on form of governance** and partnership working
Place Identity	Awareness and identity is **not the goal** of statutory designation but may be a secondary effect that builds over time	**Branding, identity and signage** could be developed as part of the self-designation to build momentum around landscape protection

*See section 5.1

2.0 Strategic Vision

2.1 Introduction

This section provides a concise recap of the vision and mission for self-designation, which was developed in collaboration with key stakeholders. It summarises the strategic case that underpins the economic arguments in this report. The previous Stage 1 report sets out the strategic case in detail.

2.2 Vision and mission for self-designation

The vision for self-designation (right) reflects the shared aspiration to:

Protect and celebrate the Valley's distinctive landscape and heritage
Strengthen stewardship and connection with nature
Enhance accessibility, health and well-being for all
Build on pride in local identity, heritage and a legacy of independent thought

2.2.1 Values

The core values guiding the self-designation are:

- **Stewardship:** Care for the land through thoughtful, long-term management, supporting ecological processes and sustainable land use.
- **Inclusion:** Ensure equal access and meaningful engagement for all communities, so everyone can benefit from the landscape
- **Independence:** Uphold the Valley's tradition of self-determination, shaped by its unique geography and history

Vision:

An inspiring landscape of vast horizons and dynamic wetlands, where big ideas meet bold stewardship. A place where land, water and people are deeply connected and thriving.

Values:

Stewardship Inclusion Independence

Mission:

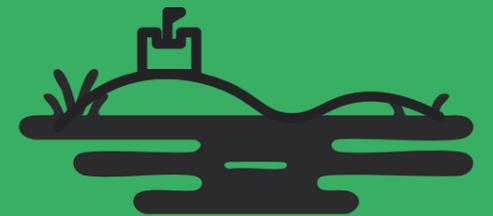**Vast Skies and Wide Horizons**

- Encourage bold thinking and new ideas
- Create opportunities for all
- Promote long-term, landscape-led collaboration across boundaries

Braids of Waterways and Wetlands

- Restore and connect habitats
- Support nature-based solutions
- Encourage active travel and improve accessibility throughout the area

Islands of Refuge and Non-Conformity

- Celebrate history and independent thought
- Create an outstanding quality of life for residents
- Attract sustainable tourism through forging a distinct identity for the area

2.2.2 Mission pillars

The mission is expressed through three pillars which each reflect a unique aspect of the landscape.

Vast skies and Wide Horizons

Big skies and big ideas, inspiring awe, spaciousness, possibility and openness to all.

We will:

- Encourage bold thinking and new ideas
- Create opportunities for all
- Promote long-term, landscape-lead collaboration across boundaries

Braids of Waterways and Wetlands

A complex, dynamic, living landscape connects people with nature through blue-green networks.

We will:

- Restore and connect habitats
- Support nature-based solutions
- Encourage active travel throughout the area

Islands of Refuge and Non-Conformity

The relative isolation of the marshy landscape fostered independent identities and distinct ways of life throughout history.

We will:

- Celebrate history and heritage of independent thought
- Create an outstanding quality of life for residents
- Attract sustainable tourism through forging a distinct identity for the area

2.2.3 Objectives for self-designation

The objectives provide a practical framework for action:

Vast Skies and Wide Horizons

Secure **stakeholder commitment** across authorities, organisations and communities	Develop a roadmap for a **long-term management plan**	**Unlock funding streams** to support landscape-scale projects	Pave the way for new **environmental jobs** linked to green growth	Promote **sustainable tourism** that reflects the Valley's identity and heritage

Braids of Waterways and Wetlands

Safeguard and enhance habitats, landscapes, and biodiversity	Restore and **connect habitat networks** across the Valley	Apply **nature-based solutions** to flooding, climate pressures, and soil regeneration	Expand and promote **active travel routes** linked to **blue–green corridors**	Increase **volunteering and community engagement** in conservation

Islands of Refuge and Non-Conformity

Strengthen awareness of **local history** and its link to the landscape	Celebrate heritage and **traditional land practices** while supporting innovation	Enhance **accessibility** to nature, heritage and cultural sites for all	Promote **health, leisure,** and **well-being** through engagement with the landscape	Build recognition of the Great Ouse Valley as a **unique, sustainable destination**

2.3 Review of the strategic case

2.3.1 Strengths and value

The Great Ouse Valley is a highly intact landscape due to much of the area functioning as a floodplain. This has allowed for the development of highly distinctive and connected habitats supported by traditional land management techniques.

The influence of incongruous features is subtle in most areas, often hidden behind belts of vegetation. This creates tranquil and open green landscapes that can support well-being.

Economic and land-use value

Productive **agriculture** supported by high grade soils

Growing **visitor economy** linked to aesthetic quality and leisure opportunities as well as heritage

Traditional land use management practices in washes and wet grasslands

Figure 4.   Cows Grazing along the Ouse Washes[2]

Ecological Value

Continuous **habitat corridor** with nature reserves following the river and washes

Designated ecological sites including **Ramsar, SSSIs, SACs, SPAs, LNRs**

Wet meadow and wet woodland with **potential to restore over 640 hectares of priority habitat**

Over **1,300 hectares of lakes and reed beds** including restored Ouse Fen

Sites with valuable and rare flora e.g. **Portholme Meadow**: largest traditionally managed meadow in UK

Ouse Washes: UK's Largest Washlands and internationally significant habitat for rare birds

Figure 1.   Lake at Paxton Pits

Figure 2.   Portholme Meadow

Figure 3.   Ouse Washes[1]

Environmental Value

Water Management

- Engineered channels of the Ouse Washes control water levels and flooding throughout the Fens by storing excess water
- Lakes, wetlands and floodplain meadows regulate water flow and improve drainage

Figure 5.   Sluice Gates at Denver

Carbon Sequestration

- Land cover such as floodplain meadows have high soil carbon content
- Concentration of peaty soils

Figure 6.   Paxton Pits nature reserve

[1]Photo by Richard Humphrey CC BY-SA-2.0
[2]Photo by Hugh Venables CC BY-SA 2.0

2.3.2 Pressures on the landscape and threats to its value

Heritage and cultural Value

Medieval market towns developed along river corridor

Historic use of wetlands and relative isolation for **fortification and defence**

Interconnected **culture, economy and water**

Engineered **drainage systems** throughout history allowed for **settlement and agriculture**

Braided waterways shaped by **historic water mills**

Aesthetic qualities of vastness, tranquillity and isolation celebrated in **stories, poetry and landscape paintings**

Recreational, health and connective value

Restorative **tranquil environments** with birdsong, low noise and light pollution contribute to well-being

Recreation value of open water: boating, swimming, angling as well as surrounding trails and routes

Active and sustainable travel routes such as the Ouse Valley Way stretching from source to sea

Figure 7.   Portholme Meadow

Figure 8.   Rowing near Ely

Figure 9.   Ouse Valley Way Sign

Climate change – More flooding, drought, storms, and heat extremes threatening people, farming, and habitats

Loss of peatland – Ongoing shrinkage and erosion cause subsidence, flood risk, carbon emissions, and soil loss, degrading the value of the landscape

Increased flood frequency, volume and extent – Prolonged floods harm farming, settlements, and breeding success of waders

Pollution – Sewage and runoff reduce water quality, endanger health, recreation, and biodiversity

Invasive species, pests and diseases - Weaken ecosystems and displace native wildlife

Development pressure – Housing growth fragments habitats, increases runoff, and strains infrastructure

Visitor pressure – Rising numbers risk degradation of landscape value without adequate facilities, investment or management

Access issues – Poorly maintained and limited paths, crossings, and parking reduce accessibility

Agriculture pressures – Intensive practices risk peat loss, carbon release, and biodiversity decline

Fragmented management – Multiple authorities limit joined-up action and ownership

2.4 Strategic Alignment

The self-designation of the Great Ouse Valley and Washes landscape is strategically aligned with policy and strategy from national to local levels.

It supports the duty of public authorities to conserve biodiversity, as set out in the Environment Act 2021, by facilitating habitat restoration and encouraging local collaboration to advance nature recovery priorities.

The self-designation also aligns with the UK's commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030, introducing recognition and protection in East Anglia, an area under-represented in designated landscapes.

The Great Ouse Valley and Washes can contribute to achieving net zero goals by enhancing carbon sequestration, water regulation, and climate adaptation. The landscape encompasses floodplains, wetlands, and habitats that support nature-based solutions, sustainable travel and leisure.

At a regional level, the landscape designation supports the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority's (CPCA) ambition of "doubling nature" and aligns with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

The self-designation also complements the Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) Local Plan by supporting several key policies, with the area already recognised as a "priority landscape".

A summary of the strategies and policies supported by the self-designation is shown to the right. These policies and their alignment with the self-designation proposals are explained in the Stage 1 Report.

National Policy and Strategy

European Landscape Convention (ELC)	30 by 30 Nature Recovery Commitment	Environmental Improvement Plan 2023	Environment Act 2021
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	Glover Report 2019	Natural England Designation Guidance	Net Zero Strategy 2021

Regional and District Policy and Strategy

CPCA Ambition: Doubling Nature	Local Nature Recovery Strategy	HDC Huntingdonshire Futures
Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036	HDC Economic Growth Strategy	HDC Biodiversity For All

Local Partnerships

Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership	Fens for the Future Partnership	New Life on the Old West

2.4.1 Huntingdonshire Futures Strategic Alignment

Huntingdonshire Futures is Huntingdonshire District Council's place strategy for the next 30 years. It is split into five "journeys":

- Pride in Place
- Inclusive Economy
- Health Embedded
- Environmental Innovation
- Travel Transformed

The self-designation of the Great Ouse Valley landscape will contribute to achieving the goals of all five journeys, in particular the ambition to achieve "Pride in Place" by 2050:

"*Distinct, unified and well-loved - by 2050, Huntingdonshire's citizens will feel proud to live and work in a place with stand-out character*"

The Great Ouse Valley runs through Huntingdonshire, connecting its major historic towns as well as many key nature and heritage sites. However, it is not widely known and appreciated as a continuous landscape. By conserving its value and character and promoting a unified identity and management approach, the Great Ouse Valley can become a cherished asset for residents.

By enhancing place quality, well-being, active travel, and the environmental economy the Great Ouse Valley is an essential driver to achieving the ambitions of Huntingdonshire Futures. By helping to foster a shared identity, self-designation will ensure residents feel proud to live and work in the area.

Figure 10. Huntingdonshire Futures "Pride In Place" Journey

3.0 Self-Designation Boundary

3.1 Study area background

At the outset of the project, a broad study area was defined (see Figure 11), encompassing both the 2014 designation area and the wider Ouse River landscape. This area was divided into 3 focus zones, each reflecting the distinct character of the waterways and surrounding environments.

The next section outlines the process for reviewing and defining boundary options for the current phase. It details the evidence base, applied criteria, and how these informed the assessment of potential boundaries.

These provisional boundaries, developed primarily through desk-based analysis using diverse data sources and imagery, form the basis for the economic analysis in Section 5. They offer a range of options and a framework for further engagement, including field surveys and refinement of the preferred boundary.
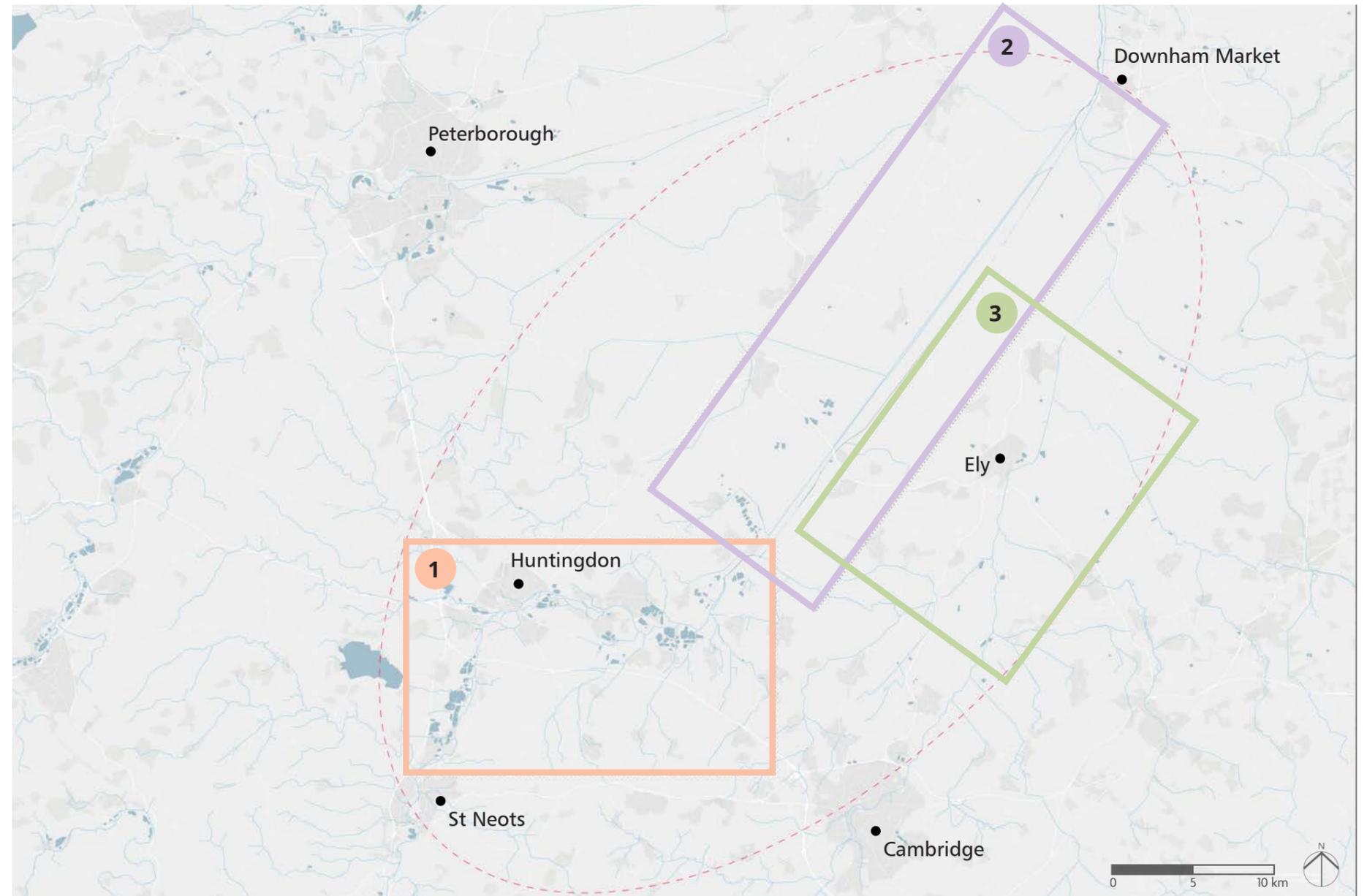
Figure 11.   Stage 1 Study Areas

1 - The Huntingdonshire/ South Cambridgeshire Great Ouse Valley: A gently meandering river and floodplain system extending north from St Neots, through Huntingdon, Godmanchester and St Ives, to Earith including braided backwaters, wet meadows and lakes.

2 - The Ouse Washes: A 33 km engineered water channel stretching northeast to Denver Sluice in West Norfolk. This vast, linear, and seasonally wet landscape is surrounded by drained fenlands and benefits from four statutory ecological designations.

3 - The Ely Ouse and Fen Isles: The Ely Ouse diverts from the Washes at Earith and passes through Ely before rejoining near Denver Sluice. The Fen Isles, rising from the flat lands between these watercourses, contribute to the area's unique topography and historic land-use.

3.2 Boundary definition methodology

This section will detail the method used reviewing, defining and refining the boundary options for the self-designated area.

3.2.1 Guidance and evidence base

The process for reviewing, defining, and refining boundary options for the proposed self-designated Great Ouse Valley and Washes Landscape has been designed to be methodical, transparent, and rooted in nationally recognised landscape assessment practice.

Although this is not a statutory designation, the approach draws on National Landscape (Formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONB) criteria so that, if future statutory designation were pursued, the work would already be strategically aligned.

At the same time, a non-statutory designation allows a degree of flexibility to reflect the unique qualities of the Great Ouse Valley and Washes, and the ways in which local communities and visitors value the landscape.

To shape the methodology, a number of key documents and case studies were reviewed:

- **European Landscape Convention (ELC)** – establishes that all landscapes, whether ordinary, degraded, or outstanding, are of value.
- **Natural England** – Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (2014), including Annex 1 definition of landscape value: '*The relative value or importance attached to a landscape (often as a basis for designation or recognition), which expresses national or local consensus, because of its quality, special qualities including perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness, cultural associations or other conservation issues.*'
- **Natural England** – Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for Designation as a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (2021) provides nationally consistent boundary-setting principles
- **Landscape Institute** Technical Guidance Note 02/21 on assessing landscape value outside national designations.
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** – hierarchy of designated sites, maintenance and enhancement of habitat networks and green infrastructure, and the requirement for landscapes to be "special" or "out of the ordinary" to be valued in planning terms.
- **South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse Local Landscape Designations (2021)** – provides a methodological example for assessing valued landscapes at local level.

Natural England Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for designation (2021) Natual Beauty Factors:

Landscape Quality	Current physical state or condition of the landscape and its features
Scenic Quality	Appealing to the senses (primarily, but not only, the visual senses).
Relative Wildness	Relatively wild character can be perceived in the landscape and makes a particular contribution to sense of place.
Relative Tranquility	Relative tranquillity (peace, calm) can be perceived in the landscape.
Natural Heritage Features	Influence of flora, fauna, geological and physiographical features on the perception of natural beauty of the area.
Cultural Heritage	Degree to which associations with particular traditions, people, artists, writers or events contribute to perception of natural beauty.

3.2.2 Boundary definition criteria

The criteria used to guide boundary definition are grouped into Core Elements, Shaping Elements, Exclusion Elements, and Rules.

1. Core Elements (highest weighting, essential for inclusion)

These represent the defining qualities of the Great Ouse Valley and Washes as a valued landscape:

- **Hydrological network and floodplain system:** The river, washes, and drainage network that underpin the character and ecology of the valley
- **Highest quality habitats and landscapes**: including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar sites, and Local/ National Nature Reserves
- **Distinctive local character:** Landscape features and qualities that are unique or rare in a local or national context

2. Shaping Elements (medium weighting, refine and define)

These criteria shape the boundary between core areas to reflect wider landscape quality and coherence:

- **Condition and intactness:** minimal detractors or fragmentation
- **Scenic and perceptual qualities:** Unobstructed views, tranquillity, dark skies and remoteness
- **Cultural and historic value:** heritage assets, archaeological landscapes, associations with local history or traditions
- **Recreation, access and connectivity:** rights of way, cycle routes, access to enjoy the landscape
- **Hydrological shaping:** Following and connecting through hydrological corridors including rivers, washes, and drains

3. Exclusion Elements (Areas not included)

Features that detract from the character of the landscape are excluded where possible:

- **Large settlements** and built-up areas
- Major **infrastructure and industrial development** that disrupts habitat continuity or aesthetic qualities

4. Rules for Boundary Placement

To ensure the boundary is clear, consistent, and defensible:

- **Settlements close to the boundary are excluded**: In line with Natural England guidance. However, boundaries may come close to settlement to reflect the cultural and historic connection of settlement to the wider landscape
- **Landscape-led and legible:** Physical, identifiable features are used wherever possible, such as rivers, drainage ditches, woodland edges, field margins, tracks, railways, or roads (rather than political or ownership boundaries)
- **'Wash-over' principle:** as per Natural England guidance, the boundary can include ("wash over") tracts of land that may not fully meet the criteria themselves, but are contiguous and contribute to landscape coherence. Such areas may also offer potential for future enhancement (for example, through Local Nature Recovery Strategy actions)

3.3 Core inclusion elements

The proposed self-designation focuses on the distinctive natural systems, habitats and features that define the Great Ouse Valley and Washes. These form the backbone of the landscape's ecological, cultural and community value.

3.3.1 The Great Ouse Hydrological Network

The waterways are the connecting thread of the designation. They include the River Great Ouse and its backwaters, running through floodplain meadows, farmland and historic towns such as Huntingdon, Godmanchester, St Ives and Ely. In some areas, the river retains its natural meanders and in others it has been re-directed (Figure 13)

The Ouse Washes, with their parallel drainage channels (Old Bedford River/River Delph and New Bedford River) and seasonally flooded washlands, create one of Europe's most important wetland landscapes (Figure 14).

The waterways and associated habitats such as wetlands, flood meadows, wet woodland and lakes support diverse wildlife and create a continuous connection for wildlife.

The hydrological system not only provides habitat and aesthetic value, but also a vital environmental role in flood protection and securing water supply.

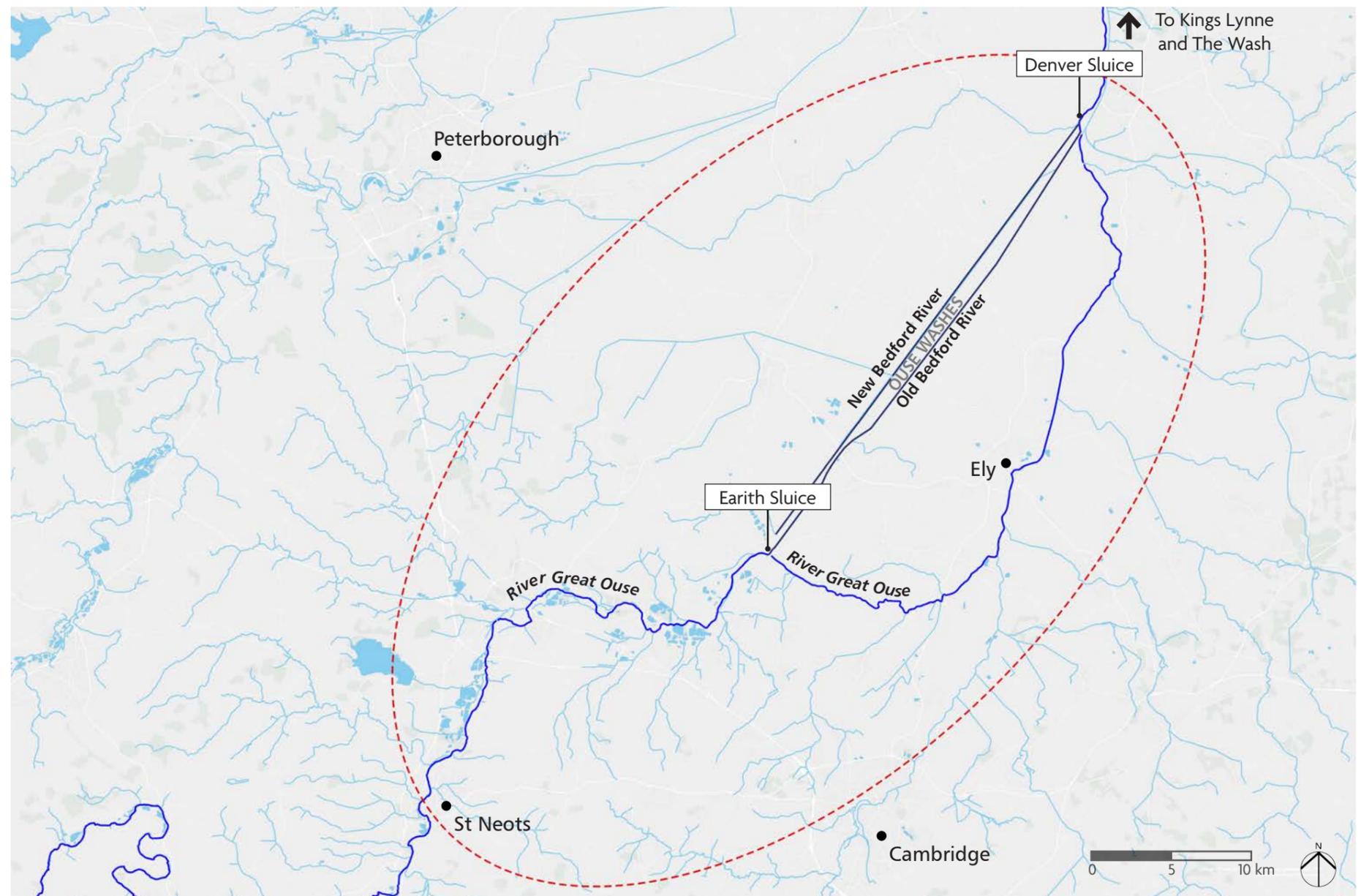**Figure 13.   Map of core inclusion element: Main hydrological network of the River Great Ouse**

Ouse Washes - seasonal flood storage

Old Bedford River   New Bedford River (tidal)
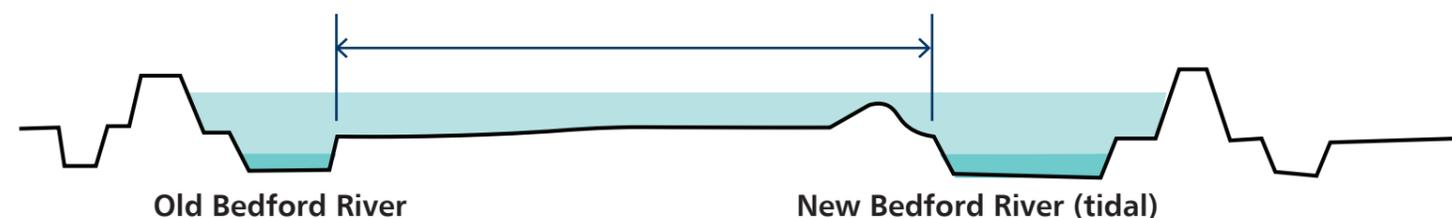
Figure 14.   Ouse Washes cross section, based on drawing in OWLP LCA

3.3.2 Protected nature sites and sites of particular importance for biodiversity

Figure 15 shows the nationally and internationally recognised sites of exceptional ecological importance with existing statutory protections in the area of study. Cambridgeshire alone contains 99 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), six Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), and five Ramsar sites.

The Ouse washes is included within all of these categories and is the largest designated site, partially crossing into Norfolk.

Together, these sites create a network of irreplaceable habitats but are currently managed by a wide range of landowners, highlighting the opportunity for a more joined-up approach.

Key

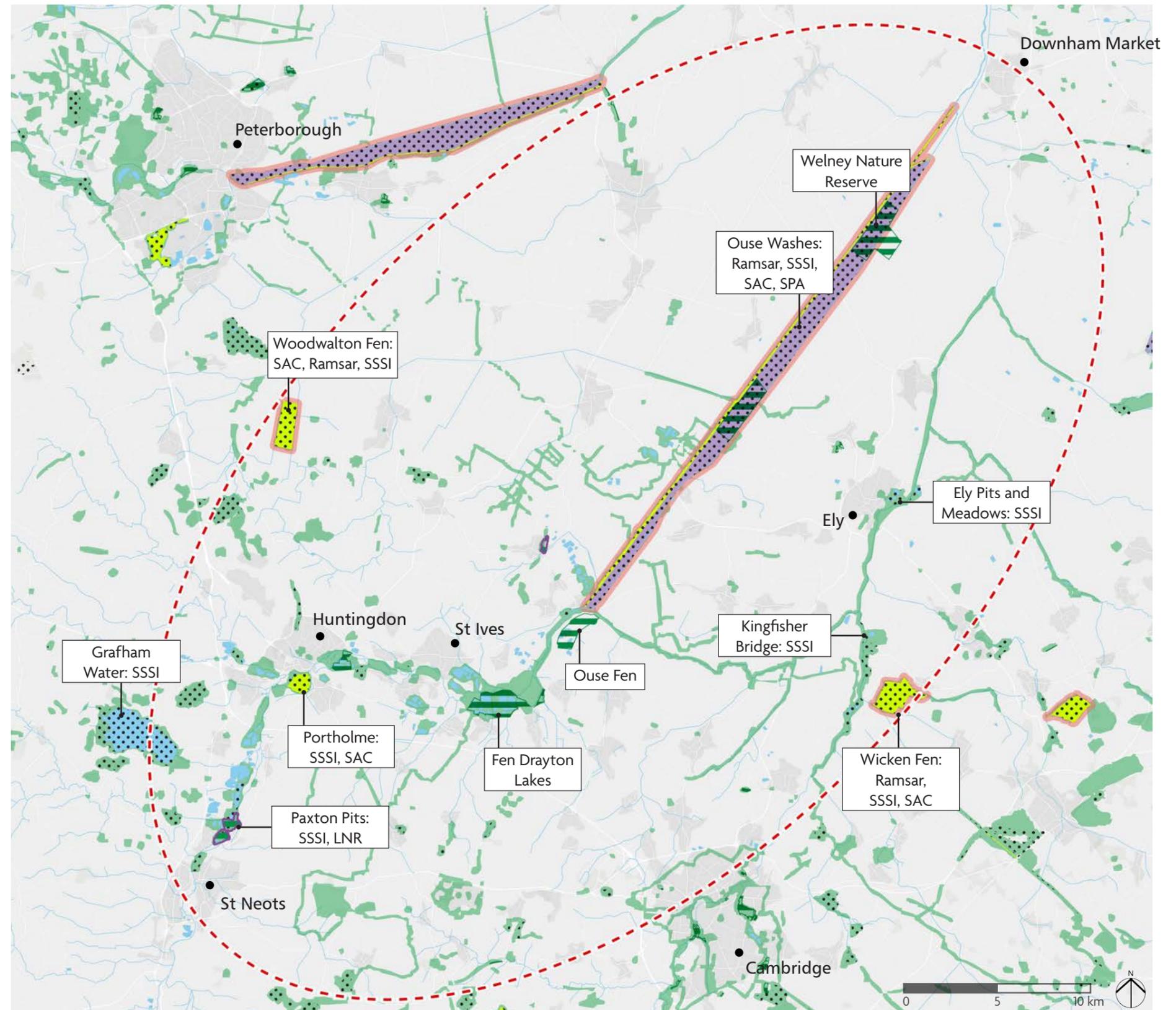|	
▬	Area of Particular Importance to Biodiversity (APB) according to developing LNRS
▭	Ramsar Site
⣿	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
▬	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
▬	Special Protection Area (SPA)
▤	Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
▤	Nature Reserve

Figure 15. Map of core inclusion elements: Protected nature sites and Areas of Particular Importance to Biodiversity

Ramsar Sites

Ramsar sites are wetlands that are designated for their international importance under the Ramsar Convention. Both Wicken Fen and Ouse Washes are Ramsar sites.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

Internationally significant sites that are conserved to protect habitats and species listed in the European Union (EU) Habitats Directive. Sites include Portholme Meadow and Wicken Fen.

Special Protection Areas (SPA)

Sites protected under the EU Birds Directive to protect rare, vulnerable and migratory birds and their habitats. The Ouse Washes is a SPA.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

These are nationally significant areas conserved due to their particular interest to science for biological or geological reasons. Sites include Grafham Water, Kingfisher Bridge and Ely Pits and Meadows as well as all the aforementioned sites.

Local Nature Reserves

Local Nature Reserves including Somersham Local Nature Reserve and Paxton Pits Local Nature Reserve are sites designated by local authorities and in some cases town and parish councils. These sites are of special interest locally and are designated for people and wildlife.

Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APB)

These sites have been identified in the process of creating Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). They include designated sites mentioned above as well as other important local wildlife sites such as Fen Drayton Lakes and connective green spaces. These are recommended to be preserved for habitat protection and enhancement due to their important role for supporting protected species and biodiversity.

Nature Reserves (non-statutory)

Nature reserves are sites that are managed for nature conservation or restoration and may or may not be publicly accessible. Most of these sites have been identified in Local Nature Recovery Strategies as Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity, though some areas fall outside of these boundaries. They are largely managed by charities such as RSPB (Ouse Fen, Fen Drayton Lakes, Paxton Pits) or WWT (Welney Nature Reserve).

Wicken Fen: Ramsar, SAC, SSSI

Wicken Fen was established in 1899 when the National Trust purchased its first two acres of land, establishing the Trust's oldest nature reserve.

The site consists of a mosaic of meadows, sedge and reedbeds and hosts more than 9000 species.

The Wicken Fen Vision is a 100 year plan which aims to expand and restore a wider area of fenland stretching toward Cambridge.

Ouse Washes: Ramsar, SAC, SPA and SSSI

The Ouse Washes is an engineered flood storage area approximately 33 km long and 0.8km wide created by two parallel cuts with embankments. The waterways, banks and seasonally flooded meadow in between are managed with traditional grazing and have become an internationally important wildlife habitat.

Bird species include wigeon, dabbling ducks, whooper swans, garganey, avocet, black-tailed godwit, redshank, snipe, yellow wagtail, lekking ruff, little egret, spotted crake and more.

Two nature reserves, managed by BCN Wildlife Trust and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, give visitors the opportunity to learn about and spot wildlife from multiple hides.

[1]Photo by Stephen McKay (CC BY-SA 2.0)

[2]Photo by Richard Humphrey (CC BY-SA-2.0)

3.4 Boundary shaping elements

Shaping elements define the boundary between the core elements to limit fragmentation and create coherence.

3.4.1 Areas that could become of particular importance to biodiversity (ACB)

These are areas identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for habitat creation, enhancement or protection (Figure 16) and include:

- Potential habitat corridors
- Opportunities to expand existing areas and create buffer zones
- Opportunities to enhance low-quality and degraded habitats

3.4.2 Mineral extraction and allocation sites

Many sites allocated and used for mineral extraction will be restored as nature sites. This process began in 1950s and is currently supported by the "Nature after Minerals" partnership lead by RSPB:

- Ouse Fen (Needingworth Quarry) will expand to become the biggest reedbed in the UK (460 ha)
- Block Fen (Mepal Quarry) is a rare case where inert waste will be recycled to create wet grassland, creating new habitat and water capacity to relieve pressure on Ouse Washes habitat

Key

▨ Areas that could become of particular importance to biodiversity (ACB)

▨ Mineral Extraction Site
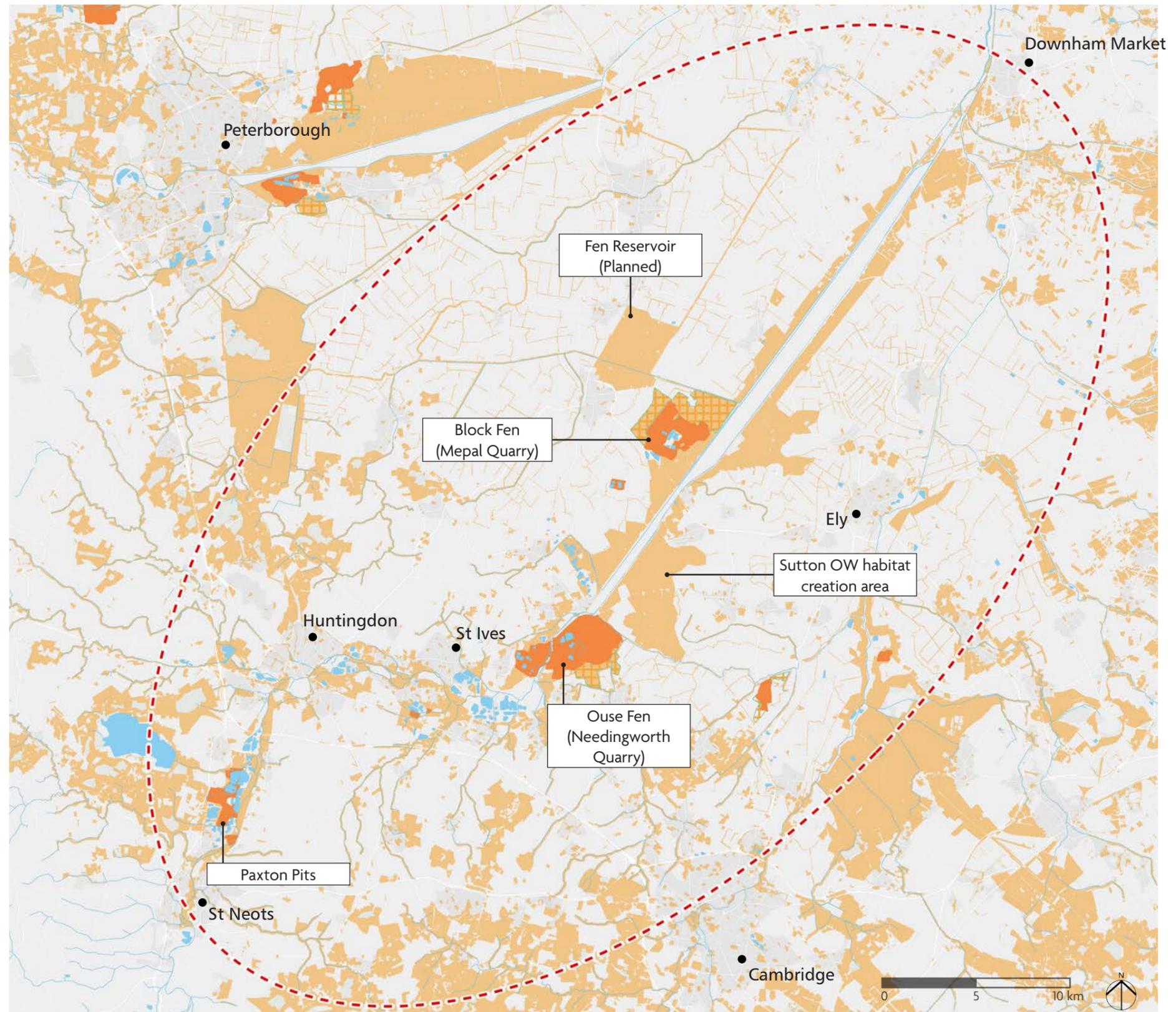
▨ Mineral Allocation Site

Figure 16. Map of boundary shaping elements: Areas that could become of particular importance to biodiversity and mineral extraction and allocation sites

3.4.3 Heritage and Cultural

Human influence has imprinted on the character and identity of the landscape. Watermills shaped the braiding channels of the Great Ouse. Monastics seeking isolation in the marshes created distinctive settlements and medieval market towns. These stories reflect a tradition of independence and self-determination rooted in the Valley's geography and history (Figure 17).

Landmarks such as St Ives Bridge Chapel, Houghton Mill and Ely Cathedral connect the present-day landscape with its medieval and early modern past, while the Ouse Washes stand as a nationally significant 17th-century engineering achievement in water management.

The area is known for its multiple links to Oliver Cromwell, who resided at different times in Huntingdon, St Ives and Ely. The relative isolation of the landscape was used strategically by the Parliamentarians during the Civil War. See the stage 1 report for more detail on the area's history and heritage value.

Key

Conservation Area

Registered Park or Garden
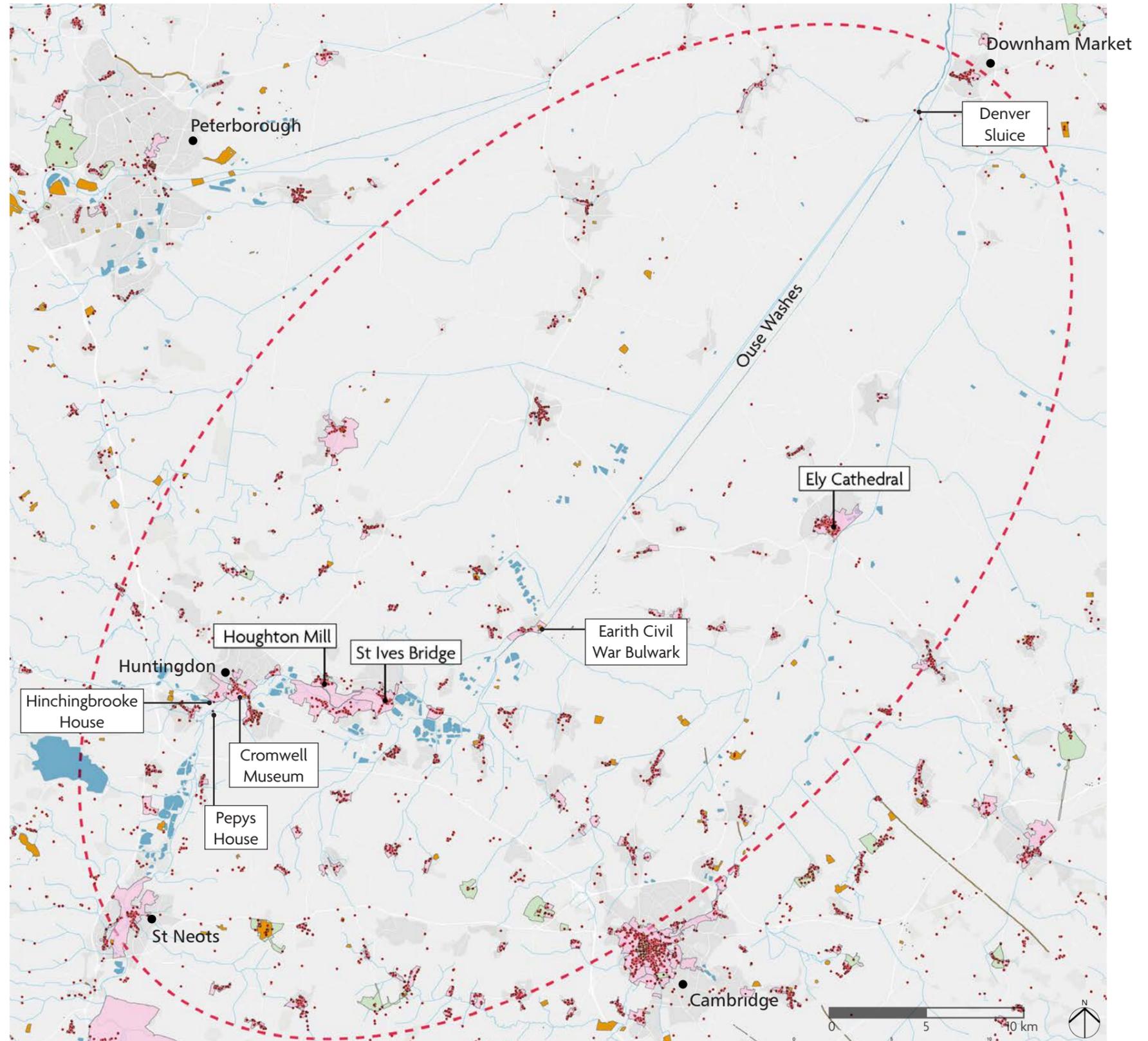
Scheduled Monument

• Listed Building

Figure 17.   Map of boundary shaping elements: Heritage and cultural sites

3.4.4 Public Rights of Way and Cycle network

The presence of existing active travel networks strengthens the case for self-designation, creating direct benefits for local people by:

- Linking communities with wildlife sites and natural spaces
- Promoting healthy, active lifestyles
- Supporting sustainable everyday travel and tourism

A central feature is the Ouse Valley Way: a long-distance walking route that follows the River Great Ouse from source to sea. By connecting villages, reserves and riverside destinations, it integrates the countryside into daily life while showcasing the Valley's distinctive landscapes (Figure 18).

In 2025, the Great Ouse Valley Trust launched the "Walk the Ouse Valley Way (WOW) Day", a free annual event encouraging people to explore the trail. This initiative not only promotes health and recreation but also builds recognition of the Valley as a connected, living landscape.

Key

— Public Right of Way (PROW)

▶▶▶ Ouse Valley Way

▪▪▪▪ Cycleway (on road)

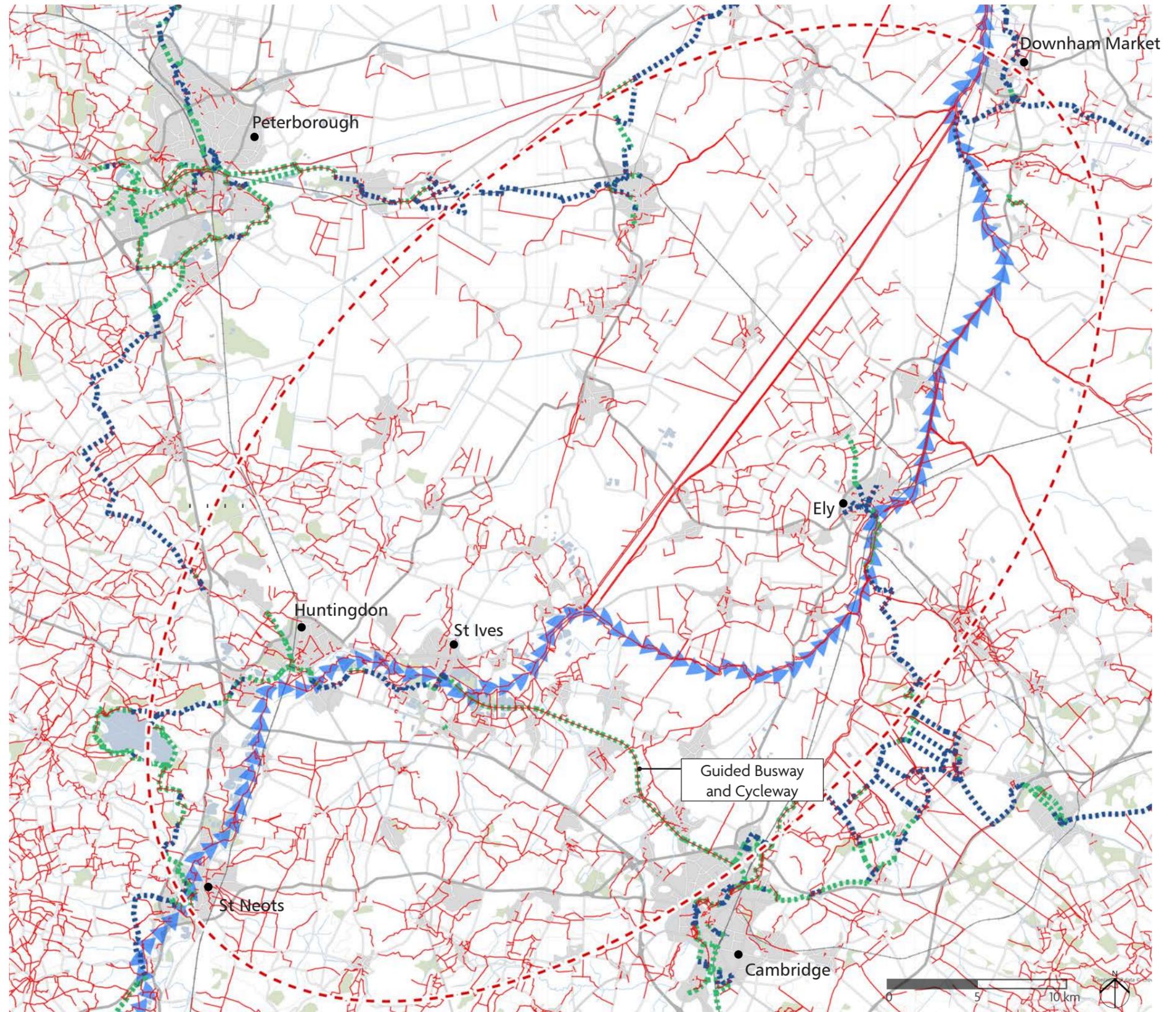▪▪▪▪ Cycleway traffic-free

⊢⊣ Railway line

Figure 18. Map of boundary shaping elements: Public Rights of Way and Cycle network

3.4.5 Ground considerations and usage

Two additional factors shape the boundary options for self-designation: agricultural land classification (Figure 19) and flood risk (Figure 20). Both influence how land is valued, used and managed.

The Great Ouse Valley is a highly productive agricultural landscape, with extensive areas of Grade 1 land. The drained fenlands, with their rich peaty soils, are nationally important for food security and underpin intensive farming, particularly in the north of the study area.

Alongside this, areas at high risk of flooding present different opportunities. While less suitable for conventional development, they are valuable for flood attenuation, water management and habitat restoration. In contrast, land of lower agricultural grade offers greater flexibility to balance farming with landscape, heritage and biodiversity objectives.

Agricultural Land Classification

- Grade 1: Excellent
- Grade 2: Very good
- Grade 3: Good to moderate
- Grade 4: Poor
- Grade 5: Very poor
- Other non-agricultural use
- Urban use

Annual risk of flooding from rivers and sea

- Medium (0.1 - 1% chance)
- High (>1% chance)
- Waterways
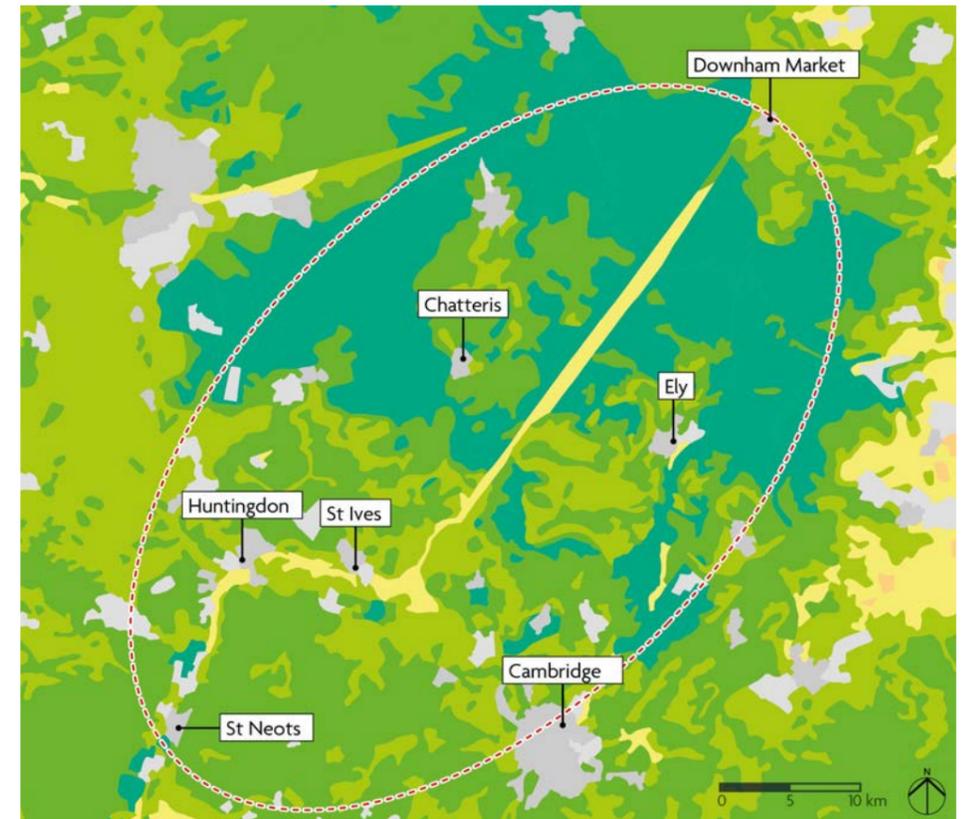
Figure 19.   Agricultural land classification
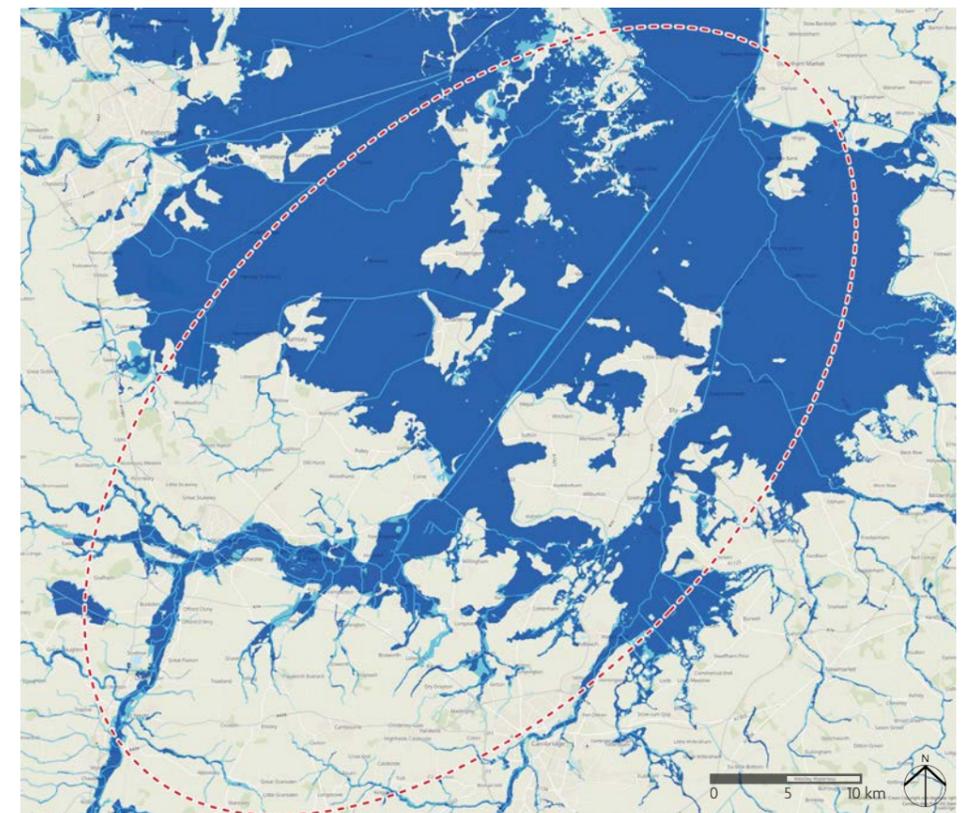
Figure 20.   Risk of flooding from rivers and sea Zone 1 and 2

3.5 Exclusion elements

Exclusion elements are elements and sites which detract from landscape value and should not be included in the designation where possible. This includes built up areas (BUA) and areas for industrial use (Figure 21).

Other sites that have been excluded from the boundary include waste management areas that are not being regenerated for biodiversity, and areas that have been allocated for development as mixed use or employment areas.

Key

BUA

Waste Management Area

HDC Allocated mixed use

HDC Employment areas
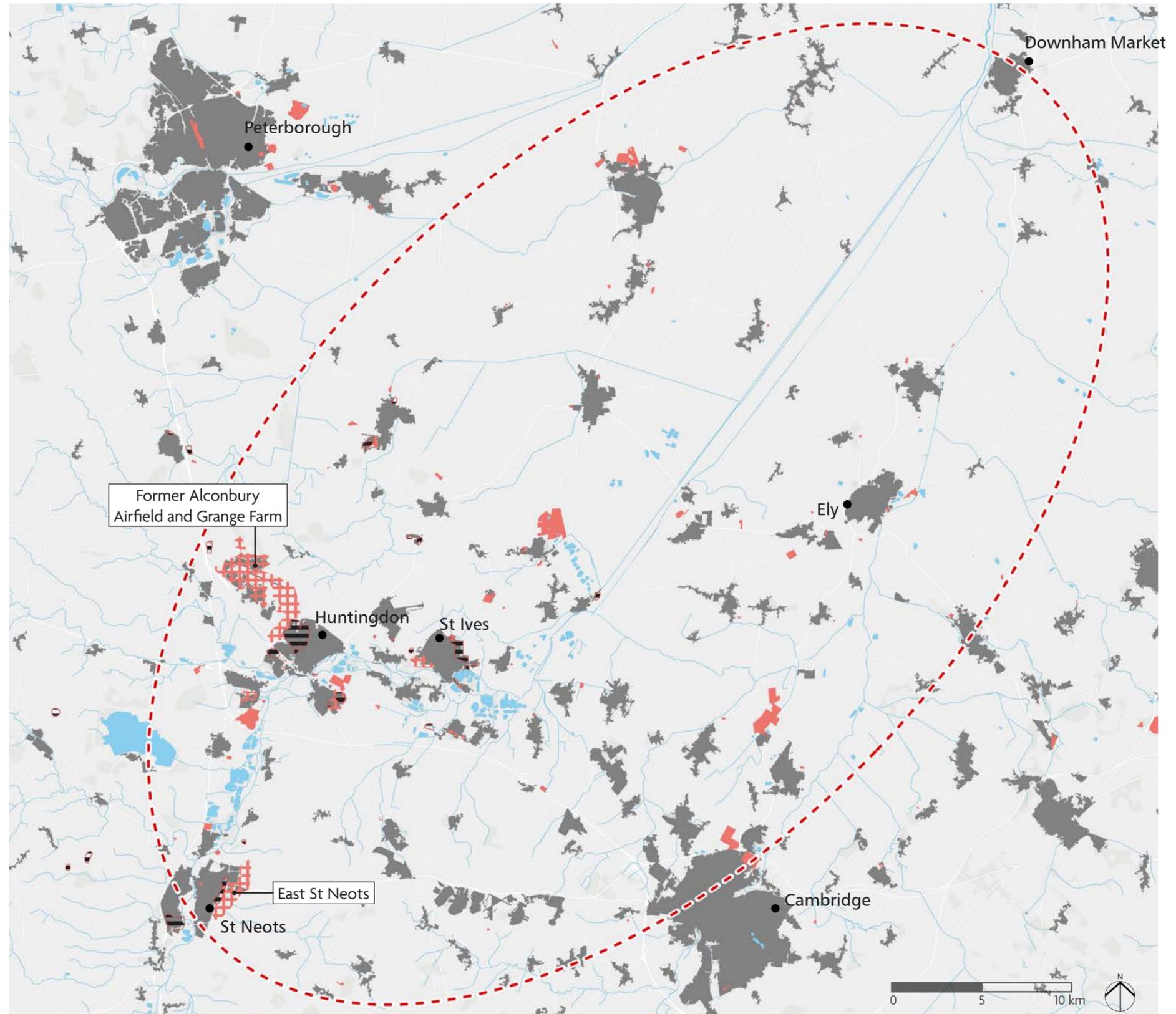
Figure 21.   Map of exclusion elements

3.6 Final boundary options

The criteria were applied in the study areas to define three options for self-designation, from the minimum area to an extended area. The options are nested such that the area of the "core" option 1 is included in all options, and option 2 is also included in option 3 (Figure 22).

Note that these boundaries will be subject to further review and refinement, and can be adapted in the context of Local Government Reorganisation (see Section 6 - Next Steps).

Option 1: Core Great Ouse Valley

Option 2: Core Great Ouse Valley plus Ouse Washes

Option 3: Extended Great Ouse Valley, including the Ely Ouse, Fen Isles and Ouse Washes

Key

- Option 1
- Option 2
- Option 3

Downham Market

Welney Wetland Centre

Peterborough

Fen Reservoir future site

Alconbury Brook

Ely pits and meadows

Ely

Grapham Water

Huntingdon

Paxton Pits Nature Reserve

Wicken Fen

Fen Drayton Lakes

St Neots

Cambridge

0   5   10 km
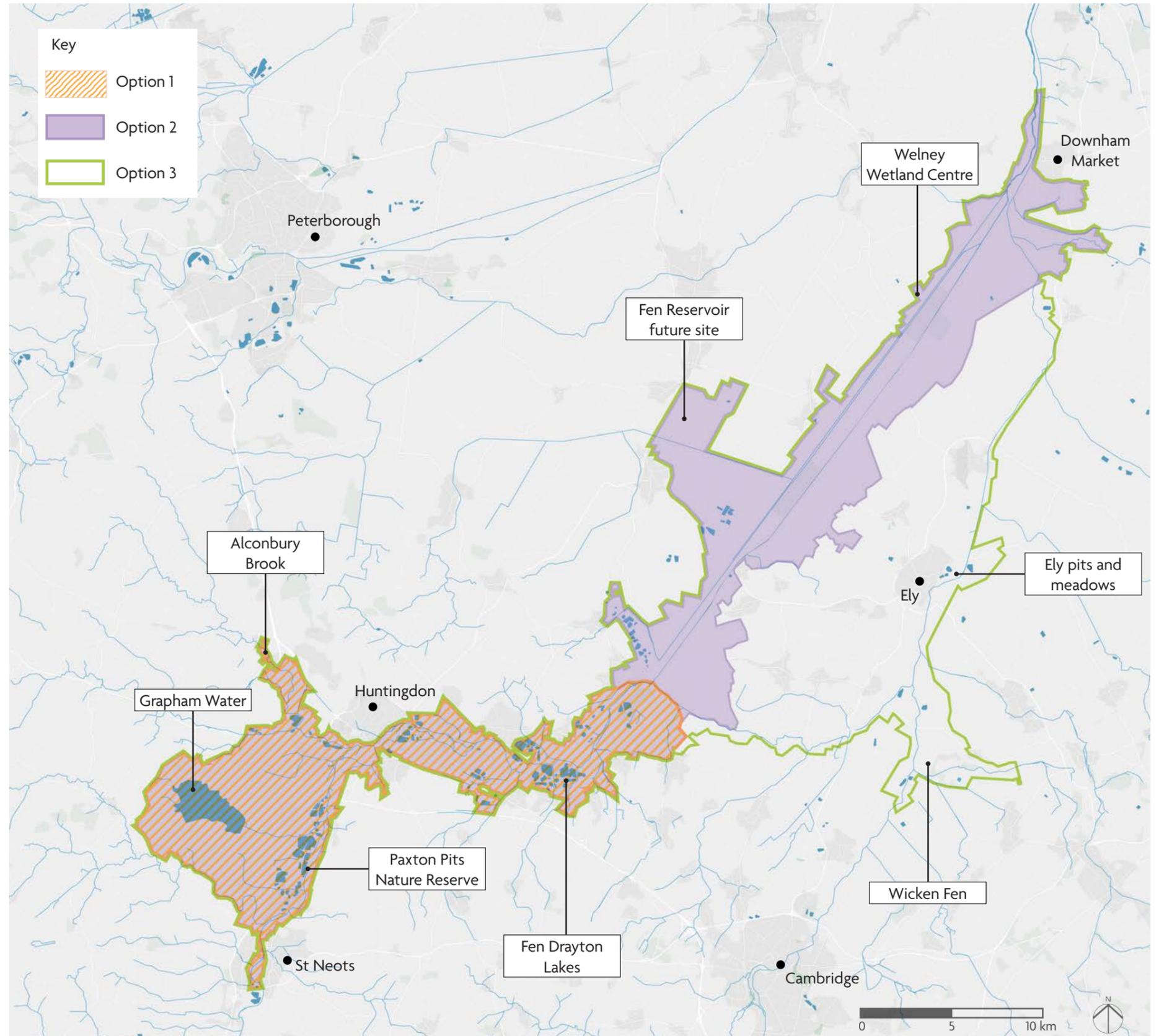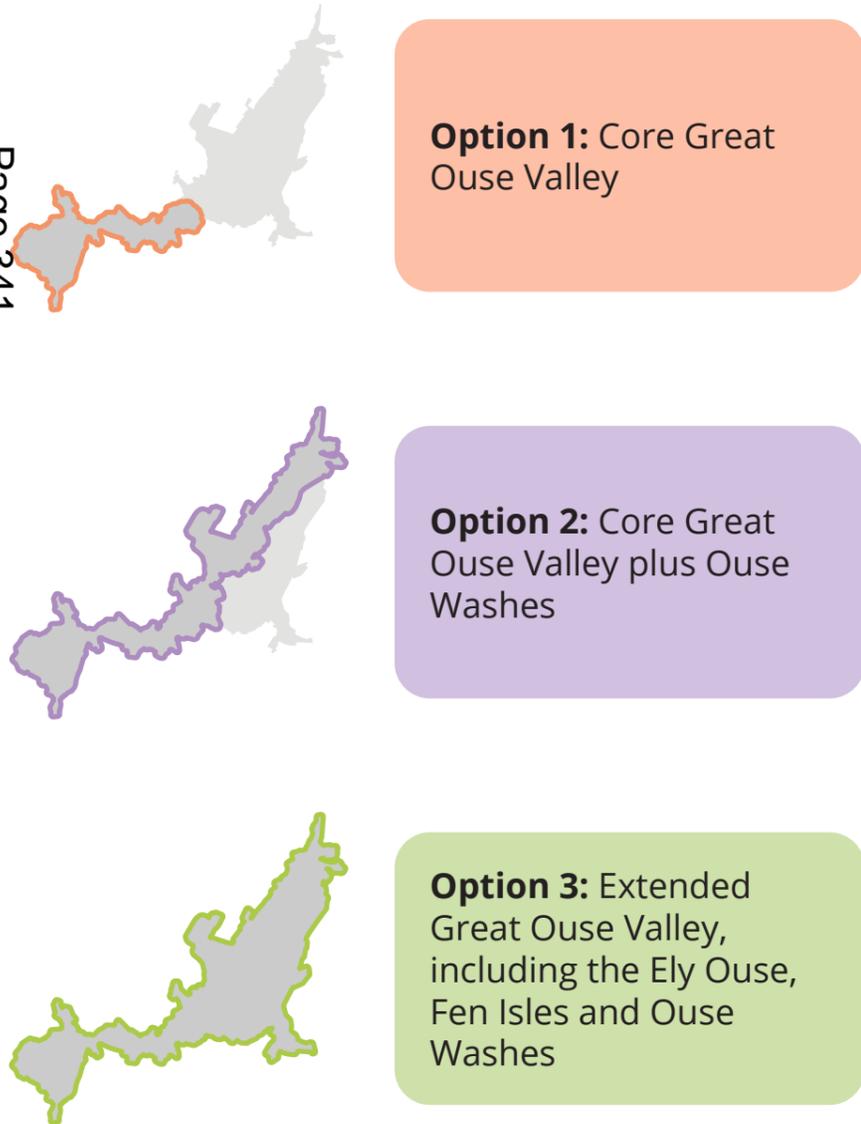
Figure 22.   Map of the three nested boundary options

3.6.1 Option 1: Great Ouse Valley Core

This area, focused in the Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire districts, was the original focus for the Great Ouse Valley Trust in the drive for landscape designation. In this way it is the core landscape under consideration for designation and is included within all options (Figure 23).

This landscape is defined by its open, low-lying terrain and strong visual and ecological relationship with the river.

The shallow valley stretches from St Neots to Earith via the historic market towns of Huntingdon and Godmanchester. Settlements are connected along the river corridor, separated by meadows and farmland.

The Great Ouse meanders southwest to northeast, through an expansive floodplain characterised by fertile alluvial soils, seasonally flooded meadows, grazing land, wetlands and lakes.

The original boundaries drawn by the trust have been assessed and refined according to the methodology outlined.

Total Area: 14,972 hectares

Key
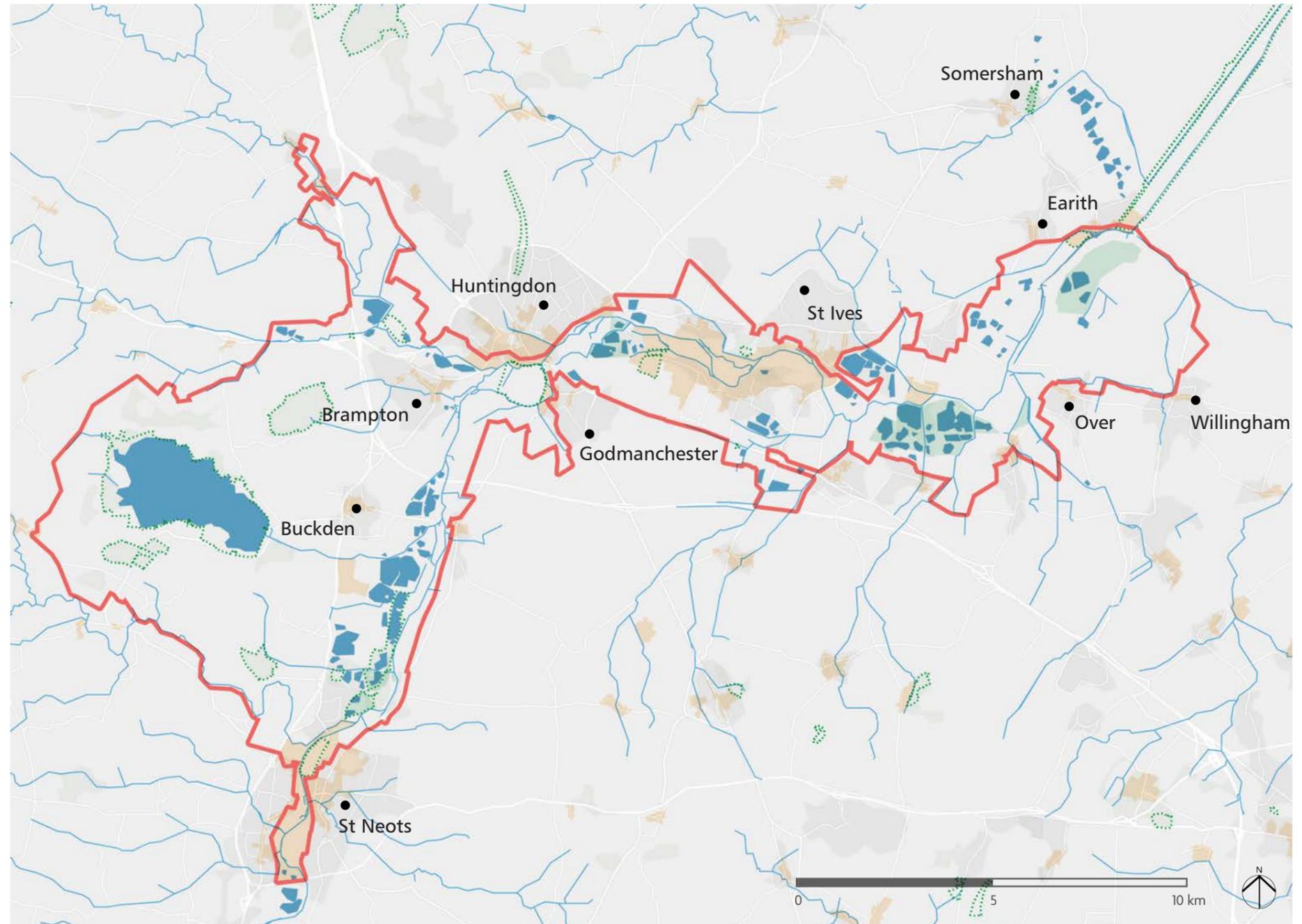
Nature Reserve   Statutory Protected Site   Conservation Area   Waterbody

Figure 23.   Option 1 overview and context

Hydrology

- Great Ouse and its braided backwaters and floodplains connect towns and villages
- Alconbury Brook and other tributaries
- Grafham Water reservoir and nature reserve
- Nature sites created through mineral extraction, restored for nature and leisure use - Paxton pits, Fen Drayton Lakes, Ouse Fen
- Seasonally flooding landscapes - wet meadow and woodland such as Houghton Meadows

Protected and important nature sites

- 13 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Portholme Meadow Special Area of Conservation (SPA)
- Densely covered by nature reserves and local nature sites
- Brampton Wood - Cambridgeshire's second largest ancient woodland

Portholme Meadow

Houghton Meadow

Ouse Fen

Figure 24. **Option 1 inclusion and shaping elements**

Map labels: Alconbury Brook, Houghton Mill, Ouse Fen, Hinchingbrooke House and Country Park, Brampton Wood, Grafham Water, Portholme Meadow, Fen Drayton Lakes, Paxton pits

0   5   10 km

N

Heritage and culture

- National Trust Houghton Mill
- The Old Ferry Boat Inn pub, grade II listed building built in 17th Century, associated with a historic crossing
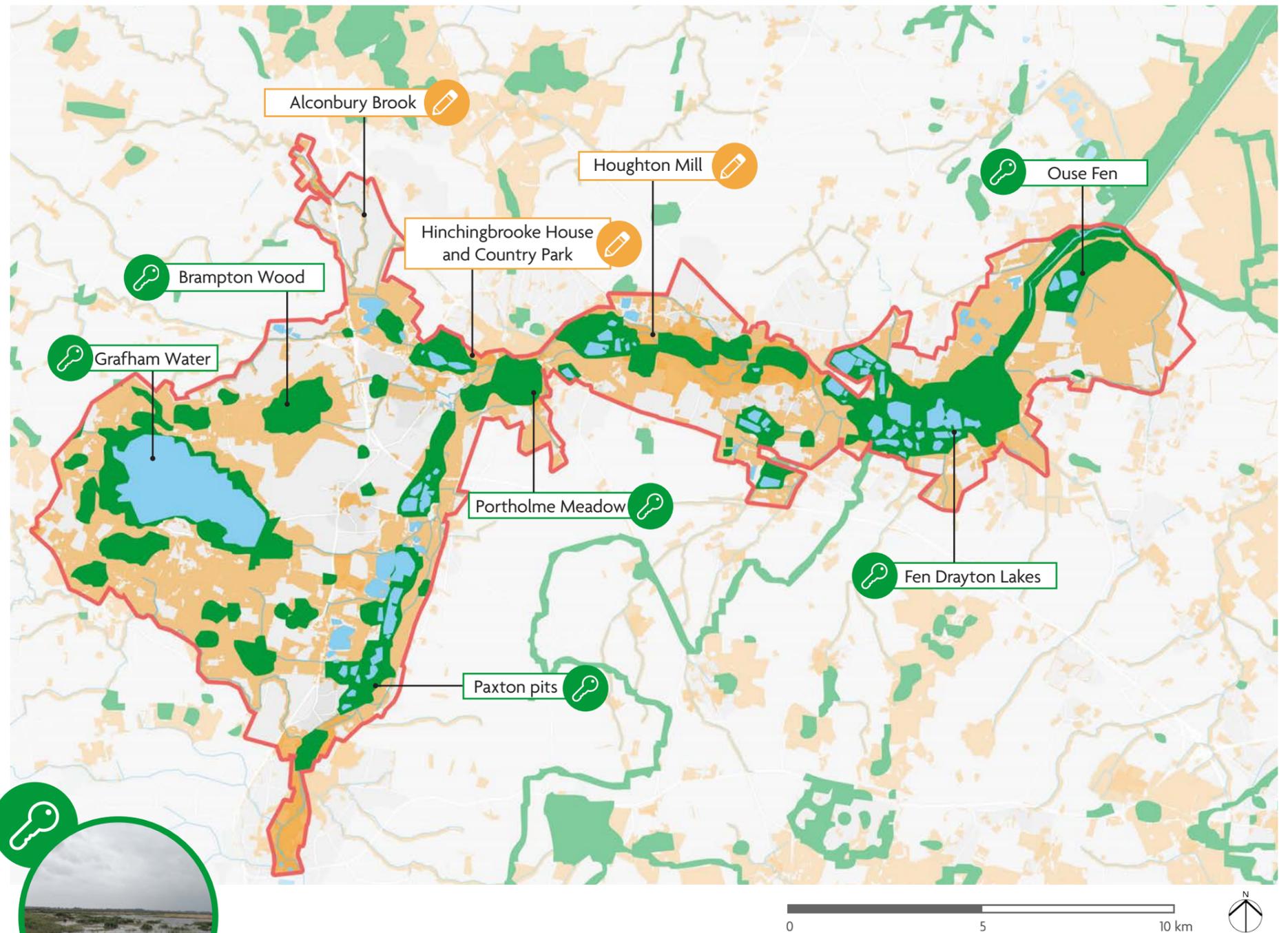- Medieval bridges at the market towns of St Ives, Huntingdon and Godmanchester. St Ives bridge is one of few remaining bridges to have a chapel built into the bridge
- Multiple sites connected with Oliver Cromwell (Hinchingbrooke House, Cromwell museum)

Landscape and habitat restoration

- Mineral extraction from 1950s onwards has created lakes that are being restored as habitat
- Nature After Minerals partnership established to restore these sites, working with land owners throughout the process of planning, extraction and handover to charities
- Further mineral allocation areas will be restored as reedbeds, creating UK's largest reedbed habitat and creating valuable flood attenuation

Transport and rights of way

- The Ouse Valley Way runs continuously through the area
- The St Ives to Cambridge guided busway and parallel cycle route creates a sustainable travel link into the heart of the proposed area, linking through Fen Drayton lakes

18th-century working Watermill, on a site that has been milling for over 1000 years

Houghton Mill

Claims to be the oldest pub in England, and (reportedly) haunted by a ghost called Juliet

Old Ferry Boat Inn

The Huntingdonshire section of the trail hosts the annual "Walk the Ouse Valley Way" day

Ouse Valley Way

The world's longest guided busway. Parallel pedestrian and cycle route connecting Cambridge to St Ives

Busway and Cycle route

Option strengths and benefits

- High density of protected and high potential sites
- Connection of development to water
- Potential to create a sense of coherence throughout the area, highly coherent and legible as a character area
- Significant potential and plans for reed-bed expansion - 460 hectares planned at Ouse Fen will eventually make it the largest in the UK
- The Ouse Valley (with similar boundaries to this option) is already identified as a Landscape Character Area in the Local Plan (Huntingdonshire District Council)
- This option has minimal need for "wash over" land, with most fields at a smaller scale compared to the other options

Option weaknesses

- The option area is small when compared with most mainland National Landscapes. This may hinder any future efforts to re-attempt full statutory designation if desired
- This option excludes the continuation of the valley beyond Earith towards Ely, despite strong landscape coherence along the river corridor

3.6.2 Option 2: Core Great Ouse Valley plus Ouse Washes

This option is a variation on the boundary that was submitted and considered for AONB designation in 2014. It extends beyond the core Great Ouse Valley area to include the Ouse Washes and some of its surrounds, which was the basis for the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership.

The area has been refined according to the designation criteria and considers the future Fen Reservoir and other habitat development and restoration areas (Figure 25).

Total Area: 33,130 hectares

Key

Nature Reserve

Statutory Protected Site

Conservation Area

Waterbody
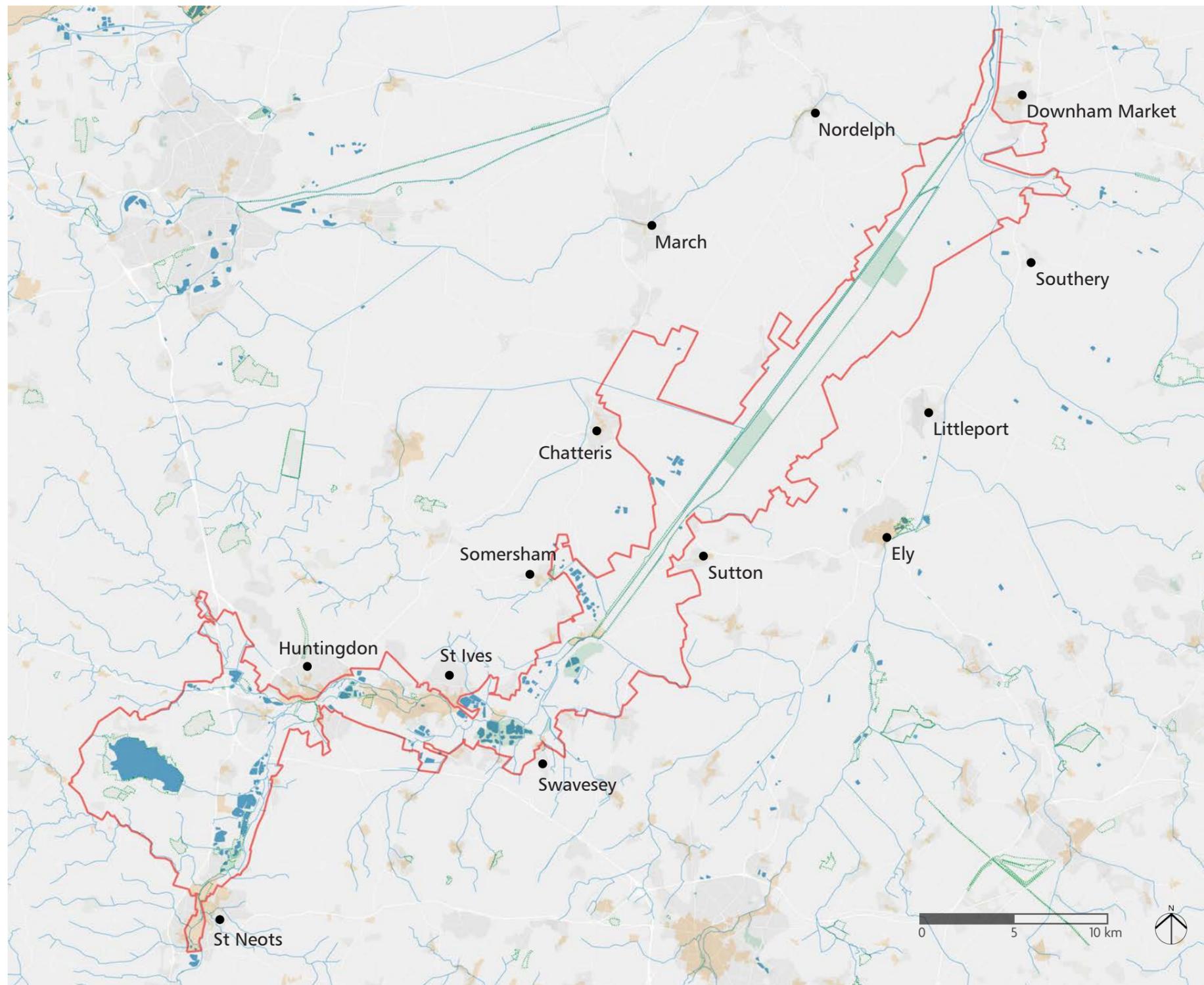
Figure 25.   Option 2 overview and context
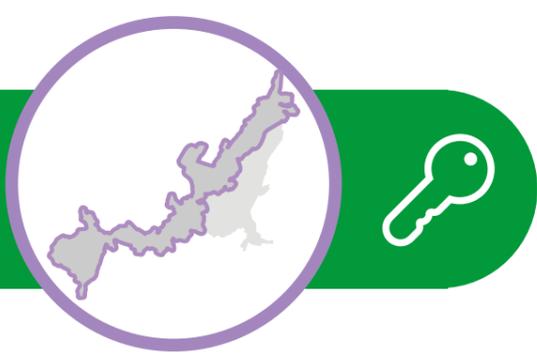
Hydrology

All features listed in option 1, plus:

- The Ouse Washes, including tidal and non tidal channel, and seadonally flooded meadows
- Fen Reservoir (planned)
- Networks of drains at field margins

Protected and important nature sites

- Ouse Washes is an internationally significant habitat with multiple statutory protections
- WWT Welney Wetland Centre is an important site for species research, conservation, protection and education
- Lowland fen remnant habitat found in places along drainage channels and tributaries

Ouse Washes[1]

WWT Welney

[1]Photo by Richard Humphrey (CC BY-SA-2.0)

County Wildlife Sites

WWT Welney

Local Wildlife Sites

Lowland fen irreplaceable habitiat

Fen Reservoir (planned)

Somersham Lakes

Ouse Washes

Sutton OW Habitat Creation Area
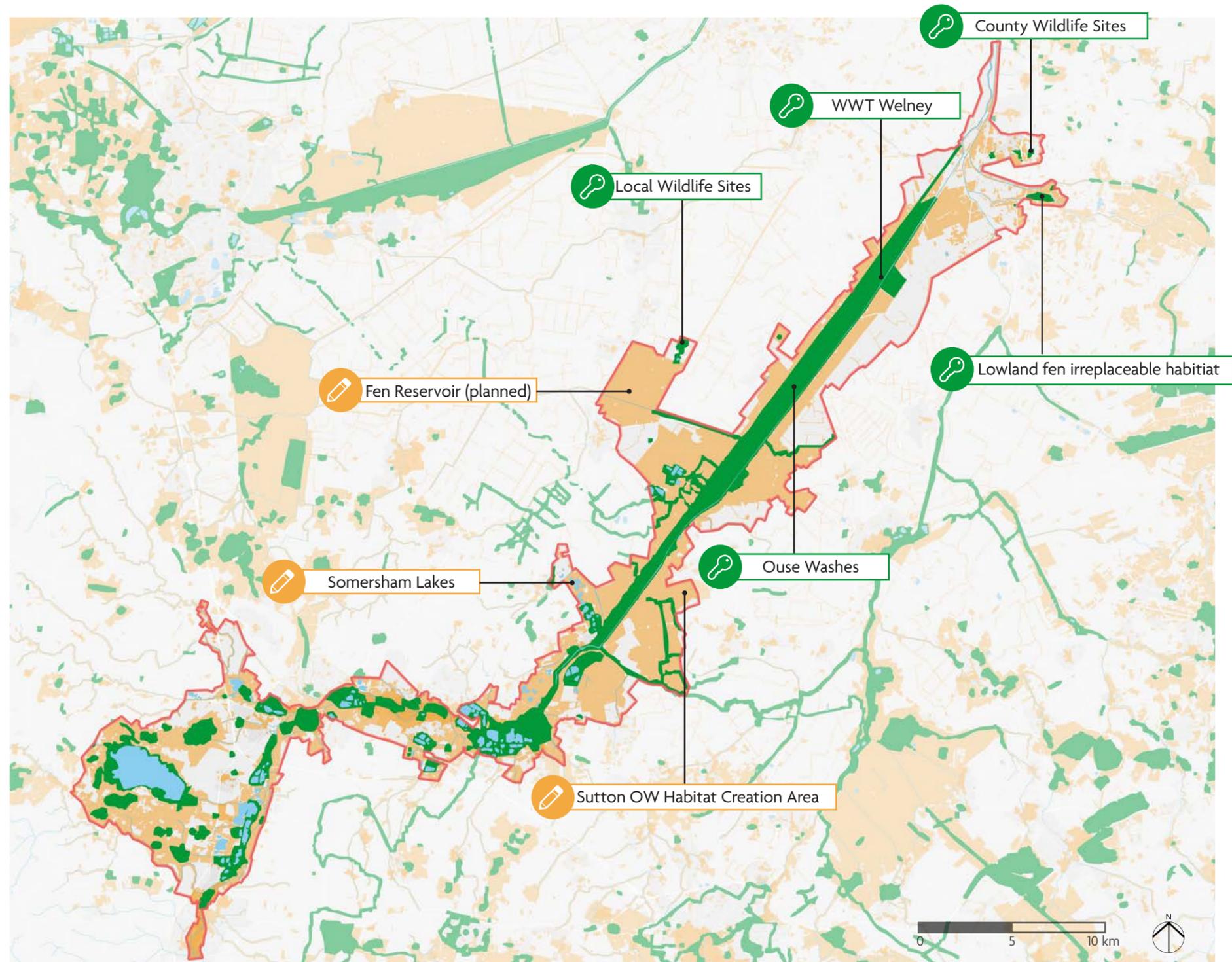
Figure 26.   Option 2 inclusion and shaping elements
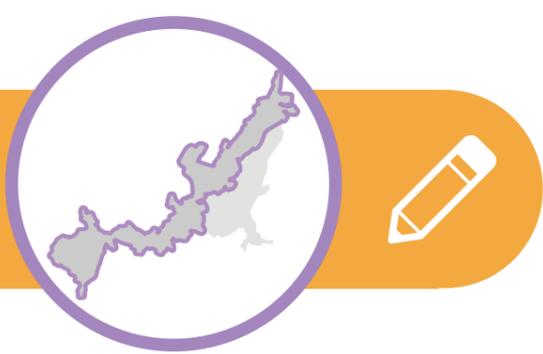
Heritage and culture

- Ouse Washes and drainage system is a significant feat
- Ouse Washes was also the site of the experimental Hover Train track
- Earith Civil War Bulwark at the southern end of the Ouse Washes - connecting to importance of the isolated geography in political history

Landscape and habitat restoration

- Planned Fen Reservoir creates opportunities for new habitat
- Sutton Ouse Washes Habitat Creation Area
- Habitat restoration at Block Fen mineral extraction site will create wet grassland using inert waste

Transport and rights of way

- The Ouse Valley Way is broken off shortly after Earith in this option
- Public Rights of Way extend along whole of Ouse Washes
- Potential to create new connections between villages using existing network

Page 347

Some remnants of the track remain from the experimental Hover Train, tested from Earith in 1973

Hover Train

The marshlands of the fens provided a defensive barrier for parliamentarians during the civil war.
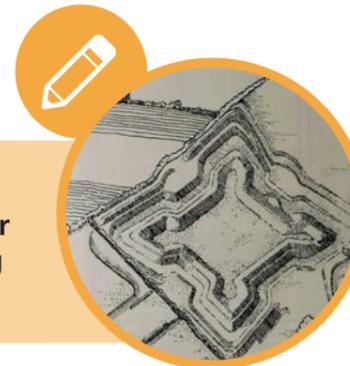
Civil War Bulwark[1]

A new reservoir with 5 km^2 water surface is planned for completion in 2036

Fen Reservoir Future Site[2]

Mineral extraction followed by restoration using inert waste will deliver 480 ha wet grassland and flood relief

Block Fen site[3]

Option strengths and benefits:

- This option has the potential to become a highly connected wetland habitat on a large scale through existing restoration efforts
- The inclusion of the Ouse Washes means that this option brings habitat with international protections: Ramsar, SAC, SPA. This habitat continues from the option 1 habitat corridor and may open international funding opportunities
- A similar area was set out as the basis of the 2014 AONB bid. This was shortlisted by Natural England, showing that this may be a future viable option for statutory designation

Option weaknesses:

- Like option 1, this option excludes the Ely Ouse / Old West River despite strong coherence with the river corridor in Huntingdonshire
- Many areas subject to future or in progress restoration of value, rather than current landscape value, with many areas currently in industrial use. Statutory designation requires that sites meet criteria in their current state, and do not allow for inclusion based on future or planned restoration

[1] Royal Commission of Historical Monuments
[2] Photo by Richard Humphreys CC BY-SA 2.0
[3] Photo by Chris CC BY-SA 2.0

3.6.3 Option 3: Extended Great Ouse Valley, including the Ely Ouse, Fen Isles and Ouse Washes

This option includes the area of the former two options, while also extending to include the River Great Ouse as it diverges from the Ouse Washes past Earith and re-converges at the Denver Sluice (Figure 27).

This section of the river is known as the "Ely Ouse" or the "Old West River" and was the focus for the "New Life on the Old West" habitat restoration project.

Total Area: 54,304 hectares

Key

Nature Reserve

Statutory Protected Site

Conservation Area

Waterbody
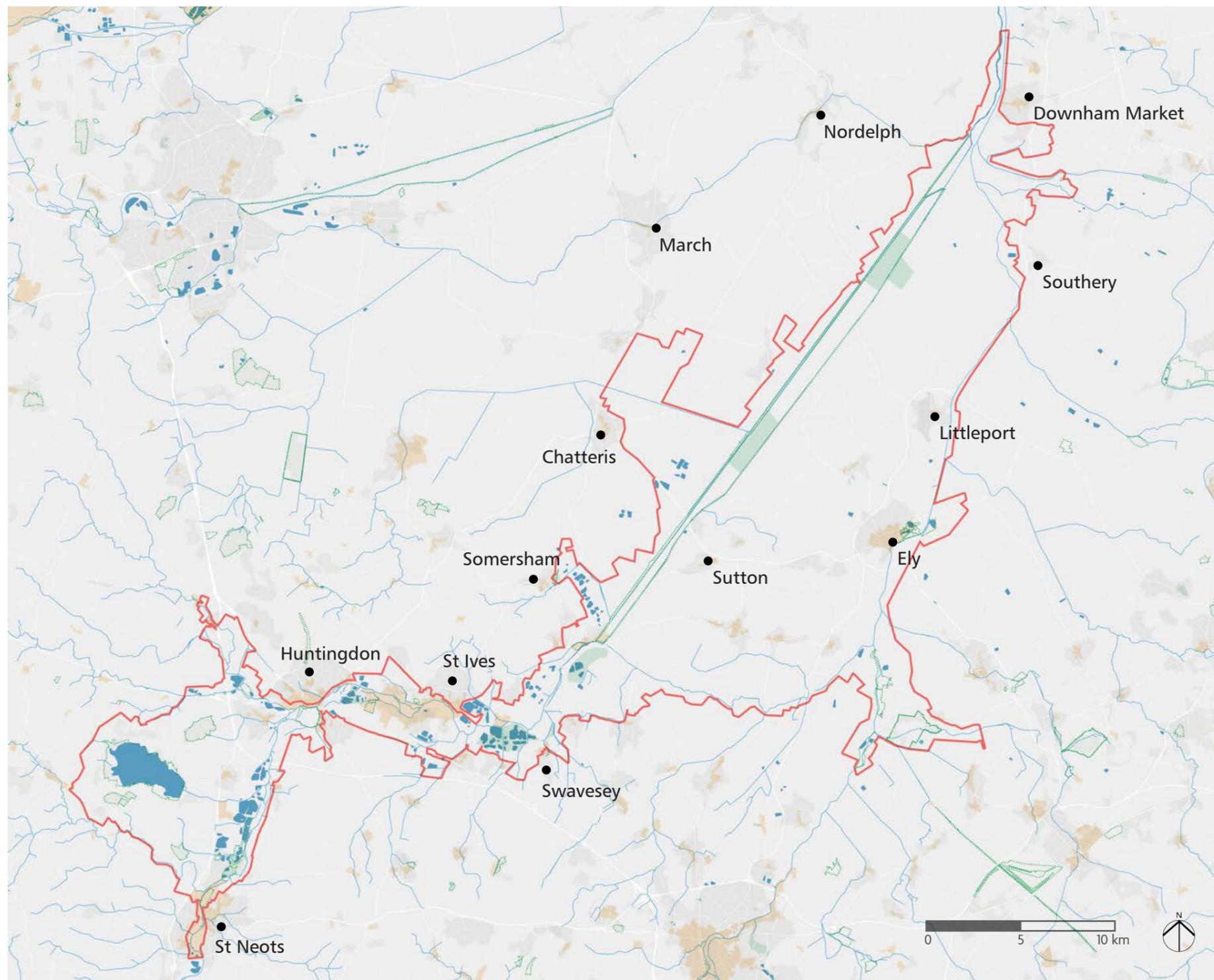
Figure 27.   Option 3 overview and context

Hydrology

- The entire Cambridgeshire section of the River Great Ouse plus the section running through Norfolk to the Denver sluice where it reconverges with the Ouse Washes
- The Ouse Washes
- Networks of drainage channels

Protected and important nature sites

- Wicken Fen - the National Trusts oldest nature reserve, designated Ramsar site, SAC and SSSI
- Kingfisher Bridge Nature reserve and the adjoining Cam Washes - both SSSI
- Ely Pits and Meadows SSSI
- Chettisham Meadow - traditionally managed hay meadow and habitat for protected plant species

Ely Meadows

Wicken Fen[1]

[1] Photo by Stephen McKay (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Chettisham Meadow

Ely Pits and Meadows

Kingfisher Bridge Nature Reserve

Wicken Fen
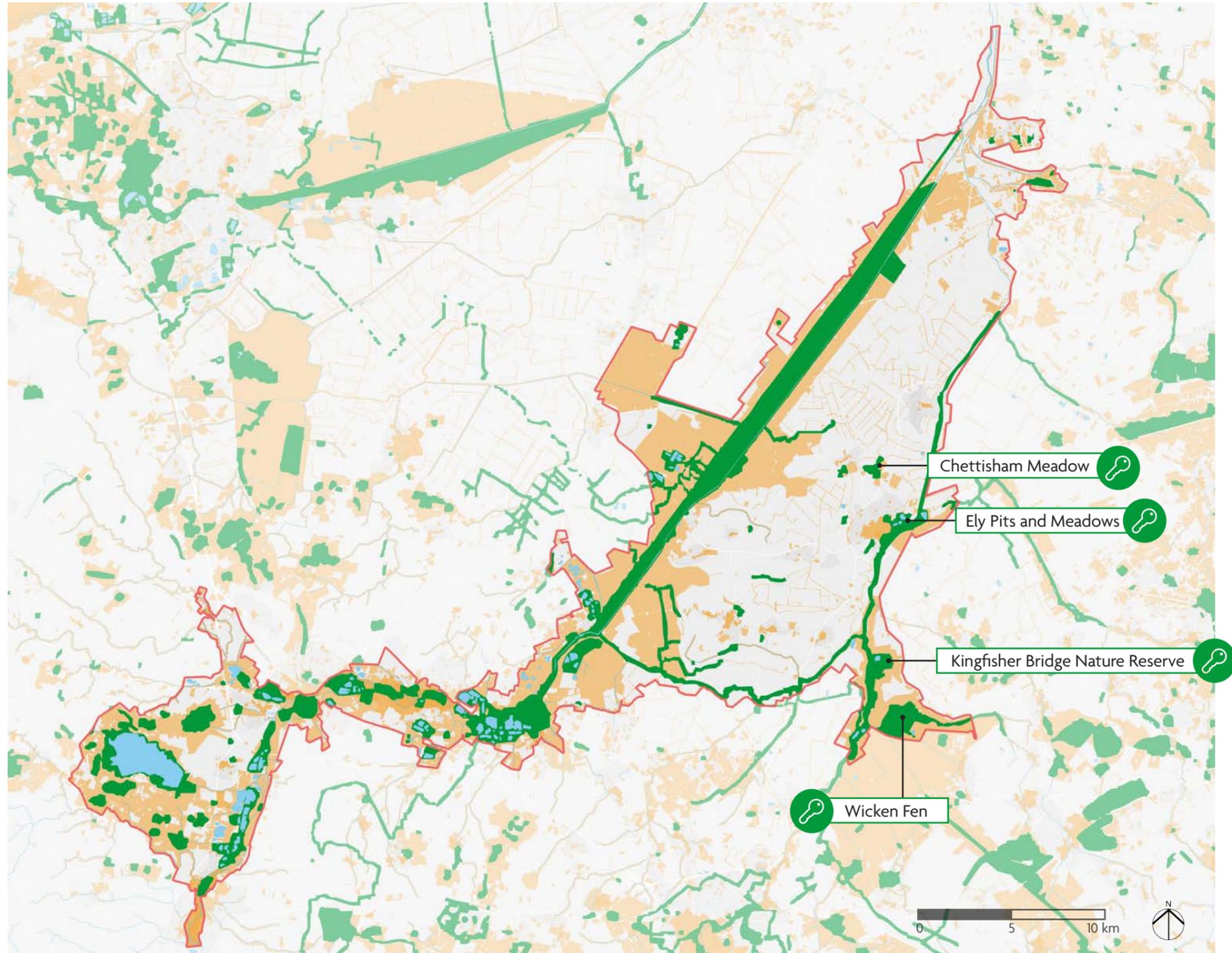
Figure 28.   Option 3 inclusion and shaping elements

Heritage and culture

- The Fen Isles, once surrounded by flooding marshlands, created isolation and fostered unique ways of life
- Ely and its world famous Cathedral, visible from much of the surrounding site, relied on the river for transporting building materials to site and an economy based on eels from the river

Landscape and habitat restoration

- New Life on the Old West programme kick-started engagement with habitat restoration projects in the extended area, for example willow copse establishment at Aldreth Washlands
- LNRS identified potential to extend existing habitat sites
- Potential to restore drainage systems and hedgerow to create a robust habitat network between the main waterways

Transport and rights of way

- The Ouse Valley Way connects throughout this area, with multiple public rights of way routes connecting this to the washes public rights of way
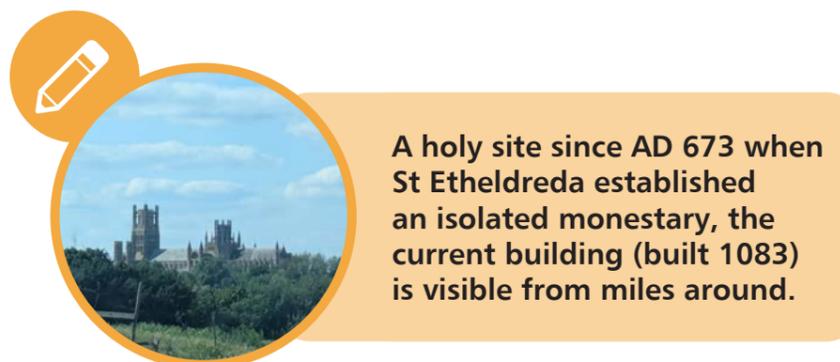
A holy site since AD 673 when St Etheldreda established an isolated monestary, the current building (built 1083) is visible from miles around.

Ely Cathedral

The Aldreth Washlands sites was planted with willow copse as part of the New Life on the Old West programme

Aldreth Washlands[1]

The Ouse Valley Way continues past Earith, passing through Ely meadows (pictured)

Ouse Valley Way

Option strengths and benefits:

- As well as the Ouse Washes included in Option 2, this option includes a second internationally protected habitat site also connected to the Great Ouse system. Wicken Fen is a Ramsar site, SSSI and SAC
- This option includes the semi-natural continuation of the Great Ouse Valley as a continuous thread connecting the landscape
- The area contains a large portion of the Ouse Valley Way trail
- There is a strong heritage landscape connection to the Isle of Ely and the ancient site of Ely cathedral
- Multiple sites relevant to the story of Cromwell throughout the option, from his birthplace in Huntingdon, to his later living places in St Ives and Ely
- Farmland, drainage ditches and fragmented remnant fens provide an opportunity to restore important habitats while opening possible funding routes through agricultural restoration funds
- As well as the Great Ouse Valley Trust, and the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership, this option builds on the work of the New Life on the Old West programme which stoked local engagement

Option weaknesses:

- Includes large areas of intensive agriculture, which creates the challenge of balancing needs with aesthetic and habitat value (however, agricultural land can also attract investment for sustainable agriculture and landscape restoration)

[1]Photo by Hugh Venables (CC BY-SA-2.0)

4.0 Economic Case Methodology

4.1 The economic case for self-designation

The purpose of this study is:

- To set out a high-level case for self-designation that can be presented to decision makers and stakeholders such as Local Authority leaders, MPs, ministers and business leaders.
- To create the foundations for a potential future Green Book business case, should HDC wish to proceed with the preferred option based on the benefits identified.

Nearly 25% of land within England is designated either as National Parks or National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)).

The process of designation of National Landscapes by Natural England is determined by Section 82(1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). This defines a National Landscape in England (formerly AONBs) as an area with distinctive character and beauty.

They are separate from landscapes designated as National Parks (NP) and have been identified by Natural England as desirable to conserve and enhance the beauty of the area (through Part IV of CRoW Act).

It is recognised that these landscapes go beyond their aesthetic appeal and are living places that support communities through aspects such as supporting nature, food production, and supporting a healthy environment.

The process of statutory designation is thus not informed or driven by economic factors as a primary consideration.

The following section will set out methodologies from other studies which attempt to understand the economic impacts of statutory designated landscapes.

The strengths and limitations of these methodologies and their applicability for making a case for non-statutory designation are explored before they are applied to the current case in Section 5.

4.2 Review of studies of the economic value designated landscapes

The literature and research review focused on previous studies of the economic value of designated landscapes, as well as reviewing the governance and funding of existing protected landscapes.

The following studies, reports and guidance were reviewed:

- The Economic Contribution of Protected Landscapes (Cumulus Consulting, 2014)
- An assessment of the economic value of the Cotswolds AONB (Cumulus Consulting, 2013)
- Dorset's Environmental Economy: Placing and economic value on the Dorset AONB (Ash Futures Ltd, 2015)
- Contribution of the Peak District National Park to the Economy of the East Midlands (SQW Consulting, 2008)
- The Value of AONB Partnerships (LUC, 2013)
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: A guide for AONB partnership members (The Countryside Agency 2001)

Making an economic case is not required as part of the statutory designation process. Therefore, no examples have been found of this being undertaken.

Economic impact studies

- Assessment of the Economic Value of the **Cotswolds AONB** (2013)
- Placing and Economic Value of the **Dorset AONB** (2015)
- Contribution of **Peak District NP** to the economy of the East Midlands (2008)
- The Value of **AONB Partnerships** (2013)

Page 351

Great Ouse Valley and Washes Landscape Self-Designation – Strategic Business Case 33

The absence of an economic dimension from the designation process means there has also been limited studies on the economic impact of existing designations. The current research uncovered only three protected landscapes which have been subject to studies on their economic value:

• Peak District NP
• Cotswolds NL
• Dorset NL

These are well-known landscapes, which have strong 'brand recognition'.

The methodologies used to measure economic impact in the three studies are similar. Each estimates the total economic value of the designated landscape (annual Gross Value Added - GVA), then, using business surveys (and a visitor survey for Dorset), calculates what portion of that value would be adversely affected by a decline in the natural landscape.

This study used the following data sets to model the existing GVA for the different areas of proposed self-designation defined in Section 3 to the following:

• **Size** (in Hectares) of the different self-designation option areas
• The **Medium Super Output Areas** (MSOA's) covered in each self-designation option area (establishing a % of coverage where MSOA's are partially covered by proposed designation)
• **Apportioned estimate of employment** for each self-designation option area by industry sector (Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2023 Business Register and Employment Survey)
• **Apportioned average GVA per job** by industry sector (East of England) for each self-designation option area ((ONS 2023 Business Register and Employment Survey)

The studies referenced above then made use of business surveys with a sample size of 155-300 businesses to establish the degree to which a deterioration in the quality of landscape would seriously impact on business performance.

Responses to the business surveys were used to allocate a percentage of an area's existing GVA to designation, on the basis that without the protection afforded by designation, the landscape would deteriorate and this portion of economic value created by business would be lost.

A business survey was outside the scope and budget of the current study. As a consequence, this study considered the range of impacts found in the studies that had undertaken business surveys to suggest a potential range of percentages of GVA that might be attributed to a protection of the Great Ouse landscape designation (Section 5).

Approaches in common from reviewed studies:

Recognising challenges	• Data limitations • Mismatch between study areas and official ONS data sets
Capturing **direct spend and fundraising** of NL (AONB)	• Expenditure of organisation including salaries, operations etc. • Fundraising record of the AONB / NL
Capturing the **wider economy**	• Capturing GVA using available public data (ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey etc.)
Attributing % of GVA to designation	• Business Survey to ask the degree to which businesses would be impacted if the landscape were not protected.
Applying **% of businesses impacted** to the overall GVA	• To arrive at a proportion of GVA attributed to the designation
Understanding **non-monetised impacts**	• Acknowledging that there are things that we can't place a monetary value on, and articulating these

4.3 Methodology for quantifying and articulating economic value

The literature revealed three principal levels on which designation can impact the local economy. This can be applied to understand the potential impact of self-designation:

1) Direct impact:

The money that a Partnership directly leverages and spends, or leverages for other organisations or businesses.

2) The impact on the wider economy (GVA) of the area:

The extent to which a proportion of the GVA of the Great Ouse Valley designation area would be safeguarded through protection and thus could be attributed to the future protected character of the landscape.

The impact of tourism in the area could be valued separately (with caveats), but the visitor economy is captured in the GVA approach above, which includes the whole of the economy

3) Other impacts:

An assessment of the potential impacts of the future designation that are harder to quantify – both positive and negative.

1 **Direct impact**

- The money that a Partnership could directly leverage and spends, or leverage for other organisations or businesses in the area

2 **Impact on the wider economy (GVA) of the area**

- The extent to which we can attribute the safeguarding of a % of the Great Ouse Valley designation area's GVA to the future protected character of the landscape
- The impact of **tourism** in the area could be valued separately (with caveats), but visitor economy is captured in the **GVA approach** above

3 **Other impacts**

- Assessing the potential impacts of the future designation that are harder to quantify – both positive and negative

5.0 Economic data analysis

5.1 Direct impact

Direct impacts are dependent on the income and funding leverage capacity of the governing body of the National Landscape.

Most National Landscapes sit with lead Local Authorities, so funding details and budgets are not published. However, Cotswolds NL and Dorset NL are governed by Partnership Boards and therefore publish their financial accounts.

Data on direct spend for three National Landscapes with published accounts are presented in the charts below.

As the self-designation of the Great Ouse will not attract funding from Defra, which accounts for between 53% and 90% of income for the National Landscapes referenced, funding for a self-designated landscape will be derived primarily from partner Local Authorities and any external project funding that can be raised (e.g. from National Lottery Heritage Fund, or other lottery and charitable funds).

Dorset "added value"

"Total 'added value' makes the effective total £4,725,009; the additional £1,869,445 is derived from £128,107 in volunteer time and £1,741,338 in partner spend on joint partnership and granted projects.

Over £1.3 million of this value comes from two programmes the Partnership supported: the Peat Partnership (via a Wytch Farm grant) and the Dorset Rivers programme in which we are an active partner alongside others."

Source: Dorset National Landscape Board minutes, May 2025, p29

Cotswolds NL Income: £3.67m — Defra 53%, Other public Authorities 34%, Local Authorities 4%, Water companies 5%, Other grants and earned 4%

Legend:
- Defra
- Other public Authorities
- Local Authorities
- Water companies
- Other grants and earned

Dorset NL Income: £2.85m — Defra 71%, Other public Authorities 18%, Local Authorities 1%, S106 5%, NLHF 4%, Earned income 1%

Legend:
- Defra
- Other public Authorities
- Local Authorities
- S106
- NLHF
- Earned income

Cannock Chase NL Income: £489k — Defra 90%, Local Authorities 10%

Legend:
- Defra
- Local Authorities

Other public agencies include:

- Natural England
- Highways England
- National Highways
- National Grid

DEFRA income includes:

- Core Grant
- FIPL
- Removing Barriers

Other public agencies include:

- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- National Landscapes Association
- National Grid

DEFRA income includes:

- Core Grant
- RDEL uplift
- CDEL uplift
- FIPL
- Access for All

- Mainland England's smallest National Landscape: 6,900 ha
- Total income: £489K
- £222K Revenue
- £267K Capital

Figure 29.   Direct spend sources for Cotswolds, Dorset and Cannock Chase National Landscapes

5.1.1 Landscape scale and funding sources

The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is the primary funder of all NLs in the form of a core grant. Additional direct grants and funding NLs can leverage is also available from Defra (e.g. Farming In Protected Landscapes (FIPL)). Defra funding is only available to landscapes that are formally designated.

An analysis of income data for the Cotswolds, Dorset, and Cannock Chase NLs indicates a correlation between landscape scale and reliance on Defra funding.

The Cotswolds, being the largest of the three, benefits from its size and organisational capacity to secure a higher proportion of non-Defra funding. In contrast, Cannock Chase, with its smaller area and more limited organisational resources, generates significantly less non-Defra income.

Cannock Chase NL

6,900 ha

Dorset NL

112,900 ha

Cotswolds NL

204,270 ha

Great Ouse Valley Option 1

14,972 ha

Great Ouse Valley Option 2

33,131 ha

Great Ouse Valley Option 3

54,305 ha

0   50   100 km
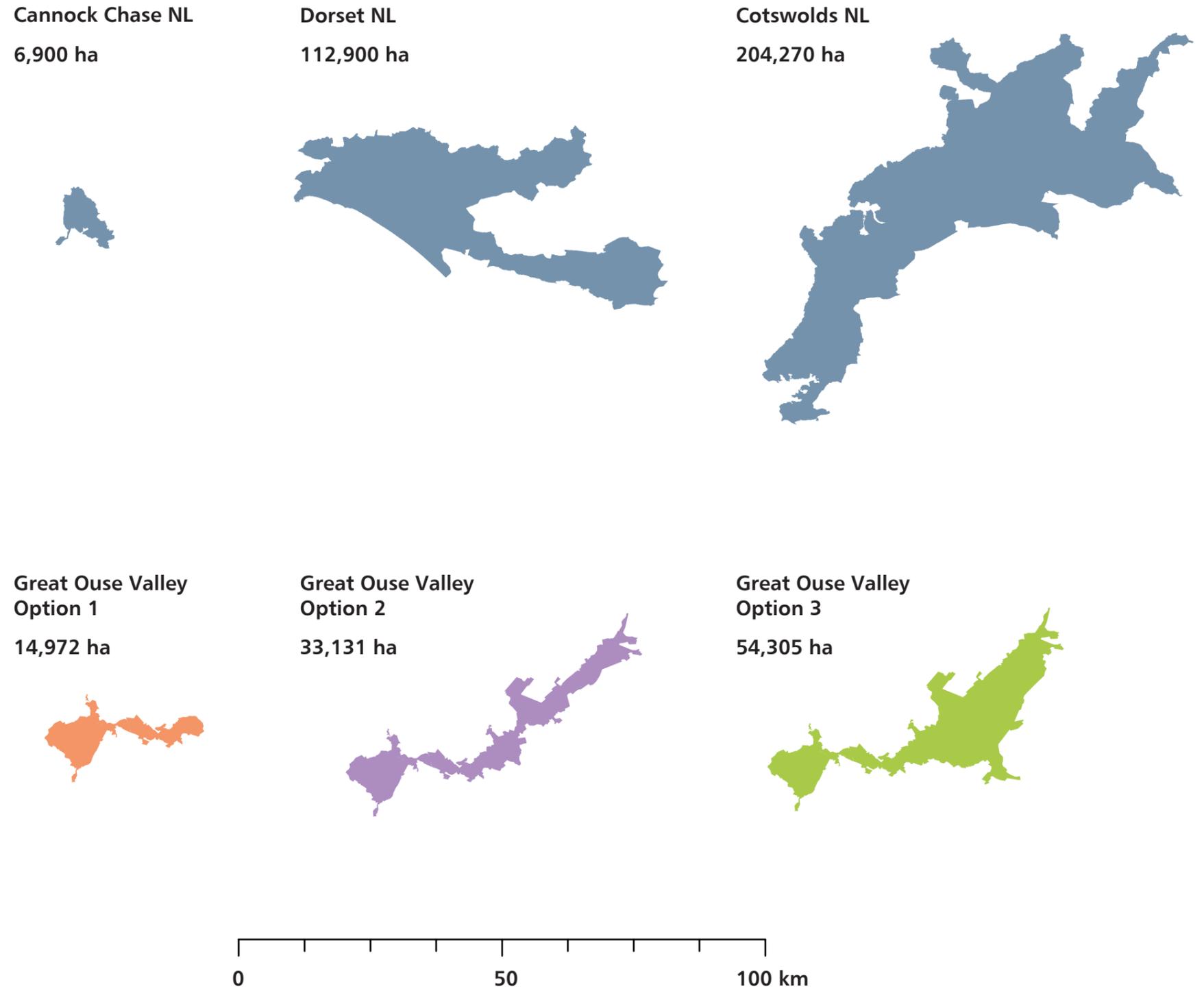
Figure 30.   National Landscapes and designation options scale comparison

5.2 Impacts on the wider economy

The methodology and data of previous studies (listed in section 4.1) have been used to estimate the range of possible value of landscape designation to the local economy of the self-designation options.

The following process was followed:

1. Defining the extent (%) of each of the Medium Super Output Areas (MSOAs) covered by each option

2. Estimating the total current GVA of each of the options, by apportioning the total GVA of each MSOA by the % covered by the option

3. Assigning a proportion of GVA of each option to the quality of the landscape (that would be protected by designation)

1. Defining the areas

The options (see Section 3) were mapped using GIS and overlaid with a map of MSOAs. The area of overlap with each MSOA was calculated for each option. Appendix 2 sets out the full list of MSOAs covered by each option.

2. Estimating the current GVA

A GVA estimate for each of the options has been calculated by apportioning GVA per job to the MSOAs, and calculating the pro rata GVA for each MSOA, accounting for the % of each MSOA covered in each option area.

To estimate GVA per job in each MSOA, we have used the most recently published ONS Business Register and Employment Survey counts to calculate jobs by industrial group in each MSOA, and apportioned a GVA

Defining the area(s) by MSOAs	**Estimating current GVA**	**Assigning proportion of GVA to designation**

KPI	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Size (Hectares)	14,972	33,131	54,305
MSOAs covered (in part or full)	21	30	37
Employment (apportioned estimate)	20,083	25,267	37,614
Annual employment pay (estimate)	£650,148,793	£808,053,092	£1,205,868,928
Annual direct GVA (estimate) - see below	£1,573,217,148	£1,979,040,349	£2,882,717,531

Table 1. Estimated current GVA for each option

Annual Direct GVA by Local Authority (£m est.)	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Bedford	0	0	0
East Cambridgeshire	0	136	985
Fenland	-	120	120
Huntingdonshire	1,457	1,526	1,526
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	-	77	91
South Cambridgeshire	117	119	161
Total	**1,573**	**1,979**	**2,883**

Table 2. Estimated GVA for each option by local authority coverage

* GVA estimate derived from apportioning GVA per job (East of England ONS data) to Business Register and Employment Survey counts in MSOAs, and prorating each MSOA result according to coverage in Option areas

per job using ONS GVA and job counts per industrial group for the East of England.

Table 1 shows data for an apportioned estimates of enterprises, employment and annual employment pay for each option area. Table 2 shows the annual direct GVA of each local authority apportioned by the extent covered by each option area.

3. Assigning a proportion of GVA to landscape protection

The studies reviewed undertook business surveys to attribute the impact of conserving a designated landscape on the wider economy (measured as GVA).

The surveys asked businesses the degree to which a deterioration in the quality of the landscape would seriously affect their business performance.

The studies then allocated a % of the area's estimated total GVA to the designation based on responses from businesses (refined by sector in some cases).

In other studies surveys are carried out by telephone with sample sizes of between 155 (Dorset) and 300 (Peak District) businesses. The National Park report includes the survey questions used.

A business survey is outside the scope of the current study but will be valuable in future to capture the potential impact of self-designation.

In the absence of a bespoke survey, the range of percentages from the reviewed studies are used to suggest a range of potential impact of each of the options.

Cotswolds AONB study (2013) - % businesses seriously affected by a deterioration in landscape quality:

- Accomodation and Food services - 32.5%
- Rest of the economy - 12%
- Overall average - 13%

Peak District National Park study (2008) - % businesses seriously affected by a deterioration in landscape quality:

- Proportion of businesses who feel their performance would be 'seriously affected' by a deterioration in landscape quality - 40%

A limitation of applying this approach is that these surveys applied to existing long-established designated National Landscapes with high levels of awareness. Additionally these surveys were taken over ten years ago.

It should also be considered that at this stage, there may be limited awareness of the quality and benefits of the Great Ouse Valley as one coherent landscape among local people and businesses. This is owing to how the landscape is currently accessed and understood as seperate, disconnected sites. Therefore, the value of the wider connected landscape may not be fully and accurately captured through surveying business owners.

However, from the previous studies we can suggest that a range between 5 to 30% of annual GVA gives a sense of the range of economic value that could be allocated as a result of landscape protection.

Given the recognition factor noted above, it is perhaps more likely that the economic value of the protection of the Great Ouse landscape would be in the lower range (see Table 3) which accounts for upwards of £78.66m of annual GVA.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
5%	78.66	98.95	144.14
10%	157.32	197.90	288.27
15%	235.98	296.86	432.41
20%	314.64	395.81	576.54
25%	393.30	494.76	720.68
30%	471.97	593.71	864.82

Table 3. Potential range of annual GVA % allocated to landscape protection (£m)

5.3 Effects on tourism and the visitor economy

The value of the Visitor Economy is contained within the GVA set out above, as GVA figures account for the value of the whole economy, including tourism.

However, the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) methodology (Global Tourism Solutions Licenced Model - see Figure 31) provides an alternative standalone approach to capturing the value of the visitor economy, should there be a need to isolate this element.

Figure 32 sets out the 2024 metrics for STEAM data (commissioned by HDC) across Huntingdonshire. This suggests that the visitor economy across the district resulted in £278 million in direct visitor expenditure and supported 2,639 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employment.

The Dorset study referenced above models the extent to which National Landscape designation is a factor affecting levels of visitation, based on a visitor survey. That survey found that 47% of visitors to Dorset considered the designation to be partly, greatly or wholly the reason for their visit. The Dorset model suggested that National Landscape designation influenced approximately £67 million in value added from visitor expenditure per annum.

This study does not include or have access to any visitor survey data and the STEAM data referenced above relates solely to Huntingdonshire and not to the other local authority MSOA's that fall within self-designation option areas 2 and 3.

The use of STEAM data could also double-count visitor economy values that are already captured in the GVA calculation. STEAM data is thus referenced as a potential alternative approach to modelling visitor economy benefits separately.

STEAM Methodology:

Inputs:
- Visitor Attractions
- Event attendance
- Accommodation beds
- Occupancy levels
- Visitor expenditure
- Transport use
- Multipliers

Impacted by:
- Stayers in serviced accommodation
- Stayers in non-serviced accommodation
- Stayers with friends
- Day trippers

£ Overall economic spend
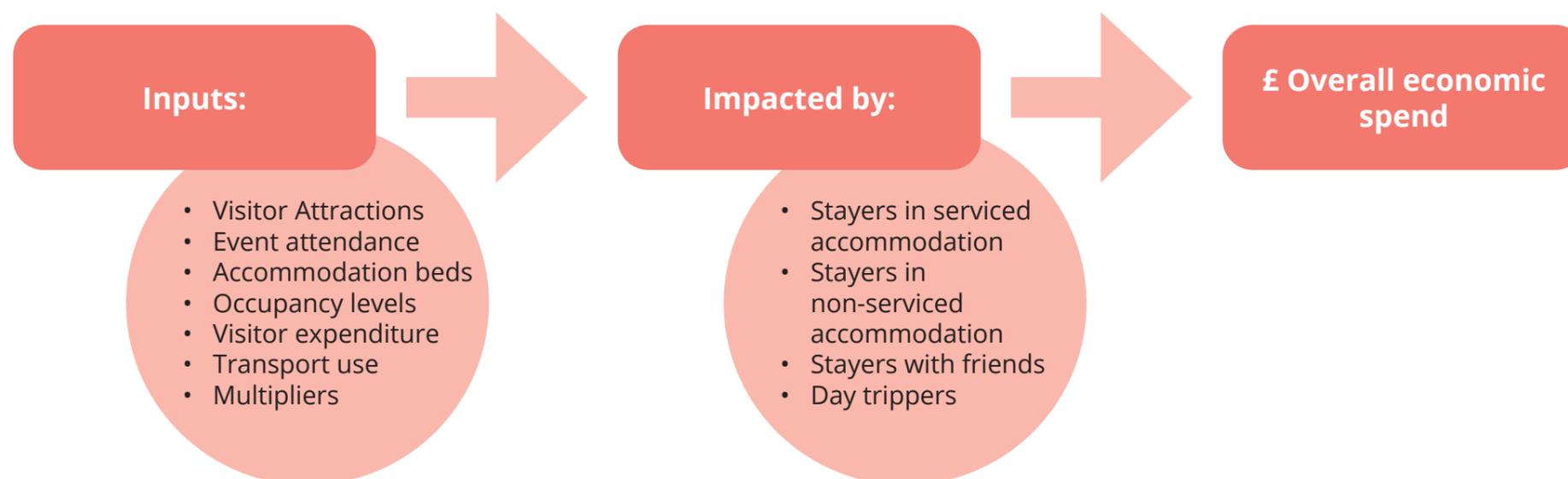
Figure 31.   STEAM methodology

Huntingdonshire STEAM data key metrics:

5.8 million visitor days

4.9 million visitors

£278 million estimated direct visitor expenditure

2,639 Direct FTE employment

Figure 32.   STEAM key metrics for Huntingdonshire

Attributing to Designation/ Landscape Protection?

- Visitor Survey as per Dorset AONB study
- Or tracking STEAM change over time (but landscape protection would not be the only growth factor)

5.5 Non-monetised impacts and benefits

Designation Policy / Action	Potential impacts and benefits	
Planning policy, Development Control and associated policies such as transport & housing	Some restrictions to land use and development / additional planning conditions, potential limits to some business types	Encourages compatible business growth, attractive to potential employees / residents, promotes sustainable travel and affordable housing
Land management policy and activities	Scheme payments, grants and support, more sustainable systems, training, new enterprises and economic and environmental performance	
Conservation, landscape and environmental enhancement, increased understanding and enjoyment	Encourages wealthier residents to move to an area, could increase property prices (which may reduce ability of existing communities to stay in an area)	Attracts / retains staff, quality of life improvements, health and well-being benefits for residents, learning outcomes, volunteering, active citizenship
Sustainable tourism strategy and activities	Impact of increased visitor numbers	Promotes sustainable business practices, sustainable transport, potential to increase visitor numbers

Figure 33.   Non-monetised benefits of designation examples

5.6 Costs of managing a self-designated landscape

The costs of administering a designated landscape will vary according to the scale and type of the designated area. Table 4 sets out the costs per hectare of the Cotswolds, Dorset and Cannock Chase National Landscapes.

A self-designated Great Ouse Valley landscape will depend wholly on income from local authorities and from external funding sources, which will affect revenue sources. The form of governance and levels of partnership working can also influence the funding sources that might be available. For example, funding can be sought through partnerships with town/parish councils, local authorities, individuals, businesses, water companies and charitable organisations.

The three self-designation option areas developed in section 3 are more analogous in scale with Cannock Chase and Dorset than with the Cotswolds. As a consequence, we have considered what the operational costs might be using these two benchmarks – £25.29 per hectare and £32.17 per hectare – giving total annual operating costs of between £481,599 and £1,373,504.

In 2024/25 the 'core budget' for Cannock Chase NL (i.e. the cost of salaries and other running costs) was £252K. This suggests that a figure in this region is likely to be the minimum 'core' budget a protected landscape can operate on. This would provide a basis for trying to lever in further external funding or investment.

Table 5 uses the percentages and total attributable direct GVA values to show the estimated values across each of the self-designation option areas.

5.6.1 Core spending and indicative minimum budget

As the smallest National Landscape in mainland England, Cannock Chase provides an indication of the minimum budget needed to manage a designated landscape.

In 2025-26 Cannock Chase NL budgeted £221K on core budget and baseline revenue projects, with the majority of this spent on staffing and administration costs (£197K). Capital project spending in the same year is budgeted to be £266K.

The core spend can be taken as a minimum cost because, a certain amount of staff time is needed both for the day-to-day running of the designated landscape, as well as for identifying and leveraging external funding sources and managing volunteers.

Given that Option 2 spans around 33,000 hectares— roughly five times the size of Cannock Chase (7,000 hectares)— a larger core budget is likely to be necessary to ensure sufficient organisational capacity to secure the additional funding required annually.

- The costs of delivering a National Landscape vary depending on scale and type
- Looking at the three case studies, we can suggest a cost range for the three Great Ouse option areas

Designated National Landscape	Area (Ha)	Revenue (£)	Cost per Ha
Cotswolds	204,000	3,673,043	£18.01
Dorset	112,900	2,855,564	£25.29
Cannock Chase, Revenue and Capital	6,900	488,920	£70.86
Cannock Chase, Revenue Only	6,900	221,950	£32.17

Table 4. Existing studied NLs costs comparison

	Area (Ha)	Revenue (£)	Cost per Ha
Option 1	14,972	£32.17	£481,599
Option 2	33,130	£32.17	£1,065,682
Option 3	54,304	£32.17	£1,746,779

	Area (Ha)	Revenue (£)	Cost per Ha
Option 1	14,972	£25.29	£378,685
Option 2	33,130	£25.29	£837,952
Option 3	54,304	£25.29	£1,373,504

Table 5. Options estimated costs comparison

5.7 Options cost and value comparison

In order to assess the overall business case in respect of GVA for each of the three option areas, the suggested cost range for each option area has been compared with the range of economic benefits detailed in Table 3. A maximum cost to minimum value ratio has then been calculated (Figure 34, overleaf).

5.7.1 Option recommendations

All three options for the Great Ouse protected landscape deliver substantial value, each demonstrating a strong cost-to-value ratio.

Option 1 achieves the highest ratio due to its coverage of an area with a higher concentration of economic activity compared to the others.

However, as economic value is not the primary criterion for designation, we recommend Option 2 as the preferred choice for the following reasons, offering:

- Area of continuous habitat with existing internationally designated sites, existing restoration projects and areas with high potential for restoration
- Established visitor attractions throughout with good potential to attract further sustainable tourism
- A scale that is comparable with other National Landscapes, making future statutory designation more feasible

Using a cost-per-hectare approach, Option 2 would require a higher annual budget than Option 1 (estimated between £830,000 and £1.07 million).

For comparison, the 2025/26 Cannock Chase NL budget indicates that approximately £250,000 per year (out of a total annual budget of c.£500,000) is needed

Option 1

Suggested cost range:
£378K - £481K p.a.

Comprising:
c. £200K + of salaries and core costs
c. £200K + of project costs

Economic value of landscape protection range:
£78m - £471m p.a.

Max cost to min value ratio: **1:156**

Option 2

Suggested cost range:
£837K - £1.06m p.a.

Economic value of landscape protection range:
£98m - £593m p.a.

Max cost to min value ratio: **1:92**

Option 3

Suggested cost range:
£1.3m - £1.75m p.a.

Economic value of landscape protection range:
£144m - £864m p.a.

Max cost to min value ratio: **1:82**

Figure 34.   Options costs and value comparison

to cover costs for core staff and administration (which is a smaller protected landscape than the option areas presented in this study).

Given that Option 2 spans around 33,000 hectares— roughly five times the size of Cannock Chase (7,000 hectares)— a larger core budget would be necessary to ensure sufficient organisational capacity to secure the additional funding required annually.

5.7.2 Phased approach

A further option is to adopt a phased approach to self-designation, starting with the Option 1 area and expanding over time to Options 2 and 3 following additional assessment and stakeholder engagement. This would allow Option 3 to remain a bold long-term ambition, while providing a practical and affordable pathway to early delivery.

Under this model, Option 1 becomes Phase 1: a manageable, locally led starting point capable of demonstrating visible progress. Phases 2 and 3 (reflecting Options 2 and 3) could then come forward as partnerships mature and as greater clarity emerges from local government reorganisation.

A phased approach enables piloting, testing and learning, allowing the designation to evolve as evidence and relationships grow. However, it may limit the clarity of identity and reduce the benefits that come from adopting a single, cohesive landscape-wide designation from the outset.

5.8 Governance and Delivery Options

5.8.1 Governance framework for National Landscapes in England

Designated National Landscapes (NLs) typically have small staff teams and their work is governed by a Joint Advisory Committee or Executive Board representing local authorities, parish councils, landowners and partner organisations.

Each NL must have a management plan which must be in place within 3 years of a designation. A review must take place within 5 years of the start of the plan.

Organisations represented on NL committees or boards don't necessarily own land within the designation themselves, however they work with their stakeholders and partners (including for example farmers, landowners, district and parish councils, organisations such as the RSPB and National Trust) to coordinate work across the whole area. Their functions include managing partnerships and projects, securing funding, and delivering the Management Plan.

The governance structures vary based on the size, complexity, and administrative boundaries of each National Landscape, but all operate through partnerships involving local authorities, communities, and stakeholders to deliver their statutory purposes of conserving and enhancing natural beauty.

5.8.2 Governance models for National Landscapes

There are three main governance models for National Landscapes in England:

- **Joint Advisory Committees (JACs)** e.g. Cannock Chase National Landscape
- **Conservation Boards** e.g. Cotswolds National Landscape
- **Partnership/Executive Boards** e.g. Dorset National Landscape

Joint Advisory Committees (JACs)

Most National Landscapes operate under this model, where NLs in general remain the responsibility of their local authorities by means of special committees. Committee membership is appointed by the constituent local authorities. In this model staff responsible for the delivery of the NL are generally employed via a host authority.

Cannock Chase NL is governed through a Joint Committee, a decision-making body made up of representatives from the five local authorities covering the area (Staffordshire County Council, Cannock Chase District Council, Stafford Borough Council, Lichfield District Council and South Staffordshire District Council), which formally approves and oversees the National Landscape Management Plan.

Conservation Boards

Only two National Landscapes have this special status in which they are governed by their own statutory bodies: The Cotswolds NL and the Chilterns NL.

Both Conservation Boards were created in 2004 following the introduction of The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, which enabled local

authorities to request that Parliament establish a Conservation Board in cases where NLs cross several administrative boundaries.

The Cotswolds National Landscape is governed by a Conservation Board established by Parliamentary Order. Its Board comprises members from local authorities, parish councils, and government appointees, with statutory duties under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act.

This Board has responsibility for preparing and adopting the statutory Management Plan and overall governance of the landscape.

Partnership/Executive Boards

The team's work is governed by the National Landscape Partnership Board, a non-statutory body. The NL's team work with partners to coordinate conservation and enhancement of the area on behalf of local authorities, with whom legal responsibility sits.

Dorset NL is governed by a Partnership Board that brings together local authorities, statutory agencies, conservation organisations, landowner representatives and others. This Partnership Board oversees delivery of the National Landscape Management Plan and guides the work of the Dorset National Landscape team.

5.8.3 Possible governance options for self-designation

There are three main options for delivering and governing the self-designated landscape:

- Governance by a single local authority
- Governance by a dedicated external organisation
- Governance through creation of a formal Statutory Joint Committee

Governance by a single local authority

This option would mirror the structure of a Joint Advisory Committee for National Landscapes in which the management of the landscape remains the responsibility of one local authority (e.g. Huntingdonshire District Council, or a successor body in the future).

The local authority would employ a core team and manage the budget. An advisory committee would be established to coordinate partnerships and provide oversight.

This is the simplest model to establish and benefits from the host authority's existing infrastructure. However, the partnership is also constrained by the authority's funding rules and cannot easily access charitable grants or seek private donations. In terms of costs, staff would also fall within set local authority pay bands with higher pension and employment costs than typically found in the charitable / third sector.

If the self-designation crosses multiple local authority boundaries, decisions must be ratified by each separate Council, making cross-boundary coordination difficult and slow. Furthermore, uncertainty regarding the structure and boundaries of local authorities due to Local Government Reorganisation could destabilise this structure.

Governance by a dedicated external organisation

In this independent model, the self-designation is governed by a dedicated external organisation. This mirrors the structure of a partnership or executive board for a National Landscape.

An independent legal entity – potentially with charitable status – with a partnership board would be established and populated by stakeholders including representatives from relevant local authorities.

In the case of the Great Ouse Valley, the existing Great Ouse Valley Trust could (subject to the approval of its board and the Charity Commission) transition from being a campaigning body to being an operational delivery organisation.

A small core team of staff hired by the organisation would identify funding opportunities, manage projects and be accountable for delivering the management plan.

This model offers financial flexibility by opening up avenues to seek funding that local authorities cannot access. It may open the door to larger and diverse funding streams such as Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), private sector funding and grants from bodies like the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Additionally its staff costs and overheads could be smaller than those implied by a local authority model.

This approach also provides independence from the local electoral cycle and bureaucratic restrictions, potentially enabling more agile working. This would allow the organisation to focus purely on landscape conservation and management. However, as an independent organisation, it would have no direct statutory powers and would have to rely entirely on Memoranda of Understanding and partnership agreements with the local authorities.

Governance through the creation of a formal Statutory Joint Committee

Under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, local authorities are able to formally delegate their relevant permissive functions to a Joint Committee.

Multiple participating local authorities can therefore establish a dedicated statutory mechanism for formal, cross-boundary decision making, despite the fact that the designation itself is non-statutory.

The advantage of this model is that it would provide a single decision-making body that is legally binding on all delegating authorities. This model brings clarity and authority, ensuring clear accountability for the management plan delivery across the area.

However, this governance structure requires all participating local authorities to formally agree to delegate powers, which can be politically challenging and time-consuming to negotiate.

In addition, as with governance by a single local authority, this model remains a local authority structure and is constrained by funding rules in its access to potential streams and other constraints outlined above.

5.8.4 Governance options comparison

The governance options range from highly integrated within local government (single authority or joint committee) to fully independent (external organisation). The governance approach taken should take into consideration the boundary option being taken forward.

The single local authority model is the simplest but most constrained, especially for multi-authority landscapes. This approach is therefore most suited to the Option 1 boundary which is contained wholly within Huntingdonshire District Council.

For a larger area (Options 2 and 3) a Statutory Joint Committee would be preferable to a single local authority, providing formal cross-boundary authority and clear, collective accountability. However, it is similarly constrained by council rules and requires significant political consensus to establish.

The external organisation model provides the greatest flexibility, funding potential, and independence but lacks statutory powers and relies on strong partnerships with councils. This model could be considered for any of the three boundary options and is the most suited for a phased approach.

A pilot phase requires flexibility, low set up costs, access to diverse funding, and the ability to adapt quickly. Among the three governance options, an independent external organisation offers the most practical platform for learning and iterative development without the need for complex statutory processes.

During exploratory phases, the pilot organisation can experiment with partnership models, funding mechanisms, and delivery approaches. Staff can be recruited on more flexible terms and generally overheads may be kept lower.

Governance model	Key Strengths	Key Weaknesses
Single Local Authority One local authority hosts and manages the landscape, employing staff and coordinating through an advisory committee	• Simple to establish • Uses existing infrastructure • Clear line of accountability	• Limited funding flexibility constrained by council rules • Higher staffing costs • Slow cross-boundary decision-making • Vulnerable to LGR changes
Dedicated External Organisation Independent entity with a partnership board and its own staff delivering the management plan.	• Access to wider funding • More agile • Lower overheads • Independence from electoral cycles • Strong focus on landscape outcomes.	• No statutory powers - relies on MoUs with councils • Requires sustainable long-term funding model
Statutory Joint Committee Formal Joint Committee under Local Government Act 1972 where multiple councils delegate relevant functions.	• Legally binding cross-boundary decisions • Clear collective accountability; • Strong governance clarity	• Politically harder to establish • Time-consuming to negotiate • Still constrained by local authority funding rules • Formal structure reduces agility

Governance structures can be adjusted as the pilot matures without legislative constraints. It also enables immediate access to wider funding which is vital for demonstrating early wins. An existing body such as the Great Ouse Valley Trust may be used, or a lightweight new vehicle may be established.

The next steps within a phased approach would be to form a formal partnership agreement with participating local authorities to provide political alignment and oversight.

A Pilot Partnership Board would then be established including key stakeholders and local authority representatives. A small delivery team would be recruited to develop a pilot management plan and quick win projects.

6.0 Conclusion and next steps

6.1 The case for Self-designation

The case for support and investment by stakeholders in the self-designation proposals for the Great Ouse Heritage Landscape rests on the substantial environmental, economic, social, and strategic benefits that a designation would bring to the region, with a particular focus on addressing current issues of fragmentation and environmental pressure.

The proposals are championed by the Great Ouse Valley Trust (GOVT) and Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) as a mechanism to conserve and enhance the area for future generations. Self-designation is seen as valuable in its own right, as well as providing a practical stepping stone toward achieving full statutory National Landscape status if a potential route to this re-opened.

© Arkwood

A recent report 'Assessing the multiple benefits of natural flood management' by The Wildlife Trusts showed that every £1 invested in natural flood management is expected to deliver £10 of benefits over 30 years and that nature is one of the best defences against flooding in a changing climate.

6.1.1 Environment and Conservation

Investment is critical to protecting the Great Ouse Valley's irreplaceable natural assets and enhancing ecological resilience:

Protecting Outstanding and Unique Natural Beauty

The area is considered a landscape of exceptional natural beauty. It boasts unique assets, including classic riverside scenery linking towns and villages, and stunning floodplain meadows. The landscape possesses distinct aesthetic qualities such as vastness, tranquillity, and isolation which have been celebrated in art and writing

International and National Ecological Significance

The area contains numerous internationally and nationally recognised designated sites and extensive water and wetland habitats, with a projected increase in water and reedbeds to over 2,000 hectares (compared to 915 hectares in the Norfolk Broads).

Addressing Threats and Enhancing Biodiversity

Cambridgeshire is one of England's most nature-depleted counties. The already depleted landscape is facing continued threats from development pressure, inappropriate land management, pollution, and climate change impacts. The River Great Ouse already carries "dangerous" levels of E.coli.

Designation would actively drive nature recovery. There is a demonstrable opportunity to restore and create approximately 412 hectares of degraded floodplain meadow habitats. Projects like "The Great Ouse Canopy" are proposed to increase tree cover along the banks to provide shade, improve river health, and create wet woodland habitats.

Climate Change Resilience and Flood Management

Self-designation facilitates investments in nature-based solutions to manage flooding and climate change impacts. The restoration of floodplains to meadow and wetland helps to store water, contributing to flood risk management, carbon sequestration, and soil health.

6.1.2 Economic and Financial Justification

Investment is highly justified by the potential financial returns and funding access provided by formal recognition:

High Return on Investment

Economic analysis of the proposed designated area projects substantial monetary value. Based on precedent studies, the estimated annual Gross Value Added (GVA) allocated to protecting the landscape quality ranges from £78.66 million to £471.97 million for the core area (Option 1). All proposed designation options demonstrate a strong cost-to-value ratio.

Boosting Tourism and Local Economy

Designation would increase awareness and visitor numbers, benefiting local shops and pubs. It enhances the area's brand, supports sustainable tourism, and contributes to job creation, benefiting the local visitor economy.

Unlocking Funding Mechanisms

While immediate self-designation is non-statutory, it is critical for pursuing future statutory National Landscape status, which guarantees core funding from the government (historically around 75% of core costs for existing NLs). The status also strengthens the ability to access significant charitable and external grant funding sources (e.g., the National Lottery Heritage Fund or private green finance initiatives).

Efficient and Coordinated Management

By establishing a formal management framework, coordination among diverse organizations (local authorities, farmers, charities) can pool resources and expertise, ensuring greater impact with less cost.

6.1.3 Socio-Cultural and Strategic Alignment

Stakeholder support ensures the area's management aligns with local community needs and overarching policy goals:

Fostering Community Pride of Place and Wellbeing

The proposal aligns with HDC's "Huntingdon Futures" strategy, specifically promoting "Pride in Place" by 2050. The tranquil environment, coupled with enhanced access, improves the quality of life for residents and promotes social and community interaction, delivering health and mental wellbeing benefits.

Improving Access and Recreation

The designation process focuses on improving recreational assets like the Ouse Valley Way. Proposals include implementing a masterplan for tourism and access to improve facilities for all users, including those with mobility challenges, and creating continuous walking routes.

Fulfilling Policy Commitments

The proposals are strongly aligned with national strategies, including the UK's commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 ("30 by 30" commitment), the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan, and regional plans such as the Cambridgeshire ambition to "doubling nature".

Addressing Fragmented Management

Currently, management is fragmented across local authorities, statutory bodies, and landowners. The process provides a pathway to forge a shared vision, formalize partnerships, and coordinate strategies across boundaries, creating a cohesive, landscape-scale management approach.
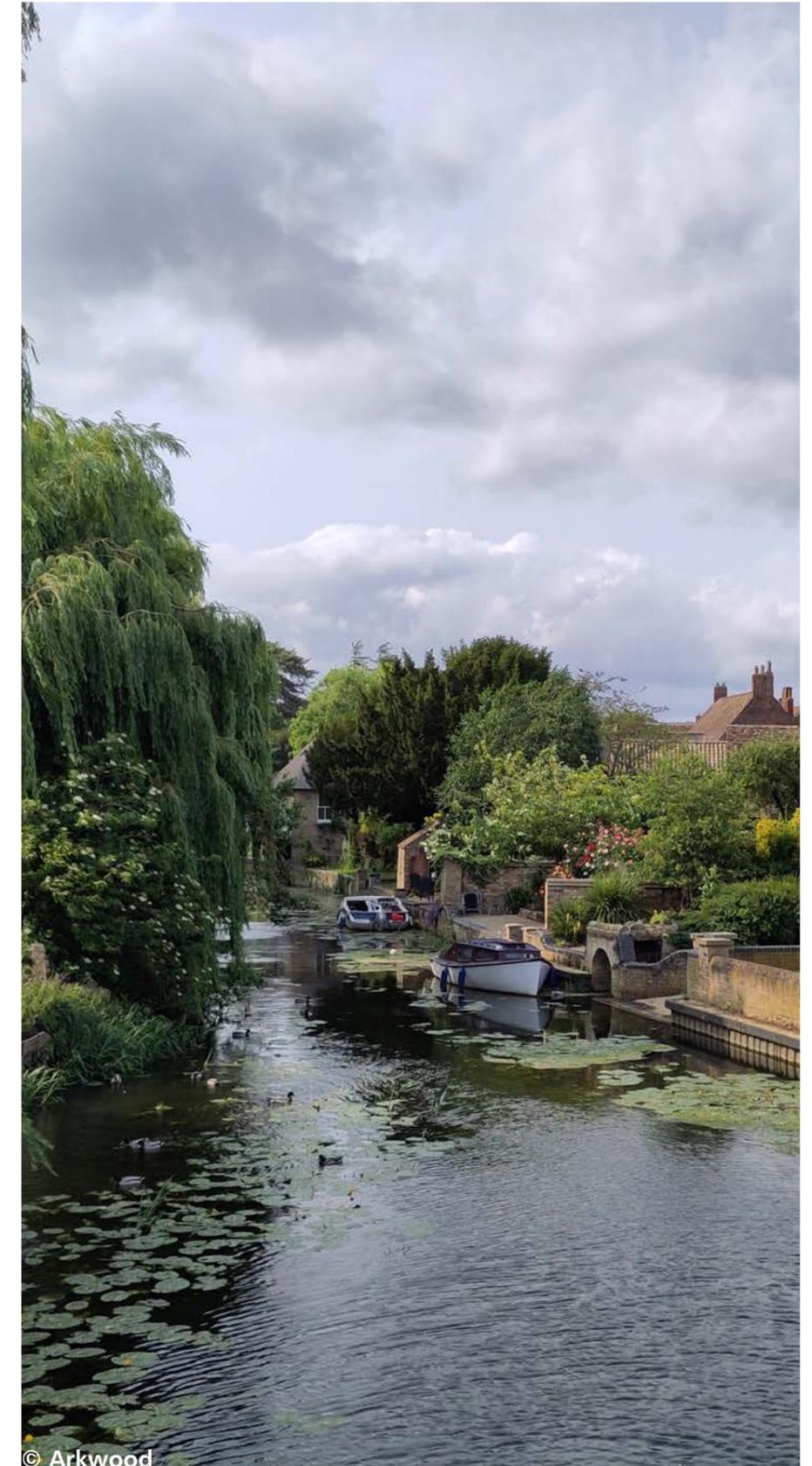
© Arkwood

6.2 Possible avenues for further research

This study has been developed using the local official data that is currently available. The scope of the study has not extended to measuring the significance of landscape protection to businesses or to visitors.

The studies referenced in this report have used metrics from business and visitor surveys to assess the impact of landscape designation on economic GVA across those areas, including on the visitor economy. The study has extrapolated findings from these comparable studies, all of which pre-date the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on visitor and wider economic behaviour.

If further data are required, a logical next step would be to commission the following additional studies to provide specific local data for the Great Ouse Valley upon which to develop a more robust GVA calculation. Indicative costs for these surveys are provided. Actual costs would be informed by detailed briefs when developed.

- Online business survey of 150-300 local businesses (using Alchemer platform or equivalent): £10k
- Online visitor opinion survey (using the Maptionnaire platform or equivalent) : £15k
- Natural capital account: provides economic metrics for ecosystem service flows for health and wellbeing (avoided health costs), leisure, carbon sequestration and air quality moderation: £5-10k
- Landscape character assessment: detailed assessment of landscape character across all three options: £20k

6.3 Future stakeholder engagement and consultation

Further engagement with stakeholders and residents is recommended in order to understand the impact and feasibility of the three options:

- Brief internal stakeholders on the outcomes of the current study and the benefits of self-designation to secure political buy-in
- Engage with wider stakeholders, especially other local authorities covered by the preferred self-designation option area, to create a joined-up vision for designation and implementation
- Explore funding through town and parish councils, local donations and develop potential partnerships with other organisations such as the Wildlife Trust, RSPB and National Trust
- Explore creation of an advocacy plan and messaging for communicating the designation
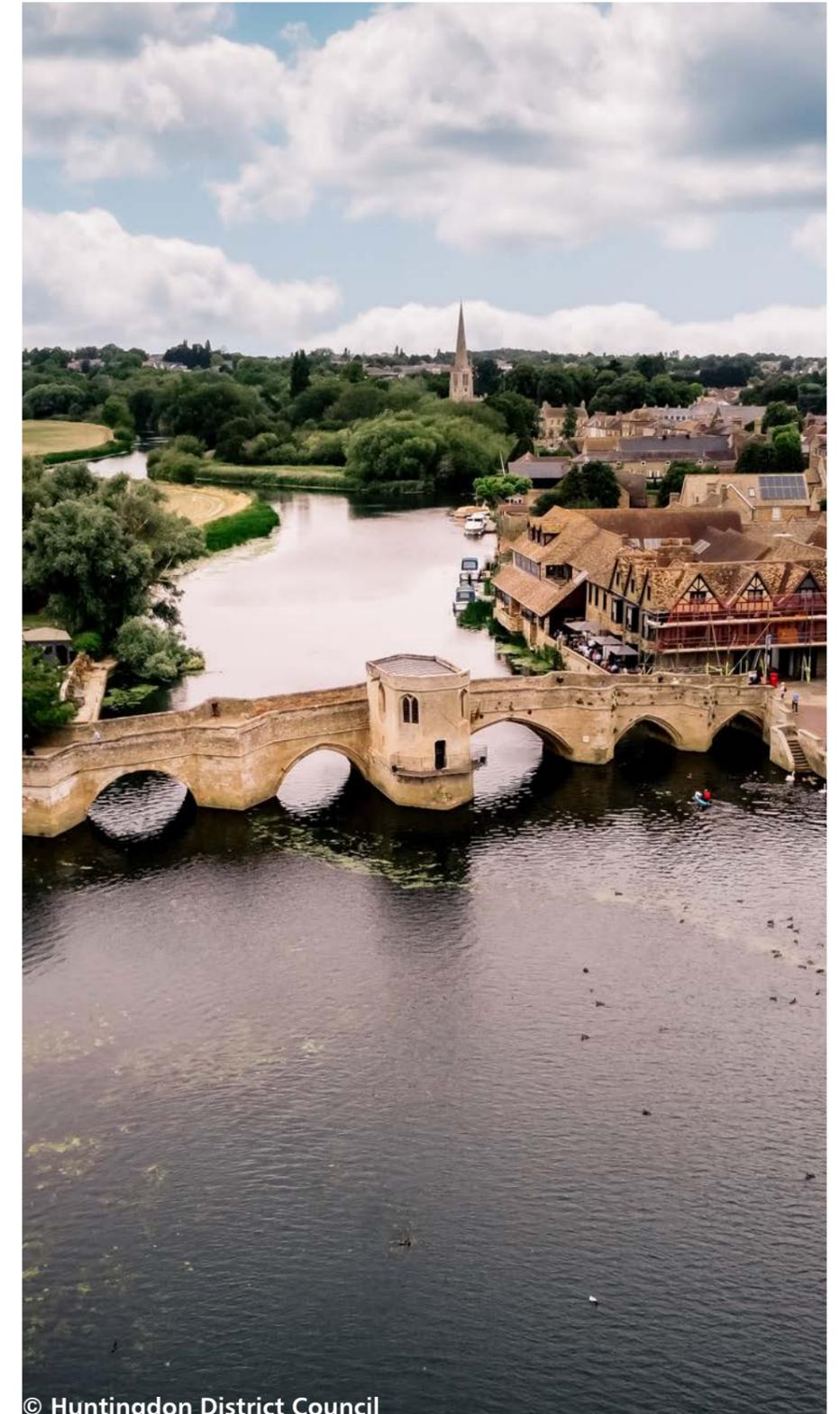
© Huntingdon District Council

APPENDIX 1 - Summary of options

KPI	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Size (Hectares)	14,972	33,131	54,305
MSOAs covered (in part or full)	21	30	37
Employment (apportioned estimate)	20,083	25,267	37,614
Annual employment pay (estimate)	£ 650,148,793	£ 808,053,092	£ 1,205,868,928
Annual direct GVA (estimate) - see below	£ 1,573,217,148	£ 1,979,040,349	£ 2,882,717,531

Annual Direct GVA by Local Authority (£m est.)	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Bedford	0	0	0
East Cambridgeshire	0	136	985
Fenland	-	120	120
Huntingdonshire	1,457	1,526	1,526
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	-	77	91
South Cambridgeshire	117	119	161
Total	1,573	1,979	2,883

Potential range of GVA % allocated to AONB landscape protection

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
5%	78.66	98.95	144.14
10%	157.32	197.90	288.27
15%	235.98	296.86	432.41
20%	314.64	395.81	576.54
30%	471.97	593.71	864.82

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
GVA	£1,573,296	£1,979,136	£2,882,851
Size (Hectares)	14,972	33,131	54,305
GV per Ha	£105	£60	£53
Employment (apportioned estimate)	20,083	25,267	37,614
Employment per Ha	1.3	0.8	0.7

APPENDIX 2 - Options Medium Super Output Area (MSOA) coverage

Option 1				
MSOA 21 Code	MSOA 21 Name	Total MSOA Area (ha)	Overlap area (ha)	Percent overlap
E02003619	Bedford 004	11447.83071	0.007474	0.00%
E02003736	East Cambridgeshire 005	8983.872038	1.88429	0.02%
E02003758	Huntingdonshire 006	13197.97109	0.092032	0.00%
E02003759	Huntingdonshire 007	2566.44618	885.082384	34.49%
E02003760	Huntingdonshire 008	345.176812	0.00016	0.00%
E02003761	Huntingdonshire 009	180.162315	30.828446	17.11%
E02003762	Huntingdonshire 010	5271.232789	2143.135072	40.66%
E02003764	Huntingdonshire 012	464.999181	92.468829	19.89%
E02003765	Huntingdonshire 013	420.927498	199.195548	47.32%
E02003766	Huntingdonshire 014	1982.675328	751.773852	37.92%
E02003767	Huntingdonshire 015	16548.69877	1860.358221	11.24%
E02003768	Huntingdonshire 016	3944.301283	1761.297716	44.65%
E02003769	Huntingdonshire 017	5390.706652	4235.589914	78.57%
E02003770	Huntingdonshire 018	7743.802409	502.701977	6.49%
E02003771	Huntingdonshire 019	328.148046	99.287145	30.26%
E02003772	Huntingdonshire 020	255.169632	89.35784	35.02%
E02003773	Huntingdonshire 021	297.62248	62.417683	20.97%
E02003774	Huntingdonshire 022	207.559393	33.821645	16.29%
E02003775	South Cambridgeshire 001	3388.484114	1436.495647	42.39%
E02003777	South Cambridgeshire 003	3622.587444	477.283651	13.18%
E02006874	South Cambridgeshire 021	8402.325207	309.043078	3.68%
		Total option area (ha)	**14,972**	

Option 2				
MSOA 21 CODE	MSOA 21 NAME	Total MSOA Area (ha)	Overlap area (ha)	Percent overlap
E02003619	Bedford 004	11447.83071	0.007474	0.00
E02003732	East Cambridgeshire 001	7395.520158	750.552127	10.15
E02003733	East Cambridgeshire 002	10368.64208	5536.685118	53.40
E02003736	East Cambridgeshire 005	8983.872038	1450.923429	16.15
E02003751	Fenland 010	8696.532285	1223.052964	14.06
E02003752	Fenland 011	6115.664046	2792.421158	45.66
E02003758	Huntingdonshire 006	13197.97109	307.795872	2.33
E02003759	Huntingdonshire 007	2566.44618	1306.263926	50.90
E02003760	Huntingdonshire 008	345.176812	0.00016	0.00
E02003761	Huntingdonshire 009	180.162315	30.828446	17.11
E02003762	Huntingdonshire 010	5271.232789	2143.135072	40.66
E02003764	Huntingdonshire 012	464.999181	92.468829	19.89
E02003765	Huntingdonshire 013	420.927498	199.195548	47.32
E02003766	Huntingdonshire 014	1982.675328	751.773852	37.92
E02003767	Huntingdonshire 015	16548.69877	1860.358221	11.24
E02003768	Huntingdonshire 016	3944.301283	1761.297716	44.65
E02003769	Huntingdonshire 017	5390.706652	4235.589914	78.57
E02003770	Huntingdonshire 018	7743.802409	502.701977	6.49
E02003771	Huntingdonshire 019	328.148046	99.287145	30.26
E02003772	Huntingdonshire 020	255.169632	89.35784	35.02
E02003773	Huntingdonshire 021	297.62248	62.417683	20.97
E02003774	Huntingdonshire 022	207.559393	33.821645	16.29
E02003775	South Cambridgeshire 001	3388.484114	1483.948132	43.79
E02003776	South Cambridgeshire 002	3478.483537	0.937222	0.03
E02003777	South Cambridgeshire 003	3622.587444	477.283651	13.18
E02005566	King's Lynn and West Norfolk 016	11591.05947	2132.727955	18.40
E02005567	King's Lynn and West Norfolk 017	520.332465	45.062443	8.66
E02005568	King's Lynn and West Norfolk 018	15554.28793	3451.766972	22.19
E02005569	King's Lynn and West Norfolk 019	17018.8579	0.000034	0.00
E02006874	South Cambridgeshire 021	8402.325207	309.043078	3.68
		Total option area (ha)	**33,131**	

		Option 3		
MSOA 21 CD	**MSOA 21 NM**	**Total MSOA Area (ha)**	**Overlap area (ha)**	**Percent overlap**
E02003619	Bedford 004	11447.83071	0.007474	0.00
E02003732	East Cambridgeshire 001	7395.520158	4241.549588	57.35
E02003733	East Cambridgeshire 002	10368.64208	9475.27198	91.38
E02003734	East Cambridgeshire 003	1047.61833	1047.61833	100.00
E02003735	East Cambridgeshire 004	4878.59287	1796.073955	36.82
E02003736	East Cambridgeshire 005	8983.872038	8614.767008	95.89
E02003737	East Cambridgeshire 006	6863.988373	1356.205056	19.76
E02003738	East Cambridgeshire 007	6914.759255	25.967514	0.38
E02003739	East Cambridgeshire 008	2564.73095	266.829603	10.40
E02003740	East Cambridgeshire 009	8435.462642	81.123299	0.96
E02003751	Fenland 010	8696.532285	1223.052964	14.06
E02003752	Fenland 011	6115.664046	2792.421158	45.66
E02003758	Huntingdonshire 006	13197.97109	307.795872	2.33
E02003759	Huntingdonshire 007	2566.44618	1306.263926	50.90
E02003760	Huntingdonshire 008	345.176812	0.00016	0.00
E02003761	Huntingdonshire 009	180.162315	30.828446	17.11
E02003762	Huntingdonshire 010	5271.232789	2143.135072	40.66
E02003764	Huntingdonshire 012	464.999181	92.468829	19.89
E02003765	Huntingdonshire 013	420.927498	199.195548	47.32
E02003766	Huntingdonshire 014	1982.675328	751.773852	37.92
E02003767	Huntingdonshire 015	16548.69877	1860.358221	11.24
E02003768	Huntingdonshire 016	3944.301283	1761.297716	44.65
E02003769	Huntingdonshire 017	5390.706652	4235.589914	78.57
E02003770	Huntingdonshire 018	7743.802409	502.701977	6.49
E02003771	Huntingdonshire 019	328.148046	99.287145	30.26
E02003772	Huntingdonshire 020	255.169632	89.35784	35.02
E02003773	Huntingdonshire 021	297.62248	62.417683	20.97
E02003774	Huntingdonshire 022	207.559393	33.821645	16.29
E02003775	South Cambridgeshire 001	3388.484114	1693.608527	49.98
E02003776	South Cambridgeshire 002	3478.483537	242.915746	6.98
E02003777	South Cambridgeshire 003	3622.587444	477.283651	13.18
E02003778	South Cambridgeshire 004	3264.778522	161.500423	4.95
E02005566	King's Lynn and West Norfolk 016	11591.05947	2132.78659	18.40
E02005567	King's Lynn and West Norfolk 017	520.332465	45.062443	8.66
E02005568	King's Lynn and West Norfolk 018	15554.28793	4660.325647	29.96
E02005569	King's Lynn and West Norfolk 019	17018.8579	184.889341	1.09
E02006874	South Cambridgeshire 021	8402.325207	309.043078	3.68
	Total option area (ha)		**54,305**	

APPENDIX 3 - Summary by industry

Employment Mix (counts)

Option	1: Agriculture, forestry & fishing (A)	2: Mining, quarrying & utilities (B,D and E)	3: Manufacturing (C)	4: Construction (F)	5: Motor trades (Part G)	6: Wholesale (Part G)	7: Retail (Part G)	8: Transport & storage (inc postal) (H)	9: Accommodation & food services (I)
Option 1	30	785	2,270	1,082	457	1,118	1,326	810	1,621
Option 2	63	938	2,998	1,558	598	1,309	1,696	1,127	1,912
Option 3	120	1,277	4,306	2,472	852	1,837	2,690	1,770	2,790

Employment Mix (%)

Option	1: Agriculture, forestry & fishing (A)	2: Mining, quarrying & utilities (B,D and E)	3: Manufacturing (C)	4: Construction (F)	5: Motor trades (Part G)	6: Wholesale (Part G)	7: Retail (Part G)	8: Transport & storage (inc postal) (H)	9: Accommodation & food services (I)
Option 1	0.1%	3.9%	11.3%	5.4%	2.3%	5.6%	6.6%	4.0%	8.1%
Option 2	0.2%	3.7%	11.9%	6.2%	2.4%	5.2%	6.7%	4.5%	7.6%
Option 3	0.3%	3.4%	11.4%	6.6%	2.3%	4.9%	7.2%	4.7%	7.4%

GVA

Option	1: Agriculture, forestry & fishing (A)	2: Mining, quarrying & utilities (B,D and E)	3: Manufacturing (C)	4: Construction (F)	5: Motor trades (Part G)	6: Wholesale (Part G)	7: Retail (Part G)	8: Transport & storage (inc postal) (H)	9: Accommodation & food services (I)
Average GVA/Job	£ 49,310	£ 180,400	£ 103,357	£ 105,596	£ 53,018	£ 53,018	£ 53,018	£ 46,483	£ 24,670
Option 1	£ 1,484,996	£ 141,603,905	£ 234,664,268	£ 114,241,339	£ 24,251,952	£ 59,261,182	£ 70,300,750	£ 37,655,219	£ 40,001,880
Option 2	£ 3,100,733	£ 169,245,606	£ 309,860,777	£ 164,541,883	£ 31,699,931	£ 69,401,301	£ 89,944,657	£ 52,365,239	£ 47,178,017
Option 3	£ 5,901,666	£ 230,425,026	£ 445,033,509	£ 261,003,240	£ 45,158,802	£ 97,417,150	£ 142,611,862	£ 82,259,104	£ 68,825,541

Employment Mix

Option	10 : Information & communication (J)	11 : Financial & insurance (K)	12 : Property (L)	13 : Professional, scientific & technical (M)	14 : Business administration & support services (N)	15 : Public administration & defence (O)	16 : Education (P)	17 : Health (Q)	18 : Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services (R,S,T and U)	TOTAL
Option 1	689	272	496	1,746	1,569	1,509	1,328	2,063	910	20,083
Option 2	877	292	638	2,165	2,047	1,591	1,891	2,507	1,058	25,267
Option 3	1,231	352	877	3,058	2,800	1,940	3,854	3,730	1,659	37,614

Employment Mix

|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
Option 1	3.4%	1.4%	2.5%	8.7%	7.8%	7.5%	6.6%	10.3%	4.5%	100%
Option 2	3.5%	1.2%	2.5%	8.6%	8.1%	6.3%	7.5%	9.9%	4.2%	100%
Option 3	3.3%	0.9%	2.3%	8.1%	7.4%	5.2%	10.2%	9.9%	4.4%	100%

GVA

Option	10 : Information & communication (J)	11 : Financial & insurance (K)	12 : Property (L)	13 : Professional, scientific & technical (M)	14 : Business administration & support services (N)	15 : Public administration & defence (O)	16 : Education (P)	17 : Health (Q)	18 : Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services (R,S,T and U)	TOTAL
Average GVA/Job	£ 81,778	£ 173,241	£ 436,783	£ 59,722	£ 37,720	£ 83,743	£ 50,844	£ 43,640	£ 90,263	
Option 1	£ 56,373,421	£ 47,182,126	£ 216,672,581	£ 104,280,264	£ 59,196,856	£ 126,335,780	£ 67,520,466	£ 90,017,538	£ 82,172,626	£ 1,573,217,148
Option 2	£ 71,697,453	£ 50,592,087	£ 278,510,475	£ 129,300,188	£ 77,230,300	£ 133,263,479	£ 96,164,184	£ 109,419,029	£ 95,525,012	£ 1,979,040,349
Option 3	£ 100,699,233	£ 60,931,550	£ 383,270,375	£ 182,599,792	£ 105,602,120	£ 162,493,622	£ 195,937,763	£ 162,778,042	£ 149,769,135	£ 2,882,717,531

Great Ouse Valley Trust
Our landscape for life

Huntingdonshire
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Arkwood