

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **WEDNESDAY, 25TH JUNE 2008** at **2:30 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

A G E N D A

PRAYER

The Reverend Mark Savage, Team Vicar for Huntingdon will open the meeting with prayer.

APOLOGIES

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. PETITION NO. 1

To invite Mr C Osborn to present a petition containing 66 signatures which calls upon the District Council to -

- ◆ leave the (Huntingdonshire) Regional College where it is;
- ◆ not replace it with houses; and
- ◆ refurbish it on the present site where it can best serve those who need it most".

2. PETITION NO. 2

To invite Mr M Dixon to present a petition containing 63 signatures which calls upon the District Council to -

"reject the move of the (Huntingdonshire) Regional College to Hinchingsbrooke because of the serious traffic implications and the increased danger to cyclists and pedestrians at this busy site".

3. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 8)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th May 2008.

4. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to personal and/or prejudicial interests and the nature of those interests in relation to any Agenda Item. Please see Notes 1 and 2 below.

5. DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION - DEVELOPMENT OF NEW COLLEGE CAMPUS AND ACCESS WORKS, ASSOCIATED PARKING AND SPORTS PITCHES, PART OF SPORTS GROUND, CAMBRIDGESHIRE CONSTABULARY, HINCHINGBROOKE PARK, HINCHINGBROOKE PARK ROAD, HUNTINGDON (Pages 9 - 32)

To consider a report by the Head of Planning Services in conjunction with the Report of the Development Control Panel – Item No. 9 (f).

6. CABINET PROCEDURE RULES - DELEGATION BY THE LEADER (Pages 33 - 40)

The Leader of the Council to present a report by the Head of Administration.

7. REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION - CODE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (Pages 41 - 60)

Further to Minute No. 64 (h) of the meeting held on 16th April 2008, to consider a report by the Head of Administration.

8. FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2008/9 (Pages 61 - 72)

The Chairman of the Licensing and Protection Panel, Councillor J M Sadler, to present the Food Safety Service Plan 2008/9 to the Council for adoption.

A report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services is enclosed.

9. REPORTS OF THE CABINET, PANELS AND COMMITTEES

(a) Cabinet (Pages 73 - 148)

(A copy of the Submission Core Strategy 2008 is enclosed with Members' agenda only.)

(b) Standards Committee (Pages 149 - 164)

(c) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) (Pages 165 - 168)

(d) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) (Pages 169 - 172)

(e) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) (Pages 173 - 176)

(f) Development Control Panel (Pages 177 - 180)

(g) Employment Panel (Pages 181 - 182)

10. ORAL QUESTIONS

In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules (Section 8.3) of the Council's Constitution, to receive oral questions from Members of the

Council

11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 85

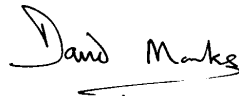
The Chief Executive to report on absences of Members from meetings.

12. MEMBERSHIP OF CABINET, COMMITTEES AND PANELS

Respective Group Leaders to propose –

- ◆ Councillor P M D Godfrey to replace Councillor J W Davies on the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework);
- ◆ an additional Liberal Democrat Member to serve on the Licensing and Protection Panel/Licensing Committee; and
- ◆ an adjustment to the membership of the Standards Committee to provide for the appointment of a Cabinet Member.

Dated this 17th day of June 2008



Chief Executive

Notes

1. *A personal interest exists where a decision on a matter would affect to a greater extent than other people in the District –*
 - (a) *the well-being, financial position, employment or business of the Councillor, their family or any person with whom they had a close association;*
 - (b) *a body employing those persons, any firm in which they are a partner and any company of which they are directors;*
 - (c) *any corporate body in which those persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or*
 - (d) *the Councillor's registerable financial and other interests.*
2. *A personal interest becomes a prejudicial interest where a member of the public (who has knowledge of the circumstances) would reasonably regard the Member's personal interest as being so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.*

Please contact Ms C Deller, Democratic Services Manager, Tel No 01480 388007/e-mail: Christine.Deller@huntsdc.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 Council.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the District Council's website – www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk (*under Councils and Democracy*).

**If you would like a translation of
Agenda/Minutes/Reports or would like a large text
version or an audio version please contact the
Democratic Services Manager
and we will try to accommodate your needs.**

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Jeśli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać tłumaczenie tego dokumentu, wersję dużym drukiem lub wersję audio, prosimy skontaktować się z nami pod numerem 01480 388388, a my postaramy się uwzględnić Państwa potrzeby.

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Agenda Item 3

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 14 May 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor P A Swales – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, M G Baker, I C Bates, J T Bell, Mrs B E Boddington, P L E Bucknell, E R Butler, K J Churchill, Mrs K E Cooper, S J Criswell, J W Davies, D B Dew, Mrs J A Dew, P J Downes, J J Dutton, J E Garner, A N Gilbert, P M D Godfrey, P Godley, J A Gray, A Hansard, D Harty, C R Hyams, Mrs P A Jordan, Ms S Kemp, L W McGuire, P G Mitchell, M F Newman, R Powell, D J Priestman, Mrs D C Reynolds, T V Rogers, J M Sadler, T D Sanderson, M F Shellens, L M Simpson, Ms M J Thomas, G S E Thorpe, R G Tuplin, P K Ursell, J S Watt and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors K M Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, W T Clough, R W J Eaton, R S Farrer, I R Muir, C J Stephens and P R Ward.

1. PRAYER

The Venerable H McCurdy, Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech opened the meeting with Prayer.

2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Bereavements

The Chairman announced, with regret, the deaths recently of Dr S Banerjee, husband of Councillor Mrs M Banerjee and former Councillor J C Whitehead who had served as a District Councillor for the Gransden Ward for two years. Members observed a minute's silence in memory of both.

(b) Council Membership

The Chairman congratulated those Members of the Council who had been returned for a further term of office at the District Council elections held on 1st May 2008 and extended a warm welcome to the following newly elected Members –

W T Clough - Buckden;
Mrs J A Dew - St Ives (West);

P Godley - Godmanchester;
M F Shellens - Huntingdon (East); and
Mrs M J Thomas - St Neots (Eaton Socon).

A tribute was also paid to former Member, Mr D A Giles, who had stood unsuccessfully for re-election.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor P A Swales, seconded by Councillor D B Dew and

RESOLVED

that Councillor J W Davies be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor Davies made the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked those Members who had proposed and seconded his candidacy. Councillor Davies expressed his pleasure in becoming Chairman of Huntingdonshire District Council and paid tribute to those outstanding characters who he had succeeded in the post naming former Councillors Eddy, Dodson and Rignall in particular.

Councillor J W Davies in the Chair.

4. VOTE OF THANKS TO RETIRING CHAIRMAN

The Chairman referred to the exemplary manner in which Councillor P A Swales had performed his duties as Chairman of the District Council and the high regard in which he was held by other civic leaders. Having expressed also his appreciation for Councillor Swales' dedication and service in the post, the Chairman announced his pleasure in presenting to him a Past Chairman's Badge. Those sentiments were endorsed by Councillor J E Garner and by Councillor P J Downes who expressed his appreciation for the manner in which business had been conducted in the Chamber equitably and efficiently during Councillor Swales' term of office.

In response and having expressed the honour he had felt in serving the District Council and the opportunities which had been afforded to him, Councillor Swales thanked his wife, Pam, for her support during his Chairmanship and concluded by sending a message to Members and Officers, to be proud of Huntingdonshire as an excellent place to live.

RESOLVED

that the Council's appreciation to Councillor P A Swales be placed on record as Chairman during the last two years.

5. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16th April 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None were received.

7. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor T D Sanderson, seconded by Councillor K J Churchill and

RESOLVED

that Councillor J J Dutton be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor Dutton made the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and expressed his appreciation to Members for the honour which they had conferred upon him.

8. LOCAL ELECTIONS: 1ST MAY 2008

The report of the Returning Officer with regard to the District and Parish Council elections held on 1st May 2008 was received and noted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book).

The Returning Officer extended his appreciation to candidates and their agents for their co-operation and courtesy during the elections with particular tribute being paid to the Elections Team for their patience and constructive approach in advance of the election day. Members placed on record their appreciation to the Returning Officer, the Elections Team and to those who had been engaged in election duties over the period.

9. ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

It was proposed by Councillor J A Gray, seconded by Councillor C R Hyams and

RESOLVED

that Councillor I C Bates be elected Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Cabinet for the ensuing Municipal Year.

10. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

It was proposed by Councillor I C Bates, seconded by Councillor D B Dew and

RESOLVED

that Councillor L M Simpson be appointed Deputy Leader of the Council and Vice-Chairman of the Cabinet for the ensuing Municipal Year.

11. APPOINTMENT OF THE CABINET

RESOLVED

that, in addition to the Leader and Deputy Leader, Councillors P L E Bucknell, K J Churchill, D B Dew, A Hansard, C R Hyams, Mrs D C Reynolds and T V Rogers be appointed as Members of the Cabinet for the ensuing year.

12. REPRESENTATION OF POLITICAL GROUPS ON DISTRICT COUNCIL PANELS, ETC.

A report was submitted by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) relating to the principles of proportionality to be applied to the appointment of Panels in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Part II of the Local Government Act 2000.

Having noted an amendment in paragraph 3.2 of the report to reflect that the percentage of Conservative Members on the Council should be "73.08" and not "73.07", it was

RESOLVED

that the allocation of seats on Panels to political groups and non-aligned Members be determined as set out in the report now submitted.

13. COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION: SCHEME OF DELEGATION AND MONITORING OFFICER: INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS

By way of a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Council were invited to consider interim arrangements relating to the Council's Scheme of Delegation and the designation of a Monitoring Officer following the impending retirement of the Director of Central Services.

The Council noted that interim arrangements were required to facilitate the discharge of responsibilities delegated to the Director of Central Services pending a decision on and appointment of a successor and to designate an Officer to act as Monitoring Officer on behalf of the Council.

Having discussed the most convenient means of addressing both matters, it was

RESOLVED

that, with effect from 27th June 2008 and pending a decision on and the recruitment of a new Director, the Chief Executive be authorised to undertake the executive and other powers delegated to the Director of Central Services by virtue of the Scheme of Delegation and otherwise and the Head of Legal and Estates be designated as Interim Monitoring Officer.

14. STANDARDS COMMITTEE: ADDITIONAL PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

The Council considered a report by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute

Book) regarding the implications of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 on the current arrangements for town and parish council representation on the Standards Committee.

Members noted that under the new Regulations, the Standards Committee would be required to establish a Referrals Sub-Committee with responsibility for the initial assessment of allegations and a Review Sub-Committee which would have responsibility for considering any requests from the complainant to review a decision of the Referrals Sub-Committee. The proposed Sub-Committees required at least one Parish Member where the allegation related to a Parish Councillor and membership of the Referrals Sub-Committee for a particular matter could not overlap with that of the Review Sub-Committee when the latter considered the same matter.

Although appreciating the difficulty in anticipating the scale of the workload arising from the new Regulations, the Council acknowledged that the authority had to have in place adequate arrangements to manage the new functions effectively and, therefore, to ease the burden which might be placed on the existing town and parish council representatives. It was therefore

RESOLVED

- (a) that, with effect from 14th May 2008, the membership of the Standards Committee be increased to allow for the appointment of one additional town or parish councillor to represent town and parish councils in the District and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils be invited to nominate the additional Member; and
- (b) that the following changes be made to the Council's Constitution with effect from 14th May 2008 –
 - ◆ in Article 9 – Standards Committee (page 27), the third bullet point in paragraph 2, membership be amended to read - three Town and Parish Councillors, representing Town and Parish Councils in the District; and
 - ◆ in Table 2 – Responsibility for Council Functions (page 63), column 2 of the entry for the Standards Committee be amended to read - three voting Members appointed by the Town and Parish Councils in Huntingdonshire.

15. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the effect of the terms of the Members' Allowances Scheme which provided for an annual adjustment in Members' allowances to reflect any increase in inflation using as an automatic index mechanism the Retail Price Index published by the Office of National Statistics.

Mindful of the harmonious working relationship between Members and employees of the Authority, the level of the recent percentage

increase in salary scales for District Council employees and the Council's financial position, it was

RESOLVED

that Members' Allowances for 2008/09 be increased by 3.3% with effect from 14th May 2008.

16. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS

RESOLVED

- (a) that the following Members be appointed to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for the ensuing Municipal Year –

Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery)	Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)	Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Corporate & Strategic Framework)
J D Ablewhite	K M Baker	M G Baker
Mrs M Banerjee	M G Baker	Mrs M Banerjee
E R Butler	J T Bell	E R Butler
Mrs K E Cooper	P H Dakers	S J Criswell
S J Criswell	J W Davies	J W Davies
Mrs J A Dew	P J Downes	P J Downes
J E Garner	A N Gilbert	J E Garner
P Godley	P M D Godfrey	J A Gray
Mrs P A Jordan	J A Gray	D Harty
P G Mitchell	D Harty	L W McGuire
J M Sadler	Ms S Kemp	P G Mitchell
M F Shellens	L W McGuire	M F Newman
Mrs M J Thomas	M F Newman	M F Shellens
P K Ursell	R G Tuplin	P K Ursell
J S Watt	R J West	R J West

17. COMMITTEES AND PANELS

RESOLVED

- (a) that Members be appointed to serve on the Standards and Licensing Committees and Employment, Development Control, Licensing and Protection, Corporate Governance, Elections and Appointments Panels for the ensuing Municipal Year as follows –

Standards Committee (7)

J D Ablewhite, Mrs B E Boddington, P J Downes, R S Farrer, I R Muir, T D Sanderson and G S E Thorpe;

Employment Panel (8)

Mrs B E Boddington, J J Dutton, Mrs P A Jordan, I R Muir, D J Priestman, T D Sanderson and P A Swales

and one Member of the Cabinet in an ex-officio capacity with appropriate portfolio responsibility;

Development Control Panel (16)

J D Ablewhite, Mrs M Banerjee, Mrs B E Boddington, E R Butler, W T Clough, J J Dutton, P G Mitchell, C J Stephens, P A Swales, Mrs M J Thomas, G S E Thorpe, R G Tuplin, P K Ursell, P R Ward and R J West and one Member of the Cabinet in an ex-officio capacity with appropriate portfolio responsibility;

Licensing and Protection Panel (12)

K M Baker, J T Bell, J J Dutton, R W J Eaton, R S Farrer, I R Muir, R Powell, J M Sadler, T D Sanderson and J S Watt and one Member of the Cabinet in an ex-officio capacity with appropriate portfolio responsibility;

Licensing Committee (12)

K M Baker, J T Bell, J J Dutton, R W J Eaton, R S Farrer, I R Muir, R Powell, J M Sadler, T D Sanderson and J S Watt and one Member of the Cabinet in an ex-officio capacity with appropriate portfolio responsibility;

Corporate Governance Panel (7)

M G Baker, P J Downes, P M D Godfrey, J A Gray, T V Rogers, L M Simpson and C J Stephens;

Appointments Panel (4)

M G Baker, Mrs B E Boddington, T V Rogers and L M Simpson together with the relevant Executive Councillor in relation to the post to be filled; and

Elections Panel (7)

P J Downes, J E Garner, A N Gilbert, D Harty, M F Newman, T D Sanderson and G S E Thorpe.

- (b) that the following Members be nominated from which the Director of Central Services be authorised when necessary to convene a meeting of the Appeals Sub-Group to include up to five Members (excluding Members of the Employment Panel) to determine Appeals under the Council's Disciplinary and Appeals Procedures –

J T Bell, J W Davies, C R Hyams, L W McGuire, P G Mitchell, M F Newman, Mrs D C Reynolds, T V Rogers, G S E Thorpe, R G Tuplin and J S Watt.

18. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 85

The Chief Executive reported that there were no absences of

Members from meetings for consideration in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The meeting concluded at 3.10 pm.

Chairman

Development Application - Development of New College Campus and Access Works, Associated Parking and Sports Pitches, part of Sports Ground, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Hinchingsbrooke Park, Hinchingsbrooke Park Road, Huntingdon

Report by the Head of Planning Services

Case No: 0703432OUT (OUTLINE APPLICATION)
Applicant: HUNTINGDONSHIRE REGIONAL COLLEGE
Grid Ref: 522814 271837
Date of Registration: 16.10.2007
Parish: HUNTINGDON

RECOMMENDATION - MINDED TO SUPPORT

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 The application site is located within Huntingdon and is surrounded by established public institution uses such as the Hospital, Police headquarters and the Hinchingsbrooke Community School Campus and associated facilities. Situated west of Brampton Road and north of Hinchingsbrooke Park Road, the land is currently owned by the Constabulary and was previously used as a private sports pitch.
- 1.2 The site benefits from being approximately 1km from the Town Centre, with good pedestrian and cycling links, frequent public transport services also located on the proposed Huntingdon to St. Ives Bus Priority measures serving the forthcoming guided bus route and only 500m from the main line railway station.
- 1.3 The application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of a new College Campus comprising approximately 9,600m² of gross floor area, approximately 220 car parking spaces, a MUGA and 90m x 57.5m football pitch. As an outline application, the applicant is at this stage seeking consent for the principle of the use of the land and the acceptability of the proposed access. Appearance, layout and scale are to be considered at a later time following the determination of this application, as reserved matters.
- 1.4 In support of the application, the applicant has submitted a Transport Assessment, proposed access details from Hinchingsbrooke Park Road and an indicative layout plan.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 **PPS1: “Delivering Sustainable Development” (2005)** contains advice on the operation of the plan-led system.
- 2.2 **PPS9: “Biological and Geological Conservation” (2005)** sets out planning policies on protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system.
- 2.3 **PPG13: Transport (2001)** provides guidance in relation to transport and particularly the integration of planning and transport.
- 2.4 **PPG15: “Planning and the Historic Environment” (1994)** sets out Government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment. It explains the role played by the planning system in their protection.
- 2.5 **PPG16: “Archaeology and Planning” (1990)** sets out the Secretary of State's policy on archaeological remains on land, and how they should be preserved or recorded both in an urban setting and in the countryside.

For full details visit the government website <http://www.communities.gov.uk> and follow the links to planning, Building and Environment, Planning, Planning Policy.

3. REGIONAL POLICY

3.1 **Regional Spatial Strategy: East of England Plan (May 2008)**

East of England Plan - Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (May 2008) Policies viewable at <http://www.go-east.gov.uk> then follow links to Planning, Regional Planning then Related Documents

- ◆ SS4: “Towns other than Key Centres and Rural Areas” – Local Development Documents should define the approach to development in towns. Such towns included selected Market Towns and others with potential to increase their social and economic sustainability.
- ◆ T2: “Changing Travel Behaviour” – to bring about significant change in travel behaviour, a reduction in distances travelled and a shift towards greater use of sustainable modes should be promoted.
- ◆ T3: “Managing Traffic Demand” – Demand management measures for highway use should be pursued to tackle congestion and, as a consequence provide more reliable journeys.
- ◆ T13: “Public Transport Accessibility” – public transport should be encouraged throughout the region by increasing accessibility to appropriate levels of service of as high proportion of households as possible, enabling access to core services.

- ◆ T14: “Parking” – controls to manage transport demand and influencing travel change alongside measures to improve public transport accessibility, walking and cycling should be encouraged. Maximum parking standards should be applied to new residential development.
- ◆ ENV6: “The Historic Environment” - Within plans, policies, programmes and proposals local planning authorities and other agencies should identify, protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment of the region including Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.
- ◆ ENV7: “Quality in the Built Environment” - requires new development to be of high quality which complements the distinctive character and best qualities of the local area and promotes urban renaissance and regeneration.

3.2 **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003)**

Policies from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk> follow the links to environment, planning, planning policy and Structure Plan 2003.

- ◆ **P6/1** – Development Related Provision – development will only be permitted where the additional infrastructure and community requirements generated by the proposal can be secured.
- ◆ **P9/8** – Infrastructure Provision – a comprehensive approach towards securing infrastructure needs to support the development strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region. The programme will encompass: transport; affordable and key worker housing; education; health care; other community facilities; environmental improvements and provision of open space; waste management; water, flood control and drainage and other utilities and telecommunications.

4. **HDC CORPORATE POLICIES**

- 4.1 **The Huntingdonshire Community Strategy** – the adopted Community Strategy, which was prepared by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership, defines supporting ‘Good Opportunities for Learning’ as one of its key desired outcomes with the related objectives seeking to deliver further opportunities for local people to access learning opportunities, develop new skills and to train for work.
- 4.2 **The Emerging Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy** – the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy also supports enhancing opportunities for lifelong learning, the provision of improved education and training opportunities for young people and the enhancing of skill levels to support economic prosperity (via various initiatives aimed at encouraging young people to access learning and training opportunities).

- 4.3 **Growing Success – Our Corporate Plan** – HDC’s corporate plan also supports, as an acknowledged community aim, the delivery of improvements of access to training and development activities

5. PLANNING POLICIES

Further information on the role of planning policies in deciding planning applications can also be found at the following website: <http://www.communities.gov.uk> then follow links Planning, Building and Environment, Planning, Planning Information and Guidance, Planning Guidance and Advice and then Creating and Better Place to Live.

5.1 **Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995)**

Policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 are relevant and viewable at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan95.

- ◆ **T18:** “Access requirements for new development” states development should be accessed by a highway of acceptable design and appropriate construction.
- ◆ **En12:** “Archaeological Implications” – permission on sites of archaeological interest may be conditional on the implementation of a scheme of archaeological recording prior to development commencing.
- ◆ **En13:** “Archaeological Implications” – in areas of archaeological potential planning application may be required to be accompanied by the results of an archaeological field evaluation or desk-based assessment.
- ◆ **En14:** “Open Spaces, Frontage and Gaps in the Built Up Framework or immediately adjacent” - development will not normally be allowed.
- ◆ **En15:** “Open Spaces and Gaps for Protection” – as defined on the inset map, development that impairs their open nature will not normally be allowed.
- ◆ **En20:** Landscaping Scheme - wherever appropriate a development will be subject to the conditions requiring the execution of a landscaping scheme.
- ◆ **En25:** "General Design Criteria" - expects all new development to relate sensitively to its surroundings.
- ◆ **R1:** “Recreation and Leisure Provision” – will directly promote district wide recreation and leisure projects and generally support leisure and recreation facilities commensurate with population levels, housing developments and identified need.

5.2 **Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alterations (2002)**

Policies from the Huntingdon Local Plan Alterations 2002 are relevant and viewable at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan - Then click on "Local Plan Alteration (2002).

- ◆ **OB1** – Nature and Scale of Obligations – will relate to the size of development and the impact on physical infrastructure, social and community facilities and services.
- ◆ **OB2** – Maintenance of Open Space – contributions may be sought for the maintenance of small areas of open space, children’s play space and recreational facilities, woodland or landscaping to benefit the development.

5.3 **Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007**

Policies from the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk> click on Environment and Planning, then Planning then Planning+Policy then Informal policy statements where there is a link to Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007

- ◆ **P1** – Sustainable Development – development proposals should contribute to the pursuit of sustainable development.
- ◆ **P2** – Natural Resources – development proposals should contribute to the efficient use of natural resources by: making best use of land and existing infrastructure; minimising the use of non-renewables; minimising water consumption; no adverse impact on water resources and flood risk; curtail pollution; encourage waste reduction and recycling.
- ◆ **P3** - Social and Economic Well-being - development should contribute to the social and economic well-being of the district.
- ◆ **P4** - Settlement Strategy - describes the settlement strategy for the district.
- ◆ **P5** – Settlement Hierarchy – Market Towns: St Neots, Huntingdon, St Ives, Ramsey and Bury.
- ◆ **P11** – Infrastructure Requirements – Development proposals should provide or contribute towards the cost of providing infrastructure, and of meeting social and environmental requirements, where these are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
- ◆ **G1** – Open Space and Recreational Land – development proposals should not entail the whole or partial loss of open space within the settlements, or of outdoor recreation facilities or allotments.
- ◆ **G2** – Landscape Character - development proposals should respect and respond appropriately to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape
- ◆ **G3** – Trees, hedgerows and Other Environmental Features - development proposals should minimise risk of harm to trees, hedgerows or other environmental features of visual, historic or nature conservation value.
- ◆ **B1** – Design Quality - developments should demonstrate a high quality of design in terms of layout, form and contribution to the character of the area.
- ◆ **B2** – Street scene – development proposal should make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of streets and public spaces.

- ◆ **B3** – Accessibility, Adaptability and Security – the location and design of new development should enable ease of access, have convenient and appropriate facilities and minimise the extent to which users feel at risk of crime.
- ◆ **T1** – Transport Impacts - development proposals should be capable of being served by safe convenient access to the transport network and should not give rise to traffic volumes that exceed the capacity of the local transport network.
- ◆ **T2** – Car and Cycle Parking - development proposals should limit car parking and provide cycle parking facilities to the levels set out in the Council's parking standards.
- ◆ **T3** – Rights of Way and Other Public Routes - Lists the criteria which should be considered in relation to Rights of Way.

5.4 **Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD – June 2007**

5.5 **Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment 2007**

5.6 **Huntingdon West of Area Action Plan – Issues and Options**
(consultation period commencing 8th May 2008 – 5th June 2008)

5.7 **Huntingdonshire Housing Land Assessment**

5.8 **Huntingdon Town Centre Vision**

6. PLANNING HISTORY

6.1 The site has been previously used as a football pitch predominately in association with the Police Headquarters. There has been no development on the site historically and there is no relevant planning history.

7. CONSULTATIONS

Initial Consultation

7.1 **Huntingdon Town Council – OBJECTION**, the proposed development, which has only one access is considered to be an 'overdevelopment of the area' and is at odds with the existing highways infrastructure, which is currently inadequate for existing traffic levels **(copy attached)**

Following the receipt of additional and amended details the Town Council have maintained their **OBJECTION** to the proposed development.

7.2 **Environment Agency – NO OBJECTION** subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions.

7.3 **Wildlife Trust – NO OBJECTION** subject to the imposition of appropriate safeguarding conditions.

- 7.4 **Police Architectural Liaison Officer** – Whilst not objecting, there are concerns regarding the road layout into the Police Headquarters. The Campus doesn't have a vehicular access onto its land adjacent to the main reception to provide a drop off point. The new access road from Hinchingsbrooke Park Road to the bypass, will have an access off used by emergency vehicles, any obstruction of this roadway entrance could endanger life by hindering response times. Recommend consideration of an access for emergency vehicles only.
- 7.5 **English Heritage** – Happy to defer to the advice of the Council's conservation team on the details of the application in relation to the impact of the setting of the proposed development on Hinchingsbrooke House.
- 7.6 **HDC Conservation Team – NO OBJECTION.** Given the context of this site and the nature of surrounding development it is concluded that the proposals put forward will not compromise or impinge on the setting of Hinchingsbrooke House or its associated listed structures. There are no views or vistas looking from or to the house and taking the land in question. Indeed on the north side of the house just outside the 16th Century gatehouse and walls (grade I listed) there is a significant area of parking which serves the school and this area has a rear service function to it and no longer affords any key views of Hinchingsbrooke House.
- 7.7 **Cambs Fire and Rescue Service – NO OBJECTION** subject to the provision of fire hydrants being secured by way of a S106 Agreement or condition.
- 7.8 **East of England Ambulance Service** – Concerns that to allow construction traffic to utilise this primary route will impact on our ability to respond to our local population in a timely and potentially life saving manner. Particular times of concern will be mornings and afternoon 'rush-hours', especially during school term time.
- 7.9 **Cambs PCT – NO OBJECTION** to the proposed development.
- 7.10 **Sport England – NO OBJECTION** as the proposed development seeks to mitigate against the loss of play facilities at the California Road site.
- 7.11 **CCC Archaeology – NO OBJECTION** to this proposed development, in light of the presence of early settlement in this land plot, the construction requires mitigation and there is no alternative than to excavate in the part of the development containing the most important archaeological remains. It is therefore recommended that a condition be imposed on any grant of planning permission.
- 7.12 **Natural England – NO OBJECTION**, subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions relating to protected species. Encourage biodiversity in accordance with the Design and Access Statement and lighting should be kept to a minimum.

- 7.13 **CCC Highways Authority – NO OBJECTION.** Are now satisfied that the Transport Assessment adequately demonstrates that both the access proposed is practical and that there will be no detrimental affect on existing or potential traffic flows. Conditions are requested.
- 7.14 **Highways Agency – NO OBJECTION.** Have withdrawn the holding direction. The Transport Assessment is now considered adequate and they are satisfied that the proposed access arrangements would not prejudice the A14 redevelopment. Recommend appropriate planning conditions to safeguard the A14 buffer zone during reserved matters stage.
- 7.15 Any additional comments will be reported to Council.

8. REPRESENTATIONS

- 8.1 **Hinchingbrooke School** – Fully supportive of the rejuvenation of the College but cannot support its relocation to the planned site. Objection on the following grounds:
- ◆ Concerns regarding the level of traffic surrounding the school at peak times and the difficulties faced by students walking and cycling towards the town centre. Increased traffic will only make matters worse.
 - ◆ Concerned regarding the construction traffic and conflict with students coming to and from school. Even post construction the use of this right turn will increase congestion.
 - ◆ Concerned regarding the assertions in the Transport Assessment with regards to the quality of pedestrian and cycle access. We regard current provision as inadequate and planned improvements will only marginally improve the situation.
 - ◆ College relocation will increase car journeys into the area of Brampton Road and will further impinge upon access into and out of the school grounds by car.
 - ◆ The school currently suffers from an increasing number of cars being parked on the school site to avoid station parking fees. It is clear there is an insufficient amount of parking at the college site and will add to the parking problems at the school site. Creating barriers at the school will only divert funds from children's education.
 - ◆ Grave concern regarding the impact on Hinchingbrooke House.
 - ◆ Any road layout may be in place for several years prior to the future A14 re-development and it is noted that the Highways Agency have expressed concerned about development in the area in advance of A14 alterations in its response to the West Huntingdon Area Action Plan in August 2007.

8.2 **20A Post Street – OBJECTION**

- ◆ Grave concern to the traffic levels in this area. The Transport Assessment is flawed.
- ◆ Insufficient consultation with all parties concerned. In particular the school with concerns a) the safety of pupils, b) impact on Hinchingsbrooke House.
- ◆ The proposed site is smaller than the existing site and parking is already a problem at the existing site.

8.3 **39 Sallowbush Road – OBJECTION**

- ◆ The removal of the college sends out a clear signal that the residents on the Oxmoor do not deserve a college fostering vocational and further educational skills. The demographics of the Estate make the College on its present site more important.
- ◆ The present site allows for cohesion between the College, local school and Special Needs Pupils at Spring Common School, which will not be met by this new site.
- ◆ The arrangements for transport are inadequate and will add to congestion on Brampton Road. Will lead to Brampton Road being congested for much of the working day.
- ◆ Hinchingsbrooke is one of the few open spaces on the fringe of Huntingdon. The loss of the playing field and its replacement will only harm the visual environment and impact on Hinchingsbrooke House and its historic setting.

8.4 **5 Laurel Court – OBJECTION**

- ◆ How will all the staff and students be getting to and from the proposed site? Traffic is already a problem.
- ◆ There is nothing wrong with where it is.
- ◆ The main reason for this move is that the land the College currently occupies is worth more money as housing. There is nothing wrong with this but chose a better location closer to where many students need it around the Oxmoor not Hinchingsbrooke.
- ◆ All this town seems to do at the moment is waste money moving things to new premises.

8.5 **134 Hartford Road – OBJECTION**

- ◆ Whilst recognising the College's need to improve its existing facilities, mostly 60's build are now not fit for purpose, it should remain on its existing site. As it will benefit the local community and lead to a greater long term integration for them and the education facilities.
- ◆ Removing the College and replacing it will further housing attached to the 'Old'Town could re-awake the Oxmoor Isolation and reduce the facilities so essential for continued integration.
- ◆ Moving the College will also mean that many disadvantaged young people will find it difficult to access the courses by

increasing the distance to travel with no convenient bus service available.

- ◆ The access is likely to conflict with emergency vehicles, the hospital traffic and school traffic, careful regard must be given to the access arrangements.

8.6 **38 South Road – OBJECTION**

- ◆ Increasing an already congested through route.
- ◆ Increased road traffic hazards to pedestrians and cyclists especially young people.
- ◆ Restricting emergency vehicle access from Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.
- ◆ Not taking account of the non-cash costs.
- ◆ Not having a fully funded A14 development scheme.

8.7 **11 Budge Close – OBJECTION**

- ◆ The road congestion we have to contend with is already appalling, I can only see foresee matters deteriorating if the College relocates to this site.
- ◆ The changes to the A14 are many years away.
- ◆ Moving the college from an area devoid of much needed services is ill-planned and unfair. Any new building could be re-built on the existing location.
- ◆ The relocation will increase the need to travel to the College
- ◆ Consultation for this major work is inadequate.

8.8 **Friends of Hinchingsbrooke House – OBJECTION**

- ◆ The vistas to and from the house will be seriously disrupted.
- ◆ The proposal is not in keeping with the ambience of the land surrounding this important building and will have an effect on the house as a major tourist attraction.
- ◆ The impact on the traffic flows will be detrimental to the area.

8.9 **20 Post Street, Godmanchester – OBJECTION**

- ◆ The roads are already busy to add the Huntingdon College with its many students is madness.

8.10 **25 Snowdonia Way – OBJECTION**

- ◆ Traffic congestion at rush hour is already a problem.
- ◆ How can concentrating so many facilities in one location be a good idea?
- ◆ Surely the current site makes more sense.
- ◆ Hinchingsbrooke Park Road is a dead end, it's not as though traffic can filter through.

8.11 **66 Christie Drive – OBJECTION**

- ◆ College Traffic will only make the existing traffic congestion worse.
- ◆ The existing green belt and parks are slowly being eroded.
- ◆ If parking is going to be charged this will result in more parking on the access to the park and Christie Drive.
- ◆ Christie Drive is supposed to be two way but due to parking it is only a single track.
- ◆ Why can't the College stay where it is, it seems to work fine.
- ◆ Also there are no facilities or amenities on Hinchingsbrooke Park Road and the College will be very isolated.

8.12 **36 Dartmoor Drive – OBJECTION**

- ◆ Congestion in Hinchingsbrooke Park Road is already a major problem. Traffic is gridlocked at peak times.
- ◆ Whenever there is an accident or incident on either the A14 or in Huntingdon itself, Brampton Road reaches a standstill.
- ◆ The current location of the college is ideal why move it.

8.13 **7 Dartmoor Drive – OBJECTION**

- ◆ Traffic gridlock is already obvious and will get worse.
- ◆ How are the ambulances going to get through?
- ◆ Access too close to large secondary school and cutting across a street where children as young as 11yrs are walking and cycling past.
- ◆ Emergency helicopter has been using the field for landing and taking off.
- ◆ Surface water pooling regularly on Brampton Road and Hinchingsbrooke Park Road. Building on this field will only make it worse.
- ◆ This small green field should be left untouched and is a delight to walk past.
- ◆ The present site is surely adequate to re-build on.
- ◆ Do we really need another institution spilling out cars at peak times?

8.14 **15 Brecon Way – OBJECTION**

- ◆ The hospital should have good access at all times.
- ◆ Traffic is already an issue.
- ◆ Car parking in the area is becoming a problem.
- ◆ We must retain green areas.
- ◆ Walking is good for children, do they need to be near to the station?

9. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

- 9.1 The main issues for consideration are the acceptability of the relocation of the existing college, the principle of the use of this

application site as a location for a new Regional College; whether the Design and Access Statement is sufficiently detailed; the effect on residential amenity; the impact on the character and appearance of the area, including the impact on adjacent listed buildings; and the impact on highway safety and drainage.

The acceptability of the relocation of the existing college

- 9.2 The corresponding application for the development of the California Road site (the existing college site) has been supported by the Development Control Panel, and whilst this application must be determined on its own merits, it does highlight Central Government advice, which advises that the first choice of location for new community facilities should be within Town Centres or in sustainable locations. Whilst the existing College site is accessible by a number of means of transport, it is located approximately 800m from the town centre and a greater distance from the railway station. When having regard to the widespread College's catchment area, it is not considered that the existing site is necessarily the most appropriate location for such a use.
- 9.3 It is therefore considered that the principle relating to the proposed relocation of the college is acceptable subject to the new premises including a replacement playing field.

Principle of use of this site for a Regional College

- 9.4 The application site is currently designated by the 1995 Local Plan as being an 'Open Space and Gap for Protection'. The associated Local Plan policies En14 and 15 normally resist development on such areas which have intrinsic environmental qualities in themselves or by virtue of longer distance views which they allow, or developments that would impair their open nature. Accordingly, should Council be minded to grant this planning permission, they should be aware that it would be a departure from the Local Plan which is required to be referred to Go East in order for the Secretary of State to consider whether he would wish to intervene
- 9.5 The question is therefore are there any material considerations which indicate that the application should be supported as a departure from the development plan? Whilst full consideration must be given to the development plan policies, Members must also have regard to the emerging Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community and Core Strategy and the emerging Huntingdon West Area Action Plan.
- 9.6 The emerging area action plan includes this application site within an area defined as being the 'Hinchbrooke Community Campus Area', following the initial consultation period, the Council has now identified three development options for this area, which include the potential development of new, enhanced, education facilities on this site.
- 9.7 In addition to this, the Huntingdon Town Centre Vision was undertaken by the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit on behalf of the

District Council in 2000 and an update published in September 2006. This Vision document considered the constabulary land as a potential development site and observes that the site will be affected by the removal of the A14 viaduct and that a link from Hinchingsbrooke Park Road to the severed part of the A14 will be needed. It advised that this site was unsuitable for residential development and that it was better suited to development that respected the parkland setting and accordingly does not allocate this entire site for new development. However, it emphasises the need to strengthen the appeal of the area for arts, sports, educational and recreational uses, as well as those existing uses.

- 9.8 Whilst existing policy indicates that this site should be preserved in its current form, it is clear that recent assessments of the site have indicated that at least part of the land would be suitable for development of an institutional nature.
- 9.9 Many residents have raised concerns regarding the movement of the College from its existing location and the disadvantage that this will have on existing students from the Oxmoor area. However, the applicant has provided data from the 2006/07 intake, which demonstrates that the larger proportion of students travel to the existing site from outside of the Oxmoor Estate, thereby emphasising the need for a more sustainable location.
- 9.10 It is clear that this application site is well served by a number of sustainable transport links being within approximately 500m of the railway station, with good pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre, and will benefit from the Huntingdon to St. Ives Bus Priority measures, that will serve the forthcoming guided busway, which will pass directly past the site. In direct comparison to the existing College site, the proposed location is far more sustainable in transport terms..
- 9.11 The site has been identified as the location for the creation of a new road network following the demolition of the A14 viaduct as part of the wider new A14 proposals, therefore the existing character of the site would be substantially lost. On this basis, the introduction of a focal institutional building would create a focus for any new junction created and meet the potential future aspirations for the site. Additionally, the development of a college building in this location would be clearly read in association with the constabulary buildings and hospital.
- 9.12 Setting aside the issues of impact on the character and appearance of the area, listed building, local residents and highway safety which will be considered below, it is considered that this proposed site would be an appropriate site for the relocated college, being in a far more accessible location than its existing location.

Acceptability of the Design and Access Statement

- 9.13 The Design and Access Statement is comprehensive and should help to ensure a high quality scheme at reserved matters stage, that incorporates a well designed, contemporary building of a mix of two

and three storey elevations, with an opportunity to promote active and animated elevations that clearly address the public vantage points of the site.

- 9.14 Should Members be minded to resolve to grant planning permission it is recommended that certain elements of the Design and Access Statement be conditioned. These would include the indicative layout plan, proposed scale, biodiversity proposals and public art strategy. This will ensure that any subsequent reserved matters schemes achieve an appropriate scale of development, sustainable development and enhance biodiversity, whilst encouraging the use of public art.

Impact on Residential Amenity

- 9.15 The proposed development site is a substantial distance from any residential development, it is not therefore likely to result in any detrimental loss of amenity to any neighbouring properties.

Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area, including the listed building

- 9.16 The existing site is currently laid to grass and benefits from a wildlife belt to the north-west and a dense tree belt to the south fronting Hinchingsbrooke Park Road. Additionally, the existing constabulary buildings and associated car parking is to the west and to the north lies the remainder of the existing grassed field owned by the constabulary.
- 9.17 As a result of the dense established tree belts, the views of the site from Hinchingsbrooke Park Road are limited. Whilst the application proposes amended access arrangements, the applicant proposes minimal works to these tree belts. The main view of the site from Hinchingsbrooke Park Road would be at the newly formed junction, allowing a view of the main college building. It is important to note that to date the Highways Agency have not finalised the potential routing of the new road network that will run adjacent to this site. Accordingly, there is a potential risk of the loss of part of the existing landscape belt fronting Hinchingsbrooke Park Road, therefore increasing the views of the proposed buildings and its presence within the street scene, emphasising the need to ensure good design and integration into its setting.
- 9.18 From the north the site is much more open, however, as a consequence of this being private land, there are only minimal public views of this perspective and these are primarily from the public footpath located within the 'wildlife belt' to the north-west. Upon completion of the new link road, the views of the site from this angle will significantly increase, as a new right of way is formed, it is accepted that the proposed development will be seen from this new link road, but careful regard must be given to the nature of the road link, the extent of works necessary to construct it and the impact that will also have on the character of this area.

- 9.19 The site at present is a pleasant open space, but as private land is not available for public use. The future of the openness of the site is already limited, as mentioned above. Following the creation of any new A14, it is highly likely that a link road from Brampton Road to what will become the old A14, will be created. Following any removal of the viaduct, a new road is likely to pass through a substantial part of this site, severing it from the constabulary buildings and potentially introducing a new junction of significant scale and 7-9m wide road, the exact details of which are currently being developed by the Highways Agency and will be subject to a Public Inquiry in approximately late 2009/10.
- 9.20 Additionally, the proposed development will clearly be read in association with the Hospital and constabulary buildings which are large dated institutional building fit for purpose. The proposed indicative innovative contemporary design proposed for the college would be an attractive addition to the locality and add a landmark feature to what is likely to become a major junction.
- 9.21 Overall, it is considered that the protection previously afforded to this site via Policies En14 and 15 has already been prejudiced by the Highway Agency's aspirations and as such the proposed development would ensure the retention of some open space to the north, whilst introducing a development that is aesthetically in keeping with surrounding development.
- 9.22 Turning to the impact on the listed building, Hinchingsbrooke House, whilst local residents have raised concerns regarding the impact of the proposed development on the vistas to and from the House, the Council's Conservation Team have comprehensively assessed the proposal and its impact on the listed building. In their professional opinion, when having regard to the context of the site and the nature of the surrounding development, the proposal would not compromise or impinge upon the setting of Hinchingsbrooke House or its associated listed structures. Of particular note is the lack of views or vistas looking to or from the house. Having regard to this professional advice it is not considered that the proposed development would be detrimental to the listed building, its associated structures or its setting.
- 9.23 Whether or not this development goes ahead, the character and appearance of the area will change in the future. The proposed College development looks to retain a large area of open space to the north and accords with the emerging policy for the development of this area. The benefits of the scheme, namely a substantially improved, state of the art Regional College, in a highly sustainable location, providing modern, efficient and inspired learning for the District's young adults are also considered to outweigh any further loss of the openness of this area.

Highway Safety

- 9.24 Because the precise alignment of the changes to the road network in the immediate locality following the completion of any potential new

A14 has not been finalised, the application as originally submitted could have prejudiced the future of the A14 development proposal and possible viaduct removal. The applicant subsequently amended the scheme to ensure these proposals were no longer prejudiced. Likewise, the Highways Agency (HA) has worked to review its original safeguarding zone and to protect this position, the HA has requested that any permission includes a condition to ensure that there is no essentially required development associated with this application within this designated zone associated with the formation of a new road alignment.

- 9.25 Additionally, the applicant has now submitted a revised Transport Assessment that has regard for the existing and proposed traffic flows, the Market Town Transport strategy, sustainable transport measures and the likely implications arising from the A14 development.
- 9.26 Whilst local residents have raised concerns regarding the existing traffic situation on Brampton Road and have stated the detrimental impact such a development would have on the existing situation, both the Highways Authorities, namely the Highways Agency and the County Council, are advising that the traffic generated by the proposed development could be accommodated within the new access road and junction and that the impact on the existing road network would be acceptable in design capacity terms.
- 9.27 It is accepted by both bodies that at peak hours there is some delay on the existing road network and this is reflected in the submitted Transport Assessment. However, both Brampton Road and Hinchingsbrooke Park Road are below the maximum capacity for the traffic flows for which they were designed to accommodate. Any network of this nature in this type of location that is subject to the level of traffic, both existing and proposed is going to suffer from some degree of congestion at peak hours. However, the nature of the local road network is such that congestion only generally occurs during peak hours and that both Brampton Road and Hinchingsbrooke Park Road do not suffer generally from congestion at other times. As such it is difficult to argue that the road network is incapable of accommodating the additional traffic movements associated with the Regional College proposal. Furthermore, it is noted that the college is willing to enter into a travel plan that will seek to minimise traffic impact during peak hours and maximising the sustainable transport options that exist in the vicinity of the site..
- 9.28 It should also be noted that in reaching their recommendation, the Highway Authority has considered the impact of the development on access for emergency vehicles. Furthermore, they have advised that a condition should be attached to any permission requiring a travel plan to be submitted, incorporating methods of encouraging sustainable travel, enforcement and monitoring, as all new development should seek to encourage sustainable modes of transport.

Other Matters

- 9.29 Some residents have raised concerns regarding water pooling on the existing road network in times of heavy rainfall. The site does not fall within an indicative flood plain but following consultation with the Environment Agency, it is recommended that appropriate planning conditions be attached to any grant of planning permission requiring methods of surface and foul water drainage to be submitted and approved to prevent an increased risk of flooding in the locality.
- 9.30 As stated above the site is located adjacent to a 'wildlife belt' known to contain protected species habitats. Following consultation with Natural England, the Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency, it is not considered that the proposed development would be detrimental to these protected species subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions and informatives.
- 9.31 In addition to this, in accordance with PPS9, it is essential that the development has minimal impact on biodiversity and enhances it wherever possible. This development offers a good opportunity to improve the biodiversity of the site, if measures to enhance habitats and increase habitat variability are incorporated at the design stage. This can be conditioned accordingly.
- 9.32 In conclusion, the proposed development, whilst a departure from the Local Plan, accords with the emerging spatial vision and strategy for this area, would be well sited amongst other similar uses, and would present an opportunity for a vastly improved, more accessible state of the art College development that would benefit the wider community. Accordingly, it is recommended that, subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, Council recommend that planning permission be granted as a departure from the adopted Development Plan, and allow the application to be referred to the Secretary of State for his consideration.

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

- 10. RECOMMENDATION** - It is recommended that the Council indicates that it is minded to approve the scheme and that the application be referred to Go-East. Should the Secretary of State decide not to call-in the application, then outline planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions to include the following:

01017 Details reserved minus access

01003 Reserved matters within three years

01004 Dates for submission of details


Nonstand Design and Access Statement

Nonstand Travel Plan

Nonstand	A14 Buffer Zone
Nonstand	Access details and Implementation
Nonstand	Sport England requirements
Nonstand	Protective Fencing during Development
Nonstand	Foul and Surface Water Drainage
Nonstand	Archaeology
Nonstand	Fire Hydrants
Nonstand	Wheel Cleaning
Nonstand	Construction Vehicle Compound

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Planning Application File Reference: 0703432OUT
 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan, 2003
 Huntingdonshire Local Plan, 1995
 Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration, 2002
 Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007
 Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD, June 2007
 Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (2007)
 Huntingdon West of Area Action Plan
 Huntingdonshire Housing Land Assessment
 Huntingdon Town Centre Vision

CONTACT OFFICER: Ms E Fitzgerald Development Control Team Leader
 01480 388490

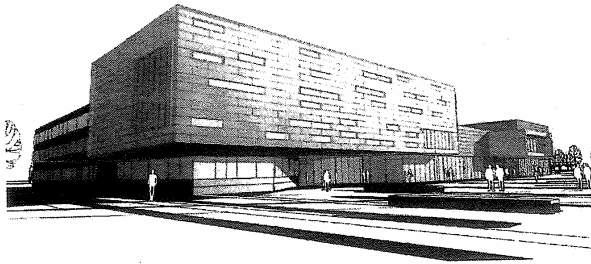
HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMENTS : 1ST NOVEMBER 2007

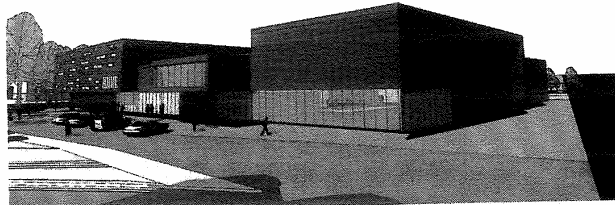
<p>0703432OUT Huntingdonshire Regional College, c/o D H Barford & Co., Howard House, 17 Church Street, St Neots</p> <p>Development of new college campus and access works, associated parking and sports pitches - Part of Sports Ground Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Hinchbrooke Park, Hinchbrooke Park Road, Huntingdon</p> <p>Recommend Refusal. The proposed development, which has only one point of access, is considered overdevelopment of the area and is at odds with existing highways infrastructure, which is currently inadequate for existing traffic levels.</p>	EAST
<p>Q703433OUT Huntingdonshire Regional College, c/o D H Barford & Co, Howard House, 17 Church Street, St Neots</p> <p>Residential development following demolition of college buildings and access improvements - Huntingdonshire Regional College, California Road, Huntingdon PE29 1BL</p> <p>Recommend Refusal. The housing proposals are considered overdevelopment of the site, which would put a strain on local resources for health, education and highways. Any section 106 contributions generated by this scheme, should it be permitted, should be invested in the existing infrastructure, particularly the roads, footpaths and lighting.</p>	EAST

ES
 11.11.07

Facades and materials

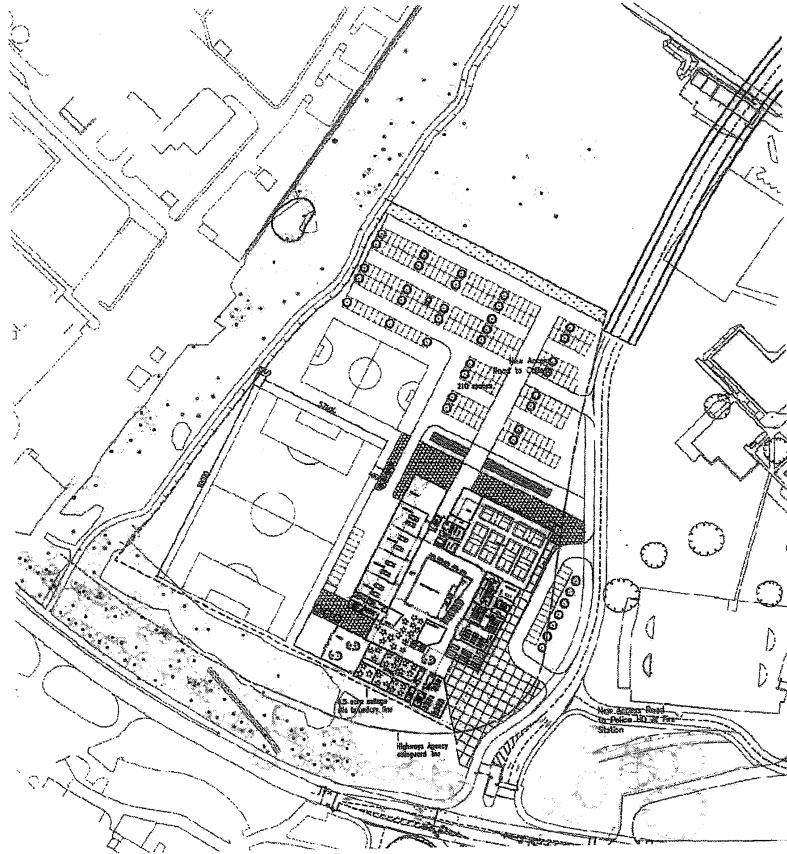


View of entrance from the south east.

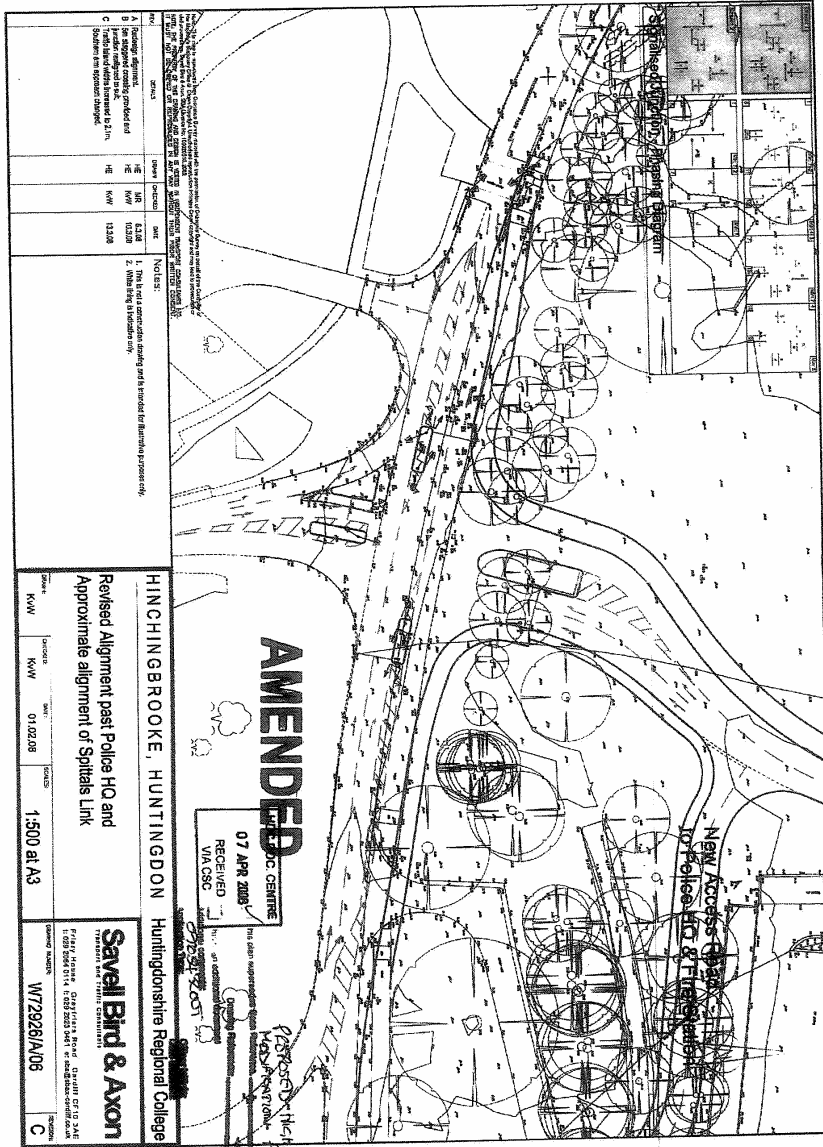


View from the north east

Vehicular circulation and parking



Proposed Access Plan Amended



AMENDED
 07 APR 2008
 RECEIVED
 VIA CSC

HINCHINGBROOKE, HUNTINGDON Huntingdonshire Regional College

Revised Alignment past Police HQ and
 Approximate alignment of Spitals Link

Scale: 1:500 at A3

Drawn: MMW
 Checked: MMW
 Date: 01/02/08

Drawn: MMW
 Checked: MMW
 Date: 01/02/08

1:500 at A3

Drawn: MMW
 Checked: MMW
 Date: 01/02/08

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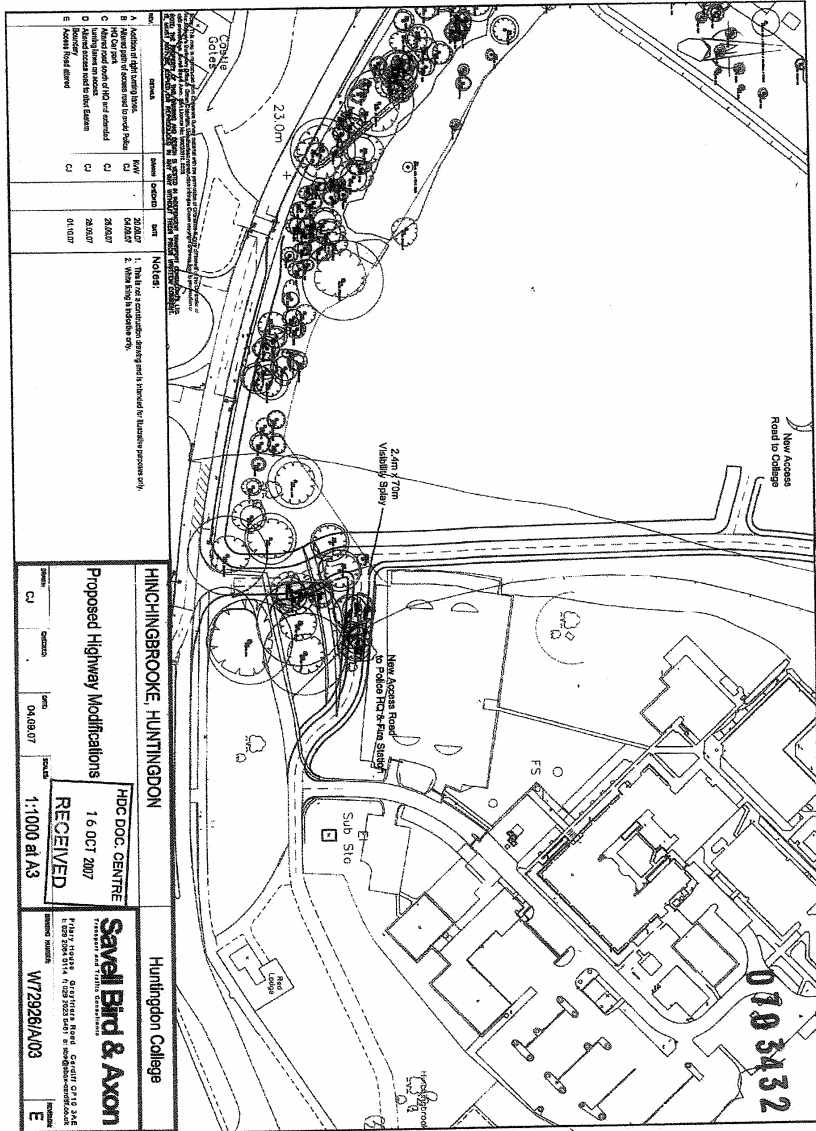
PROJECT NUMBER: W72926/A/06

DATE: 01/02/08

SCALE: 1:500 at A3

DRAWN: MMW
 CHECKED: MMW

Proposed Access Plan



Item	Area	Level	Contract	Date	Notes
A	Location of right of way line	CU		26.10.07	
B	Reference point of access road to under slab	CU		04.03.07	
C	Reference point of end of 150 car standard	CU		26.10.07	
D	Final layout on access	CU		26.10.07	
E	Access Road drive	CU		01.03.07	

HINCHINGBROOKE, HUNTINGDON

Huntingdon College

Proposed Highway Modifications

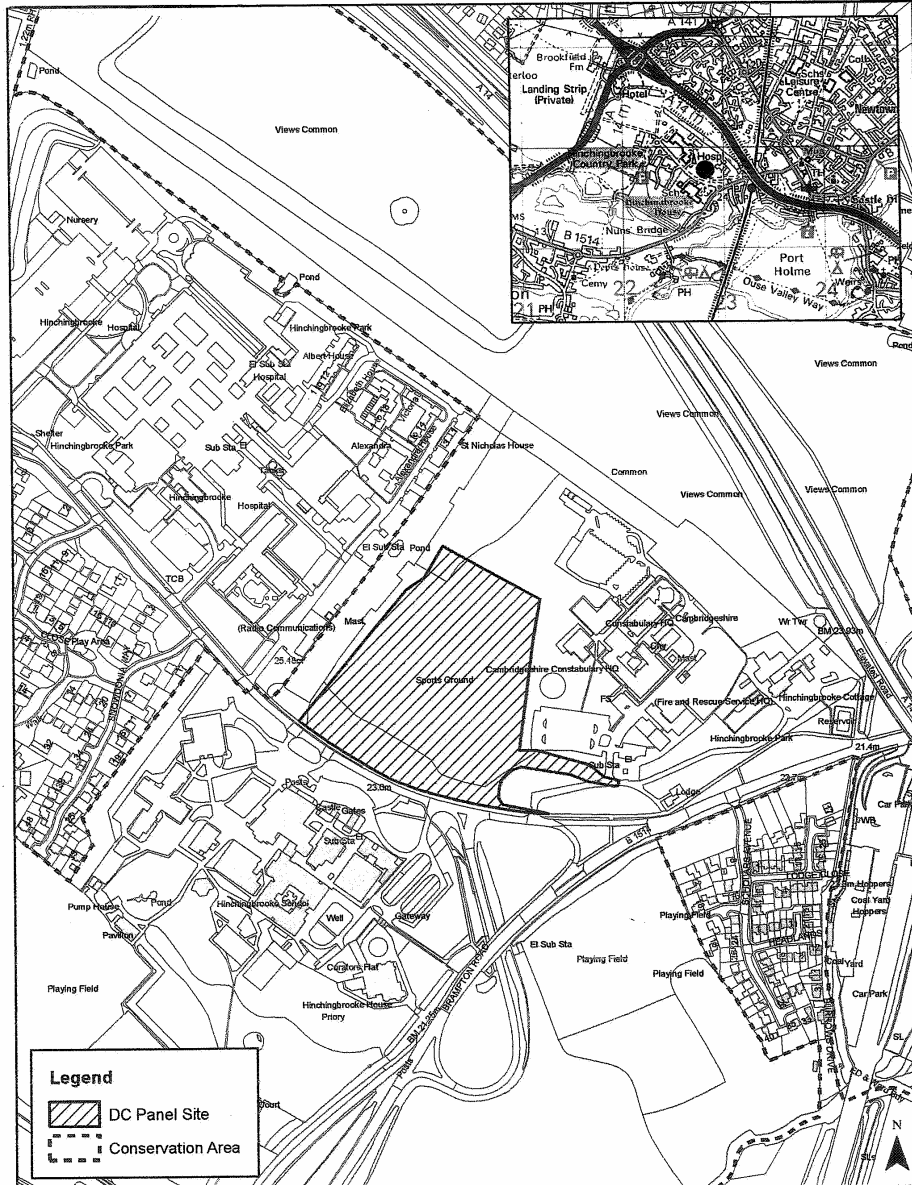
HDC DDC CENTRE
16 OCT 2007
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Project: CU Contract: Scale: 04.03.07 Date: 1:1000 at A3

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Cabinet Procedure Rules – Delegation by the Leader

Report by the Head of Administration

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Cabinet Procedure Rules in the Council’s Constitution set out arrangements for the operation and conduct of the Cabinet and its meetings. The Rules provide for the Leader to present to the Annual Meeting of the Council or within 21 days thereafter to the Chief Executive a written record containing information about executive functions in relation to the following year.
- 1.2 As these details were not finalised in time to present to the Annual Meeting of the Council, the Chief Executive is required to report the information to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In accordance with the Constitution, the written record must contain the following information:-
- (i) the collation of relevant executive functions into related groups to be known as “portfolios”;
 - (ii) the names and wards of the Members of the Cabinet appointed by the Leader to be responsible for individual portfolios;
 - (iii) the extent of any authority delegated by the Leader to a Member of the Cabinet individually (including himself), including details of the limitation (if any) on their authority;
 - (iv) the nature and extent of any delegation of executive functions proposed to any other authority or under any joint arrangements and the names of those Cabinet Members and/or other Members appointed to any joint committee under Article 11 of the Constitution for the coming year; and
 - (v) the nature and extent of any delegation to officers with details of any limitation (if any) on that delegation, and the title of the officer to whom the delegation is made.

3. DELEGATION BY THE LEADER

- 3.1 In accordance with the above requirements, the Leader has given notice of the following appointments:-

Portfolio for Customer Services and Information Technology – Cllr L M Simpson (Huntingdon East Ward)	Business analysis/improvement Customer First programme Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system Customer Service and Call Centres Freedom of Information Geographic Information Systems (GIS) ICT Help Desk ICT network & systems Intranet Local Land & Property Gazetteer (LLPG) Website
Portfolio for Finance and Environment - Cllr T V Rogers (Earith Ward)	Audit Benefits assessments/payments/fraud Budget preparation and monitoring Debt Recovery Final accounts Financial advice Financial forecasting Local taxation NNDR Payment of Creditors Procurement (<i>jointly with Cllr C R Hyams – see “Operational and Countryside Services”</i>) Revenue collection Risk management Treasury Management (<i>Borrowing and Investments</i>) Home Energy Conservation Environment Strategy Implementation
Portfolio for Housing and Public Health - Cllr Mrs D C Reynolds (St Ives East Ward)	Air quality/noise/pollution Animal welfare/pest control Arts Caravan sites Commercial: health & safety promotion/ food safety Community Initiatives/development/grants, etc Community Safety Infectious diseases Leisure Development Private sector housing Smoke-free initiatives Home Improvement Agency Homelessness Housing grants, including disabled facilities grants Housing strategies/policies Maintenance of housing register/ nominations Private sector housing Relations with housing providers/associations

Portfolio for Leisure – Cllr D B Dew (St Ives South)	Leisure Centres – Huntingdon Ramsey Sawtry St Ivo St Neots
Portfolio for Operational and Countryside Services – Cllr C R Hyams (Godmanchester)	Abandoned vehicles Car parks, public conveniences Emergency Planning/CCTV Grounds maintenance, grass cutting Parks, Open Spaces, Countryside Services Procurement (<i>jointly with Cllr Rogers – see “Finance and Environment”</i>) Recycling Streetscene/cleansing Vehicle fleet management Waste stream policy Waste/refuse collection
Portfolio for Planning Strategy and Transport - Cllr P L E Bucknell (Warboys and Bury)	Conservation/listed buildings Development control/planning applications Development plans/policies Planning briefs/studies Planning enforcement Transportation Trees and footpaths Architectural/design work Building Control/ dangerous structures/disabled access Environmental improvements Facilities Management Land drainage Project/Contractual management Residual highway responsibilities/ public utilities Street naming and property numbering Sustainability Travel Plan
Portfolio for Resources and Policy - Cllr A Hansard (St Neots Eynesbury Ward)	Democratic Services Document Centre/printing/reprographics Elections/Electoral Registration Land Charges Member Support Contracts Conveyancing Data Protection/Regulation of Investigatory Powers Estates/property management/ acquisition/sales Legal advice Prosecutions and litigation

Planning and
other Inquiries
Health & Safety
Payroll
Personnel management/advice/
contractual arrangements
Recruitment/retention
Safeguarding
Staff Restaurant
Training/development

Communications and Marketing
Community Strategy/
Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership
Comprehensive Performance Assessment
Consultation, Engagement and Research
Corporate Policy ("Growing Success")
Diversity and Equalities
Economic Development
External Funding
Performance Management
Town Centre Management

Joint Arrangements

- 3.2 The Cabinet has delegated executive functions and joint arrangements to the Leisure Centre Management Committees at St. Ivo, Huntingdon, St. Neots, Ramsey and Sawtry. These Management Committees consider matters relating to the management of each Centre within a budget approved by the constituent authorities and as defined in their relevant Management Agreements signed by those authorities.
- 3.3 Similarly, the Cabinet has delegated executive functions under joint arrangements to the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee which exercises within the context and budget delegated to it by the constituent authorities the powers of each authority on a variety of matters relating to traffic management, design and consultation for improvement schemes, the cycleways programme and local air quality strategies.
- 3.4 The membership of each Management Committee and the Area Joint Committee is set out in the Appendix to this report.

Delegations to Officers


- 3.5 Delegations to Members or Officers are listed in the current Constitution.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 **The Council is requested to note the information presented by the Leader on Executive functions for the ensuing Municipal Year.**

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

The District Council's Constitution

Contact Officer: Christine Deller, Democratic Services Manager
 01480 388007

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JOINT ARRANGEMENTS

Huntingdon Leisure Centre Management Committee

Councillors K M Baker, J J Dutton, Miss S L Kemp, D J Priestman, T D Sanderson and L M Simpson

St. Neots Leisure Centre Management Committee

Councillors R W J Eaton, R S Farrer, A Hansard, Mrs M J Thomas and R J West

St. Ivo Leisure Centre Management Committee

Councillors J D Ablewhite, J T Bell, S J Criswell, J W Davies, D B Dew and C J Stephens

Ramsey Leisure Centre Management Committee

Councillors E R Butler, D B Dew, I R Muir, R Powell and P A Swales

Sawtry Leisure Centre Management Committee

Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, D B Dew, J E Garner, P G Mitchell and J S Watt

Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee

Councillors M G Baker, P L E Bucknell, D B Dew, R S Farrer, M F Newman, and T D Sanderson.

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Review of the Constitution: Code of Financial Management

Report by the Head of Administration

1. BACKGROUND

Members may recall that at their April meeting, the Council considered a Report of the meeting of the Corporate Governance Panel (Minute No. 64 (h) refers) in which the Panel recommended a series of changes to the Code of Financial Management. The Code is that part of the Constitution that regulates the financial management of the Council and, as such, it is important that it continues to adapt to the changing needs of the Authority.

1.2 The changes recommended by the Corporate Governance Panel are relatively minor and relate to the –

- ◆ deletion of contingency;
- ◆ re-phasing of expenditure;
- ◆ a change of responsibilities and post titles; and
- ◆ an increased emphasis on achieving efficiency savings.

1.3 Council Procedure Rule 20.2 provides that “any motion to add to, vary or revoke the Council’s Rules of Procedure will, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council”.

1.4 Therefore, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 20.2, the recommendation contained in Item No. 16 of the Report of the meeting of the Corporate Governance Panel, having been moved and seconded was adjourned, without discussion, to this meeting of the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Accordingly, the Council is recommended to approve the Code of Financial Management, as amended and enclosed at the Appendix hereto.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

Constitution

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 16th April 2008

Contact Officer: Christine Deller, Democratic Services Manager
☎ (01480) 388007

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**CODE OF FINANCIAL
MANAGEMENT**

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1. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1 General

Before any proposal that affects the Council's financial position is made the body or person(s) responsible for making that decision shall consider a written report, approved by the Director of Commerce and Technology, detailing the financial implications.

1.2 The Council

Will determine the Council's Financial Strategy, including a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTP), approve the annual budget and Prudential Indicators and set the level of the council tax.

Will approve the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

1.3 The Corporate Governance Panel

Will ensure that the financial management of the Council is adequate and effective.

Will ensure that the Council has a sound system of internal control including arrangements for the management of risk.

Will consider the Council's Code of Corporate Governance and approve the annual statement.

Will approve the terms of reference and strategy for internal audit and comment on the annual internal and external audit plans.

Will consider the external auditor's annual management letter.

Will approve the Council's tax base and final accounts.

1.4 The Cabinet

Will propose to the Council the Financial Strategy, the MTP, the annual budget and council tax level, after appropriate consultation which will include the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the Prudential Indicators and the annual Treasury Management Strategy.

Will set financial priorities, allocate and re-allocate resources in accordance with the limits in this Code, monitor and review financial performance and adopt a Treasury Management Policy.

1.5 Overview and Scrutiny Panels

Will contribute to the development of, and review the effectiveness of, the Council's Financial Strategy, MTP and annual budget.

1.6 Panels or Committees

Will ensure that all decisions within their remit are made within the resources allocated within relevant budgets and are consistent with achieving the Council's objectives. If they wish to make proposals that will require additional resources these will need to be subject to the Cabinet or Council making these available.

1.7 Members and Employees

Will contribute to the general stewardship, integrity and confidence in the Council's financial affairs and comply with this Code and any systems, procedures, or policies relating to the financial management of the Council.

Specifically, they shall bring to the attention of the Director of Commerce and Technology any act or omission that is contrary to the provisions of this Code or the maintenance of high standards of financial probity, and provide information or explanation on matters within their responsibility to him/her, the Monitoring Officer, Internal Audit Service or the Council's external auditors.

Any member or officer who is involved or who has an interest in a transaction between a third party and the Council shall declare the nature and amount, if material, as required by the Accounting Standards Body's Financial Reporting Standard on related party payments.

1.8 The Director of Central Services, as Monitoring Officer or, in his/her absence, the Head of Legal and Estates

Will report to the Council on any proposal, decision or omission that in his/her view is likely to result in the contravention of the law or any code of practice enacted under it, fails to comply with a legal duty, represents maladministration or is unjust, in accordance with section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

For these purposes he/she shall have full and unrestricted access to all Council assets, systems, documents, information, employees and Members.

1.9 The Director of Commerce and Technology, as Chief Finance Officer or, in his/her absence, the Head of Financial Services

Will be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs, prescribe appropriate financial systems, protocols, procedures and policies, maintain an internal audit service and report to the Council in the event of a decision or action leading to unlawful expenditure, a loss or deficiency or an unlawful accounting entry (in accordance with section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, section 114 of the Local Government Act 1988 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations).

Will be responsible for ensuring the final accounts are completed and published by the statutory dates and reporting the details of any material amendments specified by the external auditor to the Corporate Governance Panel.

For these purposes he/she shall have full and unrestricted access to all Council assets, systems, documents, information, employees and Members.

1.10 The Head of Financial Services

Will be responsible for detailed and operational aspects of the administration of the Council's financial affairs on behalf of the Director of Commerce and Technology, approving new financial systems and undertaking such duties as are set out in this Code.

1.11 Chief Officers and Heads of Service

Whilst Chief Officers will take ultimate responsibility for their employees' actions, the Council's management structure is based on Heads of Service or, in a few cases, Chief Officers taking prime responsibility for a service and its related budget.

The Manager responsible for a budget:

- may incur financial commitments and liabilities in accordance with this Code, the Council's Scheme of Delegation and resources allocated in budgets that have been released subject to Appendix B. In particular they may make purchases of goods and services, subject to the requirements of the Code of Procurement, and employ staff, in accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules. They will normally delegate appropriate elements of this responsibility to members of their staff.
- will be responsible for regular and effective monitoring and forecasting of the financial position relating to their services.
- will be responsible for proper financial and resource management and the prevention of fraud and corruption within the services and functions under their control.
- will determine the inherent risks, within their services, to the achievement of the Council's priorities and establish, maintain and document adequate systems of internal control and financial monitoring, in consultation with the Internal Audit Service, and ensure that relevant employees or Members are familiar with such systems.
- will be responsible for providing in a timely manner, the information necessary to ensure that the final accounts can be completed by the statutory deadlines.
- will be responsible for reviewing and varying fees and charges at least annually for services under their control, after consultation with the relevant Executive Councillor(s) and/or Chairman of the relevant Panel. In doing so, they shall:
 - ensure that relevant legislation is complied with, particularly where it specifies the charges to be made or constrains them in some way.
 - having regard to the charges of any alternative service providers with whom the Council is competing, seek to maximise income, net of applicable costs, as far as is possible without compromising the Council's stated corporate priorities and objectives.
 - provide discounts where they are expected to stimulate demand and generate additional net income which would otherwise not be obtained and/or they are in the best interests of the service and its customers, particularly where they make the services available to those who could not otherwise afford them, provided that such discounts do not result in additional net cost to the Council.

1.12 Internal Audit

Will be responsible for providing an independent and objective opinion on internal control, risk management and governance systems. In accordance with its terms of reference it shall undertake audit reviews that focus on areas of greatest risk to the Council's control environment in accordance with a programme agreed annually by the Director of Commerce and Technology after consultation with Heads of Service.

For these purposes internal audit shall have full and unrestricted access to all Council assets, systems, documents, information, employees and Members.

2. FINANCIAL AND SERVICE PLANNING

2.1 In the Summer - Overall Review

The Cabinet shall review the financial performance of the Council in the previous year, compared with the annual budget, on the basis of a report prepared by the Head of Financial Services in conjunction with Heads of Service.

2.2 In the Autumn - Financial Strategy

The Cabinet, after consultation with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel and any appropriate organisations or bodies, shall recommend to the Council a Financial Strategy which will be used to determine the overall financial limits within which the annual budget and MTP will be prepared.

2.3 In the Winter - Annual Budget and MTP

The Cabinet shall, after consultation with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel, recommend to the Council an annual budget for the next financial year and a MTP for the succeeding four years, incorporating both capital and revenue expenditure, which is consistent with corporate and service strategies and the Financial Strategy. This budget will include the allocation of resources to individual services and capital projects.

2.4 In the Spring - Service Financial Plans

Following approval of the annual budget each Head of Service shall update their Service Plan(s) to incorporate a Service Financial Plan, which sets out variations in the level of fees and charges and how the resources allocated will be used to meet service objectives in the forthcoming year.

3. CONTROLLING FINANCIAL PLANS

3.1 Financial Monitoring

Heads of Service will be responsible for regular and effective monitoring and forecasting of the financial position relating to their services.

The financial performance of each service and capital project will be reviewed by Chief Officers quarterly on the basis of monitoring statements prepared by Heads of Service in conjunction with the Head of Financial Services.

The financial performance of the Council will be reviewed by Cabinet quarterly on the basis of monitoring statements prepared by the Head of Financial Services in conjunction with Heads of Service.

Heads of Service will ensure that relevant Executive Councillors are regularly informed of the progress in delivering approved MTP schemes.

3.2 **Commitments to Expenditure in Future Years**

No new commitment to expenditure beyond the current budget year may be made unless it;

- is consistent with the achievement of the Council's objectives and other relevant Strategies, **and**
- is compatible with the Council's MTP and Financial Strategy, **and, either**
- can be met from within currently approved and released resources. If it is to be funded from savings, these must be defined, permanent and not already earmarked for the achievement of the Council's savings targets, **or**
- is funded from a budget transfer in accordance with section 3.5 below.

If the Head of Service has any concerns about their proposal meeting these requirements they must consult the Head of Financial Services.

3.3 **Grants, Cost Sharing and s106 agreements**

Where a Head of Service proposes to take advantage of grants from other organisations, or some other form of cost sharing, whereby they will be able to deliver additional or improved services, consistent with their Service Plan, without creating any current or future commitment to additional net expenditure they may do so subject to:

- the funds being dependent upon a particular project or service being provided but, in the case of S106 agreements, the location or some other aspect is at the Council's discretion.
- informing the Head of Financial Services of the details
- consulting the relevant Executive Councillor(s) if the proposal exceeds £30,000 revenue or £50,000 capital in any one year.

A Head of Service may utilise sums of money received under S106, or equivalent, agreements where the nature and location of the item/service is specified. The Head of Financial Services should be informed of the details.

3.4 **Approvals for additional spending with a net impact**

Proposals for increases to the total allocated to a budget in the current year (Supplementary Estimates) and their impact in future years may be approved by the Cabinet subject to the revenue impact not exceeding £300,000 in aggregate in any financial year. The impact of such approvals will be included in appropriate financial reports within the budget/MTP process and, once Council have noted these items, the Cabinet's limit will be re-set. A transfer of a sum from capital to revenue will have a revenue impact and so will count as a request for additional spending.

In all other cases the approval of the Council will be required.

3.5 **Approvals for additional spending with compensating savings**

Proposals that require initial funding but will then result in net surpluses or savings that are at least sufficient to produce a break-even position will be supported in principle if they are:

- consistent with increasing the achievement of the Council's objectives and compatible with relevant Strategies.
- achievable within the Council's Financial Strategy.
- supported by a robust business case which includes a risk assessment.
- supported by the Chief Officers' Management Team.

The Director of Commerce and Technology may approve such a scheme following consultation with the relevant Executive Councillor for the service and the Executive Councillor for finance. The relevant budget(s) and MTP will be appropriately adjusted.

3.6 **Budget Transfers**

The Council has five main types of budgets:

- Service Revenue Budgets
Service budgets relate to the provision of services directly to the public and are defined as the lowest level included in the report to Council when the budget is approved. They include depreciation relating to capital assets and recharges from Management Units and Overhead Budgets.
- Capital Scheme Budgets
These provide the funding to complete a defined capital project and are likely to include some recharges from Management Units and Overhead Budgets. When the project is completed a charge for depreciation is made to the appropriate Service Revenue Budget.
- Management Unit Budgets
Management Unit budgets collect together the costs of employees, and their ancillary costs that relate to supporting services, before they are recharged to service budgets or overhead budgets based on the degree of benefit that is being received.
- Overhead Budgets
Overhead budgets collect together a relevant portion of management unit costs together with other related costs before they are recharged based on the degree of benefit that is being received. Examples include the costs of office provision or of the Printing Service.
- Technical Budgets
These include items such as interest on investments and the reversal of depreciation charges and will not be available for transfer to other budgets except in meeting the specific purpose for which they were established.

Whilst most budgets will reflect a net cost, some will identify an expected surplus.

The transfer of resources within, or between, any of the types of budgets is supported in principle when it will make it more likely that the Council will

achieve its service objectives and targets or enhance value for money. There do, however, need to be some limitations for effective financial management and to ensure that Executive Councillors, Cabinet and Council are aware of, and involved in, the more significant changes or where there is a financial implication.

The limitations fall into three categories. The first relates to Technical Budgets and recharges and Appendix A details the budget transfers that will not be permitted in relation to them. The second relates to budgets for pay, national insurance and pension contributions and Appendix B explains why and how budget transfers relating to these items are limited. Finally, the required involvement of Members is defined below.

The Council's management structure is based on Heads of Service or, in a few cases, Chief Officers taking responsibility for these budgets.

The **Manager responsible for a budget** may approve a budget transfer within and between the budgets they are responsible for providing it is:

- Consistent with increasing, or at least maintaining the achievement of service objectives and compatible with the Council's Financial and other relevant Strategies.
- Not to or from a Technical Budget or a recharge or from a pay, NI or pension contributions budget unless permitted by Appendices A or B.
- Not from capital to revenue
- Supported by their Chief Officer
- Notified to the Head of Financial Services
- Within the following limits if between budgets (there shall be no financial limits within a budget):
 - Revenue to revenue £50k
 - Revenue to capital £50k
 - Capital to capital £50k

Similarly, a **Chief Officer** may, subject to the same criteria, approve budget transfers between any budgets that are their responsibility or the responsibility of their staff.

The **Chief Officers' Management Team** may, subject to the same criteria except for the enhanced limits shown below, approve budget transfers between any budgets:

- Revenue to revenue £100k
- Revenue to capital £100k
- Capital to capital £100k

Cabinet may approve budget transfers of up to:

- Revenue to revenue £250k
- Revenue to capital £250k
- Capital to capital £250k

Any previous transfers in the same financial year relating to those budgets shall be aggregated for determining whether the limit has been exceeded.

In all other cases the approval of the Council will be required.

3.7 Re-phasing of Expenditure

The re-phasing of expenditure and consequent transfer of budget between years may be made by the relevant Head of Service, following consultation with the Head of Financial Services, providing that it is consistent with service objectives and compatible with the Council's Financial and other relevant Strategies. Revenue expenditure can only, normally, be rephased to later years if it relates to a specific project with identified funding in the current year that has been delayed for reasons outside of the control of the relevant Head of Service. The amount is further limited by the net underspending on that Head of Service's budgets in the current year.

3.8 Price Changes

Allocation to individual Budgets of any provision for inflation or other purposes will be determined by the Head of Financial Services.

3.9 Project Appraisals

All proposals for changes to the MTP will require an explanatory appraisal, unless the Head of Financial Services considers that the item is of a technical nature. Appraisals for new and modified schemes must be made available to Members, via the Council's intranet, by the date on which the related reports are circulated.

4. CASH AND CREDIT MANAGEMENT

4.1 Banking

The Director of Commerce and Technology is responsible for all Council banking arrangements and shall maintain (an) account(s) with (an) appropriate bank(s) with a credit rating equivalent to 'Long Term AA' or better in the data published by Fitch IBCA. All transactions involving income or expenditure shall be dealt with through the Council's bank account(s).

4.2 Income

All employees receiving money (including cash, cheques, credit card payments etc.) must comply with the relevant procedures issued by the Head of Customer Services to ensure that the sums are properly recorded, receipted and banked.

The Head of Financial Services shall manage a debt collection service on behalf of the Council and all sums due must be registered by raising an invoice on the Council's Financial Management System or some other system or procedure approved by the Head of Financial Services.

4.3 Loans

All borrowing will be undertaken by the Head of Financial Services in accordance with the Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, both published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), and the Council's Treasury Management Policy and Annual Strategy Statement.

A report shall be submitted to the Cabinet prior to the start of each financial year so that it can recommend to the Council the maximum borrowing limits for the forthcoming financial year.

4.4 Investments

Investments shall be made by the Head of Financial Services in accordance with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, Government guidance on Local Government Investments, the Council's Treasury Management Policy and Annual Strategy Statement, either directly or by utilising external fund managers.

Periodic reports shall be submitted to the Cabinet on Treasury Management and by 31st July each year an annual report shall be submitted on activities in the previous financial year.

4.5 Payments

Payments due to external suppliers of goods and services must be made through the Council's financial management system and in accordance with the payments procedures of that system, as determined by the Head of Financial Services. Payments shall be made direct to the supplier's bank account wherever this is practical.

5. ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES

5.1 The Council will follow the best practice guidance contained in the Accounting Code of Practice and other relevant publications produced by CIPFA in the preparation and maintenance of its accounts.

5.2 Statement of Accounts

The annual Statement of Accounts shall be presented to the Corporate Governance Panel for approval within the prescribed statutory timescale.

5.3 Records

Each Head of Service is responsible for maintaining records of financial transactions and commitments and employee time, in forms agreed with the Head of Financial Services, and for ensuring that all financial transactions are properly recorded in the appropriate financial period and to an appropriate account within the Council's Financial Management System.

5.4 Retention of Documents

Documents required for the verification of accounts, including invoices, shall be retained in a retrievable format for any statutory period, or otherwise for six years or such other time that is specified by the Head of Financial Services.

5.5 Contingent Liabilities

Any Officer who is aware of a material and outstanding contingent liability shall notify the Head of Financial Services, who shall include details in the Council's accounts or in a Letter of Representation to be presented to the Council's external auditors in respect of those accounts.

5.6 **Stock**

Where a formal stock account is used in connection with any service, the relevant Head of Service shall ensure that a certified stock-take is carried out in the last week of March each year, and that records of receipt and issue of all stock are maintained throughout the year in a manner agreed with the Head of Financial Services.

5.7 **Insurance**

The Head of Financial Services shall obtain insurance to protect the Council or minimise its potential losses from risks including those to employees, property, equipment and cash. Any decision not to insure significant risks must be based on a detailed risk assessment.

5.8 **Write-off of Irrecoverable Debts**

The Head of Customer Services, or in his/her absence the Head of Financial Services, is authorised to write-off debts with an individual value of up to £4,000, or of a greater amount after consultation with the Executive Councillor responsible for finance, having taken appropriate steps to satisfy himself/herself that the debts are irrecoverable or cannot be recovered without incurring disproportionate costs.

A summary report detailing debts written-off shall be submitted to the Cabinet quarterly.

6. **ASSETS**

6.1 **Definition**

An asset is an item of land, building, road or other infrastructure, vehicle or plant, equipment, furniture and fittings or information and communications technology, (hardware and software) with a life exceeding one year.

6.2 **Capital Expenditure**

The purchase or improvement of any asset will normally be treated as capital expenditure. However, expenditure of less than £10,000, or £5,000 in the case of vehicles, plant and equipment, will not normally be treated as capital expenditure unless the Head of Financial Services considers it is in the Council's interests to do so.

6.3 **Asset Register**

The Head of Legal and Estates will, after consultation with the Head of Financial Services, determine the procedures for maintaining the Asset Register, including the information that needs to be recorded. Heads of Service will provide the prescribed information for all relevant assets relating to their services in accordance with those procedures.

6.4 **Acquisition**

The purchase of assets must be in accordance with the procedures specified in the Council's Code of Procurement, having regard to the value of the asset.

The relevant Head of Service shall inform the Head of Financial Services within 10 working days of the acquisition of an asset which meets the definition for capital expenditure.

6.5 **Leases**

Finance and operating leases are to be used only if they are in the Council's financial interest and with the approval of the Head of Financial Services.

6.6 **Control of Assets**

Each Head of Service is responsible for ensuring that the assets relating to their services are properly safeguarded, managed and maintained, and used only to achieve the Council's objectives. This will include establishing and maintaining appropriate security, control systems and records. They will need to consult relevant officers in relation to specialist items and, where vehicles are concerned, the officer holding the Council's Operating Certificate who has specific statutory responsibilities.

6.7 **Disposal of Assets**

The sale of assets must be in accordance with the procedures specified in the Council's Code of Procurement, having regard to the current value of the asset.

The relevant Head of Service shall inform the Head of Financial Services within 10 working days of any disposal of an asset included in the Asset Register.

6.8 **Valuations**

Assets will be re-valued at five yearly intervals by an appropriately qualified person according to the type of asset. Where appropriate, interim valuations will be recorded on the Asset Register by reference to a suitable index.

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TECHNICAL BUDGETS

The following budgets cannot be reduced by officers in order to permit extra expenditure on another budget except where this is part of the specific purpose for which they were established.

- Any contingency, unless it complies with the approved rules for the use of the general contingency or is an adjustment to reflect the technical application of the contingency (e.g. allocation of inflation from an inflation contingency)
- Capital charges
- Commutation Transfer
- Pension Liabilities (as opposed to pension contributions)
- Interest paid
- Interest received
- Any recharge or allocation from a management unit or overhead account.

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BUDGETS FOR PAY
(Pay is deemed to include, NI and Pension Contributions
for the purpose of this Appendix)

1. The Council does not provide for a 100% of the costs of its employees. This is because experience shows that it is generally impossible to avoid gaps when people leave and are replaced. It is also common for the new employees to be on a lower point in the grade than the person who left.
2. Obviously it is unlikely that each pay budget will be equally affected in any particular year and therefore, to simplify budget monitoring, each pay budget includes 100% of employee costs but there is a negative, centrally held, contingency that represents the saving that the Council's overall budget is based on. This contingency is based on 2.5% of the pay for most services less a sum for recruitment costs (advertising and interview expenses).
3. Therefore no use of savings, virement or rephasing relating to a pay budget, whether temporary or permanent, will be permitted unless this Appendix is complied with.

Employees Leaving

4. In order to maximise the likelihood of achieving this saving a Head of Service must, whenever an employee gives their notice, determine whether:
 - a. the post is kept vacant for a period before a decision is made,
 - b. the post can be deleted,
 - c. a restructuring should be proposed,
 - d. the post should be filled at the end of a defined period,
 - e. it should be filled as soon as possible,
 - f. it should be filled as soon as possible and temporary employees or consultants are engaged to provide cover in the meantime.
5. In deciding on which option to take the Head of Service should take appropriate HR and financial advice. The decision must include consideration of any need for temporary or permanent regradings, acting up allowances, honoraria, employees or consultants. Allowance must also be made for an appropriate saving, to help achieve the contingency budget, as determined by the Head of Financial Services.
6. Heads of Service will also need to liaise with HR to arrange recruitment advertising and ensure that the recruitment arrangements comply with the process agreed by Employment Panel.

Other Adjustments and Virement

7. If any other proposal is made to transfer (in accordance with paragraph 3.6) or rephase (in accordance with paragraph 3.7) a pay budget, a budget reduction, as determined by the Head of Financial Services, shall be made in order to allow the contingency budget to be reduced.

Exceptions

8. If the Head of Service can demonstrate to their Director the **critical** nature of maintaining immediate service cover in certain key work areas then the requirements of paragraph 4 above will not apply and the saving/budget reduction may be reduced or nil. Examples where this might apply would be if vacancies would result in insufficient employees with the necessary abilities or skills to run refuse rounds or to safely open swimming pools. Agency, or equivalent employees, must be available with the necessary skills and/or abilities.
9. If the Head of Service can demonstrate that a **critical backlog** of work has resulted from continuing vacancies such that the service to the public is seriously compromised or net additional costs would become unavoidable the saving/budget reduction may be reduced. Examples where this might apply would be dealing with benefit applications or collecting council tax income. Agency, or equivalent employees, must be available with the necessary skills and/or abilities.

Food Safety Service Plan 2008/09

Report by Head of Environmental & Community Health Service

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Member endorsement for the Food Safety Service Plan for 2008/09. It is a requirement of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement that a Food Safety Service Plan be prepared in accordance with a format provided by the FSA. Under the Council's constitution this is part of the policy framework that has to be formally approved by the Council.
- 1.2 This is the eighth annual report that has been submitted to Members. It details the work that the service has planned for 2008/09, the staffing and financial resources required, the constraints that may prevent some of the tasks from being fulfilled and the priority of the tasks. It also includes a review of the previous year's performance and identifies where the Authority was at significant variance from the service plan and the reasons for that variance.

2. SUPPORTING/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Huntingdonshire District Council is a Food Authority and as such it is responsible for enforcing specific food safety legislation, this work is carried out by the Environmental and Community Health Services Division. The service is linked to the community aim of healthy living.
- 2.2 The aim of the Service Plan is to:
- ◆ provide information about the Food Safety Service;
 - ◆ identify the means by which the service will be provided;
 - ◆ identify the means by which the service will meet any relevant performance targets or performance standards;
 - ◆ enable performance to be reviewed by examining any variances from the Service Plan; and
 - ◆ demonstrate a balanced enforcement approach.
- 2.3 The FSA sees this Service Plan as a mechanism for local authorities to ensure that national priorities and standards are addressed and delivered locally as well as:
- ◆ focussing debate on key delivery issues;
 - ◆ providing an essential link with financial planning;
 - ◆ setting objectives for the future and identifying major issues that cross service boundaries; and

- ◆ providing a means of managing performances and making performance comparisons.

3. REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE IN 2007/08

- 3.1 The Food Service was fully staffed for the whole of the financial year which ensured that 100% of high-risk and 99.5% of low-risk premises requiring an inspection were inspected. In total 1248 inspections and visits were carried out to food premises as part of programmed activity and in response to complaints and food alerts.
- 3.2 In April 2006 new EU and UK Food legislation was introduced. This has continued to have a significant impact on food business operators as they have to ensure that a fully documented food safety management system in place. To meet the needs of the food business sector the service has had to provide considerable guidance and advice. This has increased the time spent at each premises during an inspection.
- 3.3 In order to assist businesses in understanding the new legislation and the methodology in producing a documented food safety management system, the FSA has produced a toolkit, titled Safer Food Better Business. The Food Service supports this initiative and in conjunction with other Councils in Cambridgeshire successfully applied to the FSA for grant funding which has enabled us to employ FSA-accredited consultants to deliver and organise local training courses and 1:1 coaching. During the period of funding 316 catering businesses within Huntingdonshire have been engaged in this process receiving group training and 1:1 coaching. It has been demonstrated that confidence in management and standards of hygiene and safety at these premises have improved as a result of this intervention. The service is committed to ensuring the sustainability of the scheme and further grant funding may be sought
- 3.4 The preventative activity did not eradicate all food-borne illness and 255 cases were notified to the Council. The number of food poisoning cases has shown no significant change compared to last year and continues to marginally exceed national averages. The dominant pathogen is Campylobacter. All individual cases were investigated and analysis of the investigation findings show that the majority of food-borne illnesses reported by residents of the district were contracted abroad, outside Huntingdonshire or in a domestic setting and none of the cases investigated identified local food premises as being the likely source. No food poisoning outbreaks or unusual notifications were received this year.
- 3.5 There was one prosecution instigated for offences under the Food Hygiene (England) Regulation 2006. This resulted from dirty and unhygienic conditions being found at a food business. Conditions were so poor that the premise voluntarily closed until hygiene conditions had improved. The prosecution was successful and resulted in a substantial fine and significant media coverage. Full costs were awarded to the Council. A total of 22 Improvement Notices were served on 7 premises, all of which were complied with within the specified timescale. The enforcement action taken emphasises the point that if premises continue to ignore legal requirements or place the public health at risk then formal

action will be taken. However it should also be emphasised that our advice and education policy can produce results in most cases rather than having to resort to formal action.

- 3.6 Officers from the service provided specialist training and guidance for Public Health Registrars and Nurses from the Health Protection Agency in food safety and infectious disease control and regularly liaise with the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC) on significant cases and events. Over 180 food and water samples were taken for analysis of which 43 were found to be unsatisfactory. Appropriate action was taken to resolve any problems.
- 3.7 In addition to these activities there has been a wide range of promotional events carried out within the district many involving local primary schools and community groups. The Hunts for Good Project which is managed within the food service was awarded Regional Food Champion Status by the Food Standards Agency. The service has now been nominated by the FSA, along with the six other Regional winners for the National Food Champion Award which will be announced in the House of Commons later in June.
- 3.8 In order to promote food safety and hygiene a wide variety of educational methods (including drama) was utilised. These events were evaluated and proved to be extremely successful and very popular. Over 500 children attended Safety Zone again this year with positive feedback received from both pupils and teachers.
- 3.9 Full details of the review are set out in Section 6 of the Service Plan.

4. SERVICE PLAN FOR 2008/09

- 4.1 The format of this document remains essentially unchanged from that of the previous year. (An executive summary is attached at Appendix A.) The resources provided by the Council for this year should be sufficient to enable this Authority to meet the requirements of the FSA. However it is noted that the implementation of recent legislation continues to require officers to spend longer in food premises during each visit, in order to audit and evaluate the documented management systems that are now required. The service will continue to explore the use of alternative enforcement strategies and interventions for low-risk businesses and any time saved will be invested in inspecting high-risk premises and providing education and guidance.
- 4.2 In the event of unforeseen issues arising during the year that would hinder the achievement of all targets within the service plan, priority would be given to the inspection of food premises. It is also possible that the FSA may redirect resources, at any time, to meet the need of a nationally significant food safety concern.
- 4.3 Subject to Members' approval it is proposed to introduce a Scores on the Doors Scheme this year. This scheme will involve hygiene scores resulting from routine inspections being published on the Council's website in a star rating format which is easy for the public to understand. Businesses are awarded up to five stars, the higher the standard of compliance, the more stars are awarded. Very poor standards may be

awarded a no star rating. The scheme will also encourage food businesses to improve food hygiene standards by providing consumers with clear, jargon-free information, which will assist them in making informed decisions about where to eat. A report will be presented to members of the Licensing and Protection panel to explain this scheme in more detail outlining resource implications and other issues.

- 4.4 The 2008/09 service plan includes updated performance data and introduces new elements to the education programme. (See Appendix B.) The Food Services team is now part of the Lifestyles section which aims to improve the health of the people of Huntingdonshire by addressing food safety, diet, exercise etc in an holistic way. The increasing emphasis on education will be linked to partnership initiatives to address health inequalities and contributions towards keeping Huntingdonshire's population healthy. Relevant actions and targets have been included in the Sustainable Community Strategy which will help meet the strategy's desired outcomes

5. CONCLUSION


- 5.1 Last year the team successfully inspected 100% of high-risk and 99.5% low-risk premises on its programme and delivered all of the initiatives outlined in the 2007/08 development plan. This year's plan includes sustainable development of the Safer Food Better Business training strategy, further development of the alternative enforcement strategy, implementation of the proposed Scores on the Doors scheme (subject to Member approval) and development of resources for schools. We will progress with our joint working with Trading Standards and the Health Protection Agency and continue to provide guidance and information to businesses on the implementation of the new food safety legislation. The plan also includes new elements to the education programme to provide a more joined-up approach to initiatives aimed at keeping the population healthy and reducing inequalities.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 Council is requested to note the contents of the report and adopt the Food Safety Service Plan 2008/9.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Food Safety Service Plan 2008/09
FSA Framework Agreement
FSA Code of Practice

Contact Officer: Susan Lammin,
Head of Environmental & Community Health Services/
Chris Lloyd, Lifestyles Manager
 01480 388290/388280

A full copy of the Food Safety Service Plan 2008/09 is available in the Members' Room. If you wish to have an individual copy, please contact the Environmental Health Admin Section on 01480 388302.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2008/9

The overall objective of the Food Safety Service is to work with businesses and consumers to endeavour to ensure that food intended for sale for human consumption which is produced, stored, distributed, handled or purchased within Huntingdonshire is without risk to public health or the safety of the consumer.

The service is linked to the Council's corporate plan 'Growing Success' and the Community Aim of Healthy Living and the service objective is 'A high level of food safety within Huntingdonshire'.

The following key activities are identified within the performance management system and will be measured to determine the effectiveness of the listed activities and actions.

- Planned and reactive inspections of registered food premises
- Provision of training, advice to businesses and food hygiene promotion
- Taking food, water and environmental samples
- Investigation of food poisoning and cases/outbreaks of food-borne disease.

The service will seek to achieve this through a number of key actions that are identified within this service plan.

Changes in resources from 2007/08 to 2008/09

STAFF	2007/08	2008/09
Environmental Health Officers	3.6	3.6
Environmental Health Protection Officers	1.1	1.1
Lifestyle Manager	0.3	0.3
	5.0	5.0
Admin Support Staff	1.75	1.75
Total	6.75	6.75

FINANCIAL	2007/08	2008/09
Direct Costs (Employees)	£272,350	£285,640
Overheads	£185,440	£179,110
Other Direct costs (specialist equipment legal fees and sampling)	£32,000	£13,670
Total	<u>£489,890</u>	<u>£478,420</u>
Income	<u>-£600</u>	<u>-£600</u>
NET EXPENDITURE	<u>£489,290</u>	<u>£477,820</u>

ACTIONS AND TIME ALLOCATIONS

All calculations assume 1 x FTE = 1290 hours per year (215 working days x 6 productive hours per working day). All estimates include revisit activity. Time does not include administrative support.

Proactive Tasks	Level of activity		Hours	FTE
	Actual 2007/08	Estimated 2008/09	Estimated 2008/09	Estimated 2008/09
Planned Food Hygiene inspections	721	681	3287	2.55
Revisits	123	120		
Inspection of new, mobile and temporary premises	170	180		
EC approved manufacturing plants	23	20		
Food safety promotion	Provision of food hygiene training courses, (for English and non-English speaking food handlers) development of newsletters, leaflets, website. Promoting food safety week, safety zone etc (this resource is in addition to those identified in advice to businesses).		500	0.38
Liaison with other organisations	Maintenance and development of existing links and initiatives both internal and external.		150	0.12

Reactive Tasks	Level of activity		Hours	FTE
	Actual 2007/09	Estimated 2008/09	Estimated 2008/09	Estimated 2008/09
Food related complaints – estimate complaints re premises and food	179	180	400	0.31
Food inspection and sampling - estimate food, water and environmental samples to be taken	184	160	100	0.07
Infectious disease control - estimate notifications of food poisoning	255	260	150	0.12
Food Safety Incidents - estimate receipt	53	60	30	0.02

Reactive Tasks	Level of activity	Hours	FTE
Advice to business enquiries	Provision of guidance on the implementation of relevant and new legislation. Alternative Interventions to specific business groups with seminars and newsletters. Promotion of the FSA Safer Food Better Business toolkit to all relevant food business. Advice given at the time of each inspection plus an estimated further 200 enquiries from the public and businesses on food safety matters, including Home Authority Principle.	833	0.65
Staff development and training	Internal and external training courses, peer review exercise, research and development of special projects and initiatives.	500	0.39
Service management	Overall supervision and management of service, policy and procedural development. Responding to central government consultations and audits.	500	0.39
Total		6450	5.0

The budget for 2008/09 represents a decrease of 2.3% on the previous financial year. This decrease is largely as a result of a reduction in direct costs (equipment, sampling legal fees) allocated to the service and the relocation of some of the overhead costs. It is hoped that the reduced budget will be sufficient to meet the demands of the service but in the event of a complex legal case or the introduction of sampling charges then additional funds will have to be sought. There has also been a loss of income (£3,000) from the national butchers licensing scheme and game dealers licensing (both of which were repealed in 2006/7). This loss of income to the service has not been recuperated and an MTP bid submitted last year was unsuccessful.

The administrative support workload includes the production of detailed post-inspection letters, data entry to Flare, taking and recording of enquiries, service requests and collating data on infectious diseases, collation of information for FSA, CIEH returns, internal PI monitoring and EU directive compliance.

A balanced workload has been proposed for the 2008/09 year which incorporates a full range of enforcement actions including food safety education. The plan has been based upon the service being fully staffed. If staffing levels are not maintained due to staff leaving or long-term sickness then the service will be under-resourced to meet the requirements of this service plan. If this happens then enforcement work (routine inspections and dealing with complaints) will take priority and other activities will have to be reviewed.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2008/09

During 2008/9, the following areas of improvement are planned. This work is in addition to existing food enforcement and promotional work being undertaken as identified in this service plan.

In partnership with other LA's in the County review the sustainability of training and coaching for the Safer Food Better Business food safety management toolkit for food business operators and develop and action plan. Where appropriate seek further external funding.

- Subject to Member approval further develop and implement a 'scores on the doors' initiative or local food hygiene award scheme for caterers and other food businesses.
- Continue to identify and develop opportunities for joint working with Trading Standards Officers.
- Develop action plan to implement the findings of the Equality Impact Assessments in accordance with corporate policy.
- Continuously upgrade the Flare database to improve quality and detailed information available to managers, officers and the FSA.
- Develop and enhance the existing established mechanism to work in partnership with the Huntingdonshire PCT and other partners to devise food hygiene and nutrition awareness training to young people, community groups and vulnerable groups.
- Review and Implement the relevant outcomes arising for the FSA revised Code of Practice for Food Law Enforcement with particular regard to Alternative Intervention Strategies for businesses.
- Working with the Cambridgeshire Business Partnership promote the role of the Food Safety service in supporting businesses with compliance.
- Develop a peer review exercise for all food team officers focusing on enforcement outcomes, consistency and good practice.
- Review existing food safety information available for nursery schools and reception years and where appropriate develop supportive educational resources.
- In the light of the Better Regulation Agenda and the new Regulators Compliance Code carry out a review of the services Enforcement Policy.
- Working in partnership with other services in the Council and local businesses organise and promote food safety and healthy eating initiatives as part of the Huntingdonshire Food Festival Education Zone.

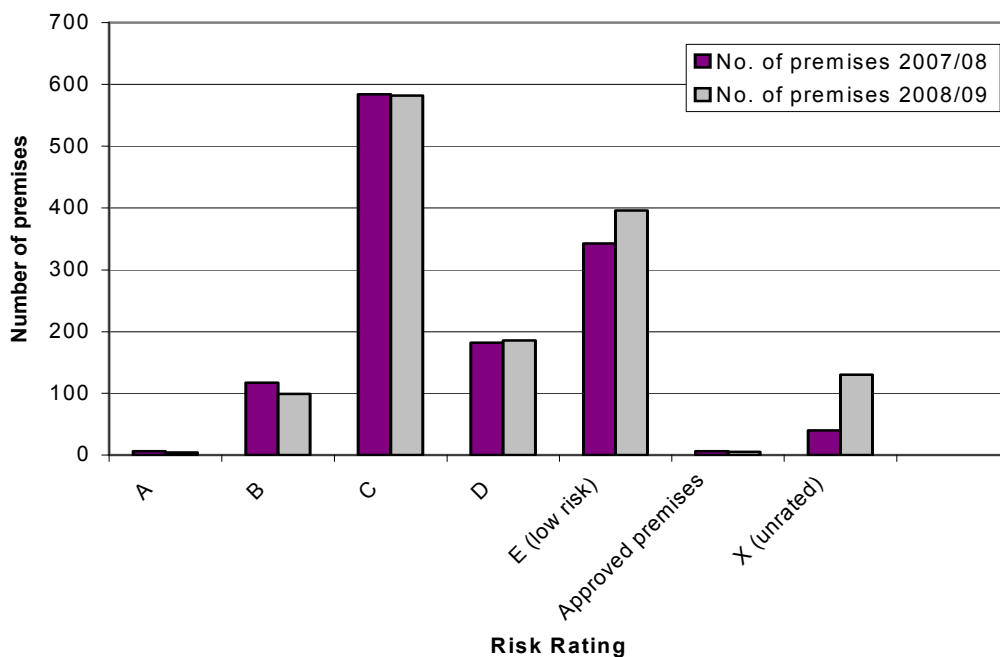
CHANGES TO THE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMME 2008/2009

Food Hygiene Inspections

As of 1 April 2008 a total of 1402 food premises are subject to programmed food hygiene inspections. This is an increase of 126 premises on previous year. The breakdown of premises by types as identified within the Food Standards Agency monitoring report form is as follows:

Food Producers (A)	13
Slaughterhouses (B)	1
Food Manufactures/processors (C)	11
Food Packer (D)	6
Importer/Exporter (E)	0
Food Distribution/Transporters (F)	41
Food Retailer (G)	339
Food Caterer (H)	951
Food Manufacturer selling retail (J)	40

The profile of risk categories, as defined by the revised FSA Code of Practice issued under the Food Safety Act 1990 is shown below. 130 new premises (mainly market stall operators) are currently waiting to be rated (annotated as X) and will receive an inspection within two months of their opening date or when appropriate. It is estimated that around 80% of the premises rated as E (low risk) may be subject to the Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES). (See paragraph 3.2.3 of report.) Subject to receipt of guidance to be issued by the FSA later in the year a number of D and E risk premises may also be subject to Alternative Interventions.



Profile of Food Premises Risk Rating

Education Programme

- In 2007/08 we ran 10 programmed CIEH Level 2 food hygiene courses for local food handlers with 115 people passing and receiving certificates. Three courses were run free of charge for voluntary groups. This year it is planned to run another 10 foundation food hygiene courses and some additional low cost training to voluntary groups, schools, luncheon clubs and those catering for vulnerable groups.
- In addition to the Food Hygiene training we also ran 6 CIEH Level 2 healthier foods and special diets nutrition training courses with over 60 people passing and receiving certificates. These courses will educate individuals on diet, nutrition and menu planning and help to promote and encourage healthy eating. Free training was provided to voluntary groups, schools, luncheon clubs and those catering for vulnerable groups. For 2008/9 it is planned to run 2 further courses.
- The primary focus of the education programme this year will continue to be the provision of guidance and information to businesses on the implementation of new food safety legislation and advising duty holders on the development of food safety management systems. A successful bid to the FSA for grant funding has enabled us to employ FSA-accredited consultants to deliver and organise 17 local training courses and 1:1 coaching. A total of 316 catering businesses within Huntingdonshire engaged in this process and the confidence in management and standards of hygiene and safety at these premises have been significantly improved as a result of this intervention. Now that the funding has run out we will seek to ensure the sustainability of the project and may seek further grant funding.
- It is planned to continue to work in partnership with Huntingdon PCT through the Hunts for Good Food Project. The Hunts for Good Project, which is managed within the Food service, was awarded Regional Food Champion Status by the Food Standards Agency. The service has now been nominated by the FSA, along with the six other Regional winners for the National Food Champion Award which will be announced in the House of Commons later in June.
- The service will assist with the organisation and development of the Huntingdonshire Food Festival and will lead on the organisation of the Education Zone which will promote healthy eating, food safety, food knowledge and the work of local community groups.
- It is planned to review all food safety information and leaflets available through the service, including the website maintenance and development of the Food Service web site which is currently receiving over 10,000 visits per year with many food safety advisory leaflets and documents being regularly downloaded.
- We will work with the Cambridgeshire Business Partnership to promote the role of the Food Safety service in supporting businesses with compliance. A major event is being planned for Huntingdonshire in September 2008.

- In addition to these activities there will continue to be a wide range of promotional events carried out with local community groups, and primary and nursery schools using a wide variety of educational methods to promote food safety and hygiene in the home.

For comparison, the table below shows the enforcement activity carried out in previous years.

	2006/7 Actual	2007/8 Actual	2008/9 <u>Estimated</u>
Food inspections carried out	804	721	681
- high risk	544	514	446
- low risk	152	174	235
-AES and Alternative Interventions	108	108	120
Revisits	212	123	120
Other visits (new premises, events, sampling and advisory)	304	404	380
Total number of inspections and visits	1218	1248	1181

	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/9 <u>Estimated</u>
Percentage of high risk premises requiring an inspection that were inspected	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of low risk premises requiring an inspection that were inspected	98.8%	99.5%	100%
Number of letters/inspection reports	1190	898	1200
Improvement notices	12	22	15
Formal cautions	0	0	0
Food complaints	108	87	90
Food Premises	89	92	80
Prosecutions	0	1	1
Food samples (total)	136	184	160
Unsatisfactory food samples	17	43	25
Export certificates issued	59	64	70

	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	<u>2008/9 Estimated</u>
Infectious diseases	267	255	260
Food alerts (hazard warnings)	74	53	60
Customer Satisfaction	100%	99%	99%

Cabinet

Report of the meetings held on 24th April, 15th May and 12th June 2008

Matter for Decision

1. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – THE CORE STRATEGY SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Planning Services, reproduced as Appendix, the Cabinet has considered the content of the submission document for the Core Strategy. The Submission Core Strategy 2008 is enclosed separately with Members' agenda.

In considering the document, Executive Councillors took into account the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) expressed at its meeting on 10th June 2008. (Item No. 3 of their Report refers). The Panel accepted that the proposed policies fail to recognise fully the importance of agriculture to the local economy and local land use. In response, the Cabinet has requested that the spatial vision document be amended to reflect this. Having also authorised the Head of Planning Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, to approve any amendments to the documents prior to their publication and subject to a legal audit of the documents, the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

that the Core Strategy and its supporting papers be approved for submission to the Secretary of State.

Matters for Information

2. APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS

Executive responsibilities for the Municipal Year 2008/09 have been allocated by the Leader as follows:-

- ◆ Finance and Environment – Councillor T V Rogers
- ◆ Planning Strategy and Transport – Councillor P L E Bucknell
- ◆ Resources and Policy – Councillor A Hansard
- ◆ Housing and Public Health – Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds

- ◆ Customer Services and Information Technology – Councillor L M Simpson
- ◆ Leisure – Councillor D B Dew
- ◆ Operational and Countryside Services – Councillor C R Hyams
- ◆ Special Adviser to Cabinet – Councillor K J Churchill

Those Members appointed to hold executive responsibility for Resources and Policy, Planning Strategy and Transport and the Leader have been appointed ex-officio Members of the Licensing Committee/Licensing and Protection, Development Control and Employment Panels respectively.

3. MONITORING OF THE REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Consideration has been given by the Cabinet to reports monitoring the revenue budget and capital expenditure in 2007/08. In so doing, Members have noted the variations to the approved programme and the associated capital and revenue implications.

4. REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY – PLANNING FOR GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION

The Cabinet has been informed of the publication of a draft policy by the East of England Regional Assembly on the number of gypsy and traveller pitches to be accommodated by each local planning authority as part of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

In considering the proposals, the Cabinet has –

- ◆ supported the draft policy proposed by the Regional Assembly on the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers on the basis that it is consistent with the local need for Huntingdonshire identified in the assessment of need and the evidence base;
- ◆ noted the requirement for all local authorities to provide at least some pitches, including areas where previously no or little provision has been made and agreed that the Council reserve its position should some local authorities seek to challenge this equality of provision by any alternative redistribution which would result in an unjustified increase in provision within Huntingdonshire; and
- ◆ requested the Regional Assembly to include within the policy an explanation as to why a 3% compound rate of increase is proposed and an indication that a future review will need to take into account the requirement for transit sites and the needs of travelling show people.

5. PROMOTING BETTER HEALTH IN OLDER PEOPLE THROUGH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The Cabinet has noted the conclusion of a study by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) on promoting better health in older

people through physical activity. In so doing, Executive Councillors have been advised that the Council's Leisure Development Team has successfully obtained grant funding from "Wellbeing in the East" to employ an Older Persons' Physical Activity Officer on a fixed term contract and to provide the necessary marketing, training and equipment. A Medium Term Plan bid also has been approved by the Council to support this role until 2010.

6. NATIONAL AIR TRAFFIC SERVICE CONSULTATION – PROPOSED CHANGES TO TERMINAL CONTROL NORTH AIRSPACE OVER CAMBRIDGESHIRE

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the key elements of a proposal by the National Air Traffic Service (NATS) to change the use of terminal control north, an area of airspace extending from London to Huntingdon.

Luton and Stansted Airports currently share two holding areas in the vicinity of Royston and Sudbury. With the continued growth in air traffic, NATS' propose to relocate these holds to new air space and create a third hold resulting in two holds dedicated to Stansted and one to Luton. The Cabinet has been advised that the proposed new hold for Luton will lead to a number of aircraft stacking over the south of the District.

In reviewing the issues involved, Executive Councillors have questioned the need to change existing holds being of the opinion that retention of the present holds in their existing locations together with the creation of an additional new hold not over Huntingdonshire would be a better option. In addition, Members have expressed concern about the impact of noise from aircraft stacking, the threat to residents' tranquillity from noise and visual intrusion and the general detriment to the environment and wellbeing of the population in rural areas. Having also raised concerns over NATS' failure to take into account the population growth factor predicted for Cambridgeshire and the potential effects from the growth of air traffic, the Cabinet has authorised the Director of Environmental and Community Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Finance and Environment, to respond to the proposals on behalf of the Council on the basis of the views expressed.

7. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

The Cabinet has approved the content of a new Local Area Agreement for Cambridgeshire. The Agreement reflects the Government's intention to streamline funding, encourage partnership working and direct investment towards local priorities.

8. THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION, SCHEME OF DELEGATION AND MONITORING OFFICER: INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS

Having been informed of the impending retirement of the Director of Central Services, the Cabinet has authorised the Chief Executive to undertake the executive and other powers delegated to this role by

virtue of the Scheme of Delegation. This is an interim measure pending a successor being in post and will take effect from 27th June 2008.

9. DOCUMENT CENTRE – PURCHASE OF INSERTER

In accordance with paragraph 11.4 of the Council's Code of Procurement, the Cabinet has approved the acceptance of a quotation from Mailing and Mechanisation for the supply of replacement equipment for use in the dispatch of mail in the Document Centre.

**10. FLEXIBLE WORKING:
REMOTE ACCESS PROJECTS: AUTHENTICATION SYSTEM**

The Cabinet has been advised of the circumstances surrounding the acceptance of a quotation other than the lowest received for the supply of a two factor authentication system as part of the remote access project for employees working from home.

11. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08

The Cabinet has noted the respective levels of performance of Fund Managers for the year ending 31st March 2008 in the investment of the Council's capital receipts.

12. BUDGET AND MTP PROCESS 2009 – 2014

The Cabinet has approved arrangements for the stages and timing for the review and approval of the Financial Strategy, the 2009/10 Budget and 2009-2014 Medium Term Plan. Members have been informed that the Budget/Medium Term Plan process will need to be increasingly challenging due to the significant spending adjustments which need to be identified over the coming years. With this in mind, the Cabinet has reiterated the need to review all budgets and schemes to identify further opportunities for efficiency savings.

13. THE EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN – REVISION OF THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE EAST OF ENGLAND

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the key elements of the "East of England Plan – the Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England" issued by the Secretary of State. The Plan outlines the strategic planning approach proposed for the East of England until 2012 and will form part of the statutory Development Plan for Huntingdonshire.

14. PROSPEROUS PLACES: TAKING FORWARD THE SUB-NATIONAL REVIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The Cabinet has approved the contents of a suggested response to a consultation paper issued by the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform entitled "Prosperous Places: Taking forward

the Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration". The document proposes a series of measures aimed at streamlining the regional tier, strengthening the local authority role in economic development and supporting collaboration by local authorities across economic areas. In considering the proposals outlined, the Cabinet has emphasised that a concerted approach should be made to ensure that the local input at district level is an integral element within the process. With this in mind, the Cabinet has requested that specific reference be made in the Council's response to the importance of ensuring that elected Councillors comprise a majority on Regional Development Agencies.

**15. ECO-TOWNS: LIVING A GREENER FUTURE –
RESPONSE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION**

The Cabinet has been advised of the inclusion of a greenfield site at Hanley Grange near Hinxton in South Cambridgeshire in the Government's short-list of 15 possible locations for new eco-towns as part of their initiative to develop additional housing growth in sustainable ways.

In considering the proposal, the Cabinet has recognised the implications for the District in terms of the adverse impact upon the Cambridgeshire Planning Strategy and Cambridge Sub-Region Growth Strategy. Having been advised that a joint response to the proposal was being prepared by Cambridgeshire authorities and Cambridgeshire Horizons, the Cabinet has authorised the Head of Planning Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, to approve the contents of a response on its behalf prior to its submission to the Government.

**16. CONSERVATION AREAS: BOUNDARY REVIEWS AND
CHARACTER ASSESSMENT STATEMENTS**

Having been acquainted with the responses received from consultation exercises on the character statements and boundary reviews for the Earith and the Hemingfords Conservation Areas, the Cabinet has agreed to adopt the documents for use as material considerations in planning decisions to ensure that the character and appearance of the areas are not diminished. The Cabinet has also authorised the Head of Planning Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations as necessary.

17. GROWING SUCCESS – PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Cabinet has noted a timetable for the review of the Council's Corporate Plan – "Growing Success" along with the performance data for 2007/08. The annual review of the Plan has been deferred pending the preparation of a new Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement for Cambridgeshire and will now be timetabled for submission to Council in September 2008.

18. CORPORATE EQUALITY POLICY: ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

The Cabinet has been updated on progress made to date on the delivery of actions and targets set out in the Corporate Equality Action Plan. In so doing the Cabinet has approved the content of the 2008/09 Action Plan along with a revised timetable for equality impact assessments. The plan sets out the Council's aim and objectives for equality along with corporate and directorate actions and targets.

19. BENEFIT FRAUD PROSECUTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Cabinet has approved the contents of a Benefits Prosecution Policy for the prosecution of benefit claimants, landlords, employees and Members who may have committed benefit fraud. In so doing, the Cabinet has authorised the Fraud Manager to undertake court hearings and issue formal cautions and administrative penalties. Staff within the Fraud Team have been authorised to undertake investigations in fraud affecting all other District Council services and to report to the relevant Head of Service on the outcomes, findings and recommendations arising from these investigations. A number of efficiencies will be gained in pursuing this course of action, particularly given the number of cases being investigated which continues to rise year on year.

20. REPRESENTATIONS ON ORGANISATIONS 2008/09

The Cabinet has made appointments/nominations in relation to representation on a variety of organisations and authorised the Chief Executive, after consultation with Deputy Leader of the Council, to make any changes that may be required throughout the year and to appoint to the vacant posts of "Champion" for Oxmoor and for training.

I C Bates
Chairman

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
THE CORE STRATEGY -
SUBMISSION DOCUMENT
(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is for the Cabinet to endorse the submission document for the Core Strategy before it is approved by Council for formal submission to the Secretary of State.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Core Strategy is the primary, over-arching document that guides and enables the strategy for the future growth and development of Huntingdonshire. Once submitted to the Secretary of State it will be subject to examination by an independent Inspector to assess whether it meets the tests of soundness.

- 2.2 The Council consulted on Issues and Options (the Regulation 25 stage) for the Core Strategy during May, June and July 2007 and on the Preferred Option (the Regulation 26) stage in December 2007 and January 2008. In addition to engaging with stakeholders (such as Parish Councils, the County Council, Primary Care Trust, Highways Agency, Environment Agency etc), the general public were also invited to comment. The Documents were made widely available at Pathfinder House and in libraries and local access points across the District and through an interactive on-line version on the Council's website. The representations made on the Issues and Options, the document 'Towards a Spatial Strategy' which discussed a number of strategic options and the Preferred Option Document have been taken into account in formulating this Submission Document.

- 2.3 The Core Strategy specifically takes account of the existing adopted Community Strategy and its emerging replacement, the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Core Strategy also has been prepared taking into account the emerging policies in the East of England Plan (which has now been published) and current and emerging Government Guidance.

- 2.4 When the Core Strategy is submitted a number of supporting documents will accompany it. These are available on the Members page of the intranet for Members to inspect and note their contents. The supporting documents are:

- ◆ Statement of Pre-Submission Consultation
- ◆ Final Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy (including Equalities Impact Assessment)
- ◆ Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Huntingdonshire LDF Core Strategy
- ◆ Amendments to the Proposals Map
- ◆ Core Strategy DPD Soundness Self-Assessment

3. EVIDENCE BASE

3.1 The Core Strategy has been informed by a wide range of technical documents (the Evidence Base). The most influential of these include:

- ◆ Huntingdonshire Community Strategy
- ◆ Sustainable Community Strategy (emerging)
- ◆ Cambridgeshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- ◆ Huntingdonshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
- ◆ Employment Land Review
- ◆ Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment 2005 and Update 2007
- ◆ Green Infrastructure Strategy

4. THE CORE STRATEGY

4.1 It is proposed that the Core Strategy will deliver at least 5,450 new dwellings, 85ha of employment land and up to 24,000sq m of retail development during the period 2006 - 2026. These figures are over and above what is already proposed in existing plans and in commitments and are considered as a minimum target to reach the challenging new levels of provision which are being advocated in the East of England Plan.


4.2 Until the time that the Core Strategy is adopted significant weight must be given to the policies in the approved East of England Plan together with the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policies and the saved policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan and Structure Plan.

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Cabinet is recommended to agree that, subject to a legal audit of the document, the Core Strategy and the documents listed in paragraph 2.4 above be submitted to Council for approval and to agree that any minor additional editing and updating which may be needed prior to publication be delegated to the Head of Planning Services after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As stated in paragraph 3 of the text.

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Local Development Framework
Submission Core Strategy 2008

Environment and Community Services - Planning
www.huntsdc.gov.uk

Local Development Framework
Submission Core Strategy 2008

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Foreword

The District Council knows that Huntingdonshire is an attractive place where people and communities can thrive and develop in a safe and healthy environment. The numbers of people and jobs in the area are growing and we need to plan for their integration into our communities.

House prices are relatively high compared to local wages and many people are in housing need. This has been identified as a critical issue for the Core Strategy to address. Much of the economy has historically been based around agriculture and associated food production. The rural economy faces a challenging future with the need for protection and diversification. A strong specialist manufacturing industry has also grown up in the last 50 years with increasing jobs in retail, leisure and offices more recently. The Core Strategy aims to help Huntingdonshire's economy move forward, to remain competitive and to be attractive to investors.

There are many development pressures, so it will be essential to safeguard the unique character of Huntingdonshire, the built environment of our market towns and villages, its landscape and wildlife.

As well as local issues, the Core Strategy will need to address matters of wider concern including climate change and the need to reduce our carbon footprint.

The Core Strategy, as the primary element in the Local Development Framework (LDF), sets the spatial framework for Huntingdonshire's future to 2026. It will help shape the provision of housing development, services, economic growth and environmental improvements. It is a technical document, with formal policies to guide development, and needs to be read in conjunction with national and regional planning guidance to get comprehensive advice.

Many people and organisations have been involved in the production of the Core Strategy so far. This submission to the Secretary of State involves the final stage of consultation, with comments being considered by an independent Planning Inspector. Please get involved and have your say about this important strategy.



Councillor Peter Bucknell
Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy
and Transport

Foreword

Huntingdonshire LDF | Submission Core Strategy 2008

1 Introduction

1.1 The Core Strategy sets the strategic spatial planning framework for how Huntingdonshire will develop up to 2026. It contains strategic policies to manage growth and guide new development in Huntingdonshire. The Core Strategy provides the local context for considering the long-term social, economic, environmental and resource impacts of development.

1.2 The key role of the Core Strategy will be to guide the spatial aspirations of the Council and other service providers and stakeholders to ensure that the needs of our residents, businesses and visitors are met.

1.3 The Core Strategy includes:

- a vision of how Huntingdonshire will develop as a place in order to meet the needs of our residents and business communities, both now and in the future
- strategic objectives for the area to achieve the vision - to help guide and manage development and mitigate any adverse effects
- a spatial strategy which will help direct growth to locations where it can be sustainably accommodated and identifies areas of significant change
- core policies to establish overall spatial principles and to provide a framework for more detailed policies for the Development Control DPD, Planning Proposals DPD and the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan
- recognition of the need to work in partnership to achieve the necessary infrastructure for successful delivery of growth
- details of how the Local Development Framework will be monitored and how the implementation of the Core Strategy will be assessed

1.4 It will not include detailed development control policies or identify specific development sites. These will be dealt with separately by the Development Control DPD, the Planning Proposals DPD and the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan.

1.5 The District Council will be preparing a series of companion planning documents, collectively known as the Local Development Framework, to guide and manage growth and change in the District up to 2026. The Development Plan Documents (DPDs), which are subject to independent examination, are:

- Core Strategy Development Plan Document
- Development Control Policies Development Plan Document
- Huntingdon West Area Action Plan
- Planning Proposals Development Plan Document
- Gypsy and Traveller Sites Development Plan Document
- Proposals Map (accompanies this document)

1.6 These will be complemented by Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) on specific issues, such as developer contributions to affordable housing and planning obligations. Further details of the stages involved in the preparation of DPDs and SPDs, including the timetables for production, can be found in the Huntingdonshire Local Development Scheme.

1.7 The Core Strategy is accompanied by the Statement of Consultation which includes in Annex 1 details about how each component of the strategy was selected and drawn up. Annex 1 forms the audit trail for the development of the policies, setting out a précis of the alternatives that were considered.

Introduction

Huntingdonshire LDF | Submission Core Strategy 2008

Evolution of the Core Strategy

1.8 The first stage of preparation was the Issues and Options Stage (Regulation 25). Consultation was undertaken throughout May and June 2007 with identified stakeholders. Limited publicity was also made at this time to give those interested the opportunity to be involved at this preparatory stage. The representations received were considered and used to inform a further round of consultation with selected key stakeholders through the publication of the consultation document *Towards a Spatial Strategy for Huntingdonshire* to aid further the preparation of the Preferred Options.

1.9 The Preferred Options Report (Regulation 26) was published for consultation in November 2007. It was presented in two volumes. Volume 1 identified the Preferred Options for policies and their reasoned justification, while Volume 2, provided the evidence base for the development of the Preferred Options. Representations received during this period were considered in detail and have influenced the content of this Submission Core Strategy.

Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment

1.10 *European Directive 2001/42/EC* requires an 'environmental assessment' of plans and programmes prepared by public authorities that are likely to have a significant effect upon the environment. This process is known as Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This requirement applies to the documents that make up the Local Development Framework.

1.11 At the same time, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of all local development documents⁽¹⁾. The processes of SEA and SA are closely related and government guidance on SA in the LDF process incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive and so only one appraisal process needs to be carried out.

1.12 The Scoping Report is the first stage of the SA process and provides baseline information and indicators as well as setting out the framework by which documents can be appraised. This was produced by the Council in 2007.

1.13 Alongside the preparation of the Core Strategy Issues and Options paper, an *Initial Sustainability Appraisal* was undertaken by the Council, the outcomes of which informed the development of the Preferred Options. The Preferred Options were then subject to SA, the results of which were published for consultation in the *draft Final Sustainability Appraisal Report* which accompanied the Preferred Options. A *Final Sustainability Appraisal Report* has been completed to accompany this submission version of the Core Strategy to demonstrate the sustainability implications of this plan.

1.14 Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is complementary to SA/SEA and is designed to protect sites of European importance (European sites). HRA refers to the assessment of the effects of a plan, or plans in combination, on a European site to enable a judgement to be made on whether there will be an adverse effect on the site's integrity. HRA is required under amendments to *Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitat Directive 92/43/EEC* which were transposed into UK law by the *Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007*. As the Core Strategy will have a significant impact upon the potential scale, location and type of development taking place in the District, the impact on European sites within and beyond the District needs to be assessed. The first stage in the process is to prepare a Screening Assessment. If the screening assessment shows that adverse impacts on European sites cannot be ruled out, a full assessment of the likely impacts is required. The full assessment identifies ways in which the plan needs to be changed to ensure no adverse impact and proposes mitigation measures. The HRA process has been carried out by specialist external consultants

1 section 19 para (5)(a)

Scott Wilson Ltd and is published alongside this Submission Core Strategy. A summary of the main findings of the assessment is presented in Annex 1 of the Statement of Consultation with additional information where relevant in the sections of the Core Strategy.

The Development Plan

1.15 The LDF is part of the statutory Development Plan, which also includes the Regional Spatial Strategy, which for this area is the *East of England Plan (2008)*. This was prepared by East of England Regional Assembly with more recent stages handled by the Government Office for the East of England (GO-East). The *Minerals and Waste Framework* prepared for the county by Cambridgeshire County Council is also part of the Development Plan which was under preparation as at June 2008. The Development Plan is the primary source of policy for the determination of planning applications in line with section 38(6) of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*.

Links with Other Documents

Huntingdonshire LDF | Submission Core Strategy 2008

2 Links with Other Documents

2.1 The Core Strategy is informed by the regional and local context set in other policy documents. The other key document is the *Sustainable Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire*.

2.2 The *East of England Plan* sets specific targets and policy requirements which need to be incorporated into the Core Strategy, and this includes housing at District level. It requires Huntingdonshire to deliver 11,200 homes in the period 2001 to 2021, and in addition to provide a share of 75,000 net new jobs for Cambridgeshire over the same plan period.

2.3 The *East of England Plan* also sets out a number of policies which seek to secure sustainable development through different measures. These policies include an expectation for authorities to set appropriate targets for affordable housing so that a minimum of 35% of all housing across the Region will come forward as affordable.

2.4 As the *East of England Plan* and the Core Strategy are key parts of the Development Plan they are required to be in conformity, and this is a key test of soundness. The two annexes of the Statement of Consultation consider this and the other tests of soundness.

2.5 The *Huntingdonshire Community Strategy* was produced by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership, in which the District Council works with its partners including the County Council, the Area Partnerships, Health Services, the Police, Town and Parish Councils and other key agencies. The original *Huntingdonshire Community Strategy* was adopted by the Council in 2004. The *Huntingdonshire Community Strategy* has been reviewed and updated during the preparation of the Core Strategy leading to the *Sustainable Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire* (SCS).

2.6 The SCS sets out the long-term vision for the development of communities in Huntingdonshire. The main underlying principle is that it will deal with the issues that the local community feels are important to its economic, social and environmental well-being. The vision will be delivered by public, private and voluntary organisations. 6 strategic themes are also identified in the SCS which have a series of desired outcomes and objectives which will be achieved through implementation of 5 year delivery plans.

2.7 The Core Strategy has to have regard to the SCS. The *Huntingdonshire Community Strategy* (2004) informed the Issues and Options stage of preparation of the Core Strategy while the SCS has been used to inform the Core Strategy during Preferred Options and this Submission stage. The dynamic relationship between the Core Strategy and the *Sustainable Community Strategy*, enabled by the simultaneous production, has meant that as each has developed this has affected the other. Strong links between the LDF and the SCS have helped to ensure that the LDF is based on a greater understanding of the community's needs as well as establishing an integrated approach towards future development.

2.8 The SCS identifies 8 key components of a sustainable community as:

- active, inclusive and safe
- well-run
- environmentally sensitive
- well-designed and built
- well-connected
- thriving
- well-served
- fair for everyone

Links with Other Documents

Huntingdonshire LDF | Submission Core Strategy 2008

2.9 The Local Development Framework is the means of achieving the spatial elements of the SCS. Therefore, they have been developed together. Strong links between the LDF and the *Community Strategy* will help to ensure that the LDF is based on a greater understanding of the community's needs, as well as establishing an integrated approach towards future development.

2.10 Local Authorities in Cambridgeshire have prepared the Local Area Agreement (LAA), called Cambridgeshire Together, as the delivery contract with central Government for providing high quality cost effective public services. It is based on the priorities of the SCS supported by local planning policy to deliver the outcomes agreed.

Other Plans and Strategies

2.11 The Core Strategy's vision, objectives and policies seek to address the spatial implications of a wide range of environmental, social and economic concerns, so that it provides an overall framework for managing the pattern of change in Huntingdonshire. This 'spatial planning' approach requires a wide range of other plans and programmes to be taken into account. The most significant include: the *Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan*, the *Housing Strategy for Huntingdonshire*, the *Local Economic Strategy for Huntingdonshire* which has recently been revised, the *Huntingdonshire Environment Strategy* and the *Huntingdonshire Cultural Strategy*.

2.12 In addition a series of visions, action plans and urban design frameworks for Huntingdonshire's market towns which contain proposals for the redevelopment and enhancement of selected areas have been taken into account. These have been produced by the Council in consultation with local communities (or, in Ramsey, by the coalition of local organisations). At the most local level Parish Plans can provide a wide variety of information and are representative of how local people see their area and how they would like to see it develop. Wherever possible Parish Plans will be used to inform the District's planning policy.

Supporting Documents

2.13 The Core Strategy has been informed by a range of studies produced or commissioned by the Council showing it is backed by a strong evidence base. The documents of most relevance to the Core Strategy are listed below, with a full list set out in the Appendix 2 'Evidence Base':

- *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2008)*
- *Employment Land Review (2007)*
- *Housing Needs Survey (2003) and Update (2006)*
- *Landscape & Townscape Assessment (2007)*
- *Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2007)*
- *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2004)*
- *Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study (2005) and Update (2007)*
- *Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2006)*
- *Cambridge Housing Sub Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2008)*
- *Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper Update (2007)*
- *Annual Monitoring Report*
- *Final Sustainability Appraisal (July 2008)*
- *Habitats Regulation Assessment (July 2008)*
- *Huntingdonshire Environment Strategy (June 2008)*
- *Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan (2006-2011)*
- *Huntingdonshire Local Investment Framework (2008)*
- *Huntingdonshire Spatial Strategy Options Assessment (prepared by Atkins for the Council) (2008)*

The Spatial Vision

Huntingdonshire LDF | Submission Core Strategy 2008

3 The Spatial Vision

A Spatial Portrait of Huntingdonshire

3.1 Huntingdonshire is still predominantly rural in character with an area of approximately 350 square miles. The population is currently around 160,000 people (2006)⁽²⁾, with approximately half living in the four market towns of Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey and most of the remainder in almost 100 villages. The District's towns, villages and countryside offer diverse and attractive environments in which to live and work, and each has its own distinctive character and role.

3.2 The District lies within the designated London/ Stansted/ Cambridge/ Peterborough Growth Area and in the East of England Region. The southern part of the District, including the towns of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives, falls within the Cambridge Sub-Region and look to Cambridge for many of the higher order services, while the northern part of the District is influenced by the relationship with Peterborough, which has experienced significant growth over recent years and continues to do so. The St Neots area also looks towards Bedford as a higher order centre.

3.3 The District has experienced considerable pressures for growth, originating with Town Development Schemes for Huntingdon and St Neots in the 1960s and continuing in the 1980's and 1990's. Opportunities are arising to regenerate the Town Development Scheme estates and the town centres of Huntingdon and St Neots. The District has a high net out-commuting pattern to London, Cambridge and Peterborough but also has a buoyant local economy which now contains the largest cluster of high-technology firms in Cambridgeshire outside the immediate area of Cambridge.

Huntingdon

3.4 Huntingdon is the administrative centre and is located toward the centre of the District on the northern valley slopes of the River Great Ouse. It is accessible from the A14, which passes around the southern perimeter of the town. The eastern edge of the town has a strong historic association with the river. Parts of the town centre are undergoing redevelopment and regeneration. Much of the historic core based on the Market Hill and High Street remains largely intact. Huntingdon is a major housing and employment centre with a high jobs to employment ratio. It is well connected with the strategic road network and the east coast mainline railway. It has a relatively strong retail sector and functions as the primary shopping centre for the District. Brampton and Godmanchester to the south west and south east respectively have a close relationship with the services in Huntingdon. The town benefits from a larger supporting population than just the town itself and the residents of Brampton and Godmanchester benefit from the wide range of services and facilities available in Huntingdon.

St Neots

3.5 St Neots is, in population terms, the largest settlement in the District. It is a market town established on the eastern banks of the River Great Ouse. This settlement has expanded significantly over recent years and the smaller and previously independent settlements of Eaton Socon, Eaton Ford and Eynesbury to the south and west have been largely assimilated into the urban fabric of St Neots, although their historic and separate character is still recognisable within the town. Significant housing development is now taking place to the east of the railway and north of Cambridge Road. St Neots has its own railway station, on the east coast mainline, located in the north eastern quarter of the town, and has direct access onto the A1. It is connected to Cambridge via the A428. Attracting retail, leisure and employment development to St Neots is challenging due to competition from Bedford and Cambridge.

2 Source: Research Group, Cambridgeshire County Council mid-2006 population estimates

St Ives

3.6 St Ives is an historic market town situated on the northern bank of the River Great Ouse. The town centre contains many original buildings and retains its distinctive medieval street pattern. The town has grown asymmetrically to the north of the river; the extensive floodplain to the south being retained as open land. The historic core of the town developed around the bridge over the River Great Ouse, and along the northern bank of the river. St Ives has developed an extensive base of small specialist shops which have enabled it to successfully compete with other market towns in the area. St Ives is a picturesque town and is a popular destination for tourists and visitors.

Ramsey and Bury

3.7 Ramsey is located on the edge of the fenland landscape. The original settlement focused around Ramsey Abbey has extended south now forming a continuous built-up area with much of the village of Bury, although part of Bury around Holy Cross church remains separate. The buildings of former RAF Upwood also form part of the continuous built-up area. For planning purposes the whole area is referred to as the Market Town of Ramsey and Bury. Ramsey has a wide variety of urban character. The 'historic core' is centred on High Street and Great Whyte and the 'Abbey Greens' associated with the former Abbey to the east of the town. Ramsey is relatively remote as it lies off the main road network and this restricts the opportunities for future development. Ramsey continues to be the focus of a number of regeneration initiatives and is developing its heritage assets.

Villages and the Rural Area

3.8 Huntingdonshire remains a predominantly rural District with just 6% of its total land in urban use. The agricultural heritage of the District has had a large impact on its landscape appearance. The underlying Oolitic Limestone and stone buildings of the Nene Valley and the dark peat soils and flat landscapes of the Fens ensure that these landscapes are particularly distinctive.

3.9 Despite the growth that has taken place across the District, many of Huntingdonshire's smaller villages retain their historic form. Buildings clustered around a church or village green and linear patterns are both common. The range of services available in the villages varies significantly as does the population. Development pressures can easily undermine the sensitive character of these settlements if it is not sympathetic to the context of the surrounding area, the size of the settlement and the services available.

Population

3.10 The population of Huntingdonshire is generally healthier, and life expectancy higher, than the national average, and incomes are above the national average. There are, however, pockets of deprivation such as the Eynesbury Ward in St Neots, and the Huntingdon North Ward which has the lowest levels of both household income and educational attainment in the District, and is within the 10% most deprived areas in Cambridgeshire⁽³⁾.

3.11 Of the District's population 21.7% are aged between 0 -15, 15.5% are within the 16 to 29 age group, 24.4% are within the 30 to 44 age group, 25.5% are within the 45 to 64 age group, 11.45% are within the 65 to 84 age group and 1.49% are 85 or over. The population of the District is expected to rise to over 166,000 by 2026 with over 23% aged 65 and over⁽⁴⁾. There is some evidence that immigration from other countries in the European Union may be an increasingly important factor.

3 Cambridgeshire County Council

4 Cambridgeshire County Council

The Spatial Vision

Huntingdonshire LDF | Submission Core Strategy 2008

Landscape, Biodiversity and Ecology

3.12 The countryside is fertile farmland, much of which is arable with large fields and few hedgerows. The gentle low relief is mainly a clay plateau dissected by the valley of the River Great Ouse and its associated brooks. To the north and east of the District the land levels fall to fen, most of which is below sea-level.

3.13 Huntingdonshire contains a number of sites of particular importance for biodiversity, such as the Ouse Washes, Woodwalton Fen and Portholme Meadow. There are over 25 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), four Woodland Trust sites, and over 125 County Wildlife Sites. Particular opportunities have been identified by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership in a *50 year Wildlife Vision* for Cambridgeshire, which recommends a number of priority areas for habitat creation and enhancement. A Strategic Open Space Study was commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council in 2004 which looks at the provision of open space across the county. Cambridgeshire Sub-Regional *Green Infrastructure Strategy* (2006), produced by Cambridgeshire Horizons has been developed to provide a strategy for Green Infrastructure. The Great Fen Project is a major habitat restoration project which will create a 3700 hectare wetland between Huntingdon and Peterborough by connecting Holme Fen and Woodwalton Fen, which will also provide new opportunities for recreation and education. There are also significant initiatives to extend Paxton Pits Nature Reserve and to create a new wildlife reserve at Needingworth Quarry.

Economy

3.14 Much of the economy has historically been based around agriculture and associated food production. Whilst agriculture remains important to the local economy in more recent times a strong specialist manufacturing industry has grown up alongside changes that have seen more jobs in retail, leisure and office based sectors. There has also been significant growth in the high-technology sector in recent years in Huntingdonshire.

3.15 Tourism and leisure are important contributors to the local economy. Visitors are attracted to the District by its strong local historical connections, such as Oliver Cromwell and Samuel Pepys. Opportunities for sport and informal recreation in the countryside attract many others, with large numbers attending horse races at Huntingdon Racecourse. There are opportunities for varied water-related activities on the network of waterways in the District, the River Great Ouse and at Grafham Water.

Infrastructure

3.16 Growth will generate additional demands on the District's physical and social infrastructure. A key challenge will be the timely provision of adequate and appropriate new infrastructure to meet these demands. Infrastructure requirements reflect more than physical provision of utility services and the highway network; education, health services, recreation, cultural facilities and green infrastructure are all vital to help communities thrive.

3.17 Cambridgeshire Horizons was established to co-ordinate development and infrastructure implementation and overcome barriers to the development of strategic sites. The District Council will continue to work jointly with Cambridgeshire Horizons to facilitate growth and the delivery of new infrastructure for the benefit of Huntingdonshire.

Education

3.18 Huntingdonshire Regional College provides full and part-time education for young people and adults. Based in Huntingdon and St Neots the college also provides learning opportunities in many other locations across the district. State education for those aged 11-18 is provided in 7 establishments, focused in the larger centres of population with Huntingdon and St Neots each having two secondary schools and St Ives, Ramsey and Sawtry each having one with all secondary schools serving quite extensive rural catchments too. Many students in the north of the district fall within the Stanground College catchment located in Peterborough.

3.19 Huntingdonshire currently has 61 state primary schools catering for children aged 4-11. Of these 26 are located within the Market Towns of Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey with 35 others spread around the district, mostly in the larger villages.

3.20 Samuel Pepys and Spring Common schools provide education services to students aged 2-19 with special educational needs and are based in St Neots and Huntingdon respectively.

3.21 There is a small private education sector, including Kimbolton School which offers boarding facilities, but most students choosing this travel outside the district for education, mainly to Cambridge and Peterborough. Pre-school education is supplied by a range of state, private and voluntary providers.

Health Care

3.22 Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust is responsible for the overall commissioning of health care services in Cambridgeshire. 22 General Practices operate within the District with some having satellite surgeries in villages to provide more local facilities to patients. Opened in 1983 Hinchingsbrooke Hospital provides medical services for residents of Huntingdonshire and some surrounding areas but was threatened with closure in 2006/7. Confirmation was obtained in June 2007 of the hospital's retention with some restructuring of services taking place. A major new treatment centre opened in 2005 has allowed a significant increase in day case patients and a replacement children's ward opened in 2007.

Transport

3.23 Huntingdonshire benefits from excellent strategic communication links. The East Coast mainline rail services are accessible at Huntingdon and St Neots. The A1 offers access north – south on the trunk road network. The A14 provides strategic east – west links and facilitates access to Europe via the East Coast ports. East – west linkages are also facilitated by the A428 crossing the southern part of the District. Access to airports is more remote with Stansted, Luton and Birmingham being the nearest major passenger airports to the District.

3.24 Private car ownership in Huntingdonshire is higher than the national average reflecting the relatively rural nature of most of the District and consequent dependence on private cars for personal transport. The most frequent bus services operate within and between the Market Towns where there are greater concentrations of potential passengers. Only 17 other villages have a bus service timetabled to be hourly or better between 7am and 7 pm Monday to Saturday operating to at least one Market Town, Cambridge, Peterborough or Bedford. Services are due to start on a Guided Busway between Cambridge and St Ives in 2009, with on-road services continuing to Huntingdon.

The Planning Context

3.25 The development plans system consists of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks. The *East of England Plan* has recently been published and guides development through to 2021. To reflect new national guidance a single issue review has commenced to address the needs for gypsy and traveller accommodation, which is expected to be complete in 2009. The *East of England Plan* is expected to be subject to review very soon, which is likely to cover the period up to 2031 and it is anticipated that it may seek to increase development rates.

Housing requirements

3.26 The *East of England Plan* requires a minimum of 11,200 new homes to be built in Huntingdonshire over the period 2001 to 2021. Taking into account housing completions from 2001 to 2006, this is the equivalent of 550 per year up to 2021. As the plan period is already part way through, as at 2006, about 2,890 homes have already been built. Approximately a further 4,265 are accounted for in existing allocated sites, many of which are

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either under construction or have planning permission. A further 1,345 are accounted for from non-allocated sites that have planning permission or are identified as urban capacity. Together these sources mean that about 8,500 homes are accounted for, which leaves land to be identified for 2,700 homes to be built before 2021. Government guidance in *PPS3: Housing* requires the Council to ensure that there are locations identified for at least a 15 year supply of land for housing when the Core Strategy is adopted. As the Core Strategy is due to be adopted in 2009 the remaining plan period to 2021 would not achieve this. The *East of England Plan* advises that the highest average annual housing requirement from 2001 to 2021 or from 2006 to 2021 should be used after 2021. Therefore an additional 2800 homes will be needed between 2021 and 2026 (five years at the 2001 to 2021 average annual rate of 560). As the figures in the *East of England Plan* are to be treated as the minimum, a number of options that went beyond this were considered as part of the issues and options process.

3.27 Affordable housing is a key issue in Huntingdonshire due to the relatively high level of house prices compared with local incomes. The *East of England Plan* seeks 35% of all housing across the region to be affordable. Huntingdonshire's *Housing Needs Survey Update* (2006) demonstrates a high level of need, particularly for social rented housing. The recently published *Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)* for the Cambridge Housing Sub Region also identifies a high level of need. It shows that average house prices have risen from 2001 to 2006 by about 70% with average lower quartile prices rising by about 95%. At the same time average earnings have increased by about 28% and lower quartile earnings have increased by just 22%. The effect of these changes is that lower quartile market housing is now only affordable to 46% of the population. The *SHMA* supports seeking affordable housing to help address this problem. Meeting the existing and newly arising housing need in the district would require more houses than the annual requirement from the *East of England Plan*. The Peterborough City Council has also produced a *SHMA* for the Peterborough area. The *Peterborough SHMA* covers a small part of Huntingdonshire, to the north of the District. The findings of the *Peterborough SHMA* have been taken into account for the areas it covers.

Employment

3.28 The *East of England Plan* requires jobs in Cambridgeshire to increase by 75,000, of which it is predicted that at least 13,000 should be created in Huntingdonshire. To support continued economic growth, sufficient land of a suitable quality in the right locations to meet expected needs for industrial and commercial development needs to be identified. As there is no direct link between jobs growth and land availability, the scale of employment land needed will be the product of a complex series of factors shaping the demand for new accommodation and supply of new and existing employment land and property. Some of the key factors are: overall national economic growth, local labour supply and demand, changing conditions for business competitiveness, and increasingly the need to reduce CO₂ emissions and unsustainable modes of transport for employees and the distribution of goods. Most importantly, the growth of jobs and choice in the range of jobs in Huntingdonshire will help to redress the current imbalance of out-commuting.

3.29 The *Employment Land Review* looked at the existing supply of employment land and considered the requirements for the LDF. It recommends retaining a number of existing allocations and two scenarios for future requirements. The 'New Usual for Business' approach leads to a requirement for 96ha of land up to 2026. This approach assumes light industrial, warehousing and office developments will be built so that higher job densities will be achieved than previously. The 'Low Carbon Future' approach is more aspirational and requires different attitudes towards employment densities, seeking highly accessible locations and changing ways of working. This could reduce the land requirement to 66ha. For both approaches the required development would be mostly concentrated in the central employment market area around Huntingdon, although housing growth at St Neots will give rise to the need for significant additional new employment opportunities to create a sustainable community.

Retail Development

3.30 The *East of England Plan* identifies Cambridge and Peterborough as regional centres for retail and other town centre purposes with Bedford being classified at the next level as a major town centre. Their close proximity draws significant levels of expenditure away from retail outlets in Huntingdonshire as shoppers seek greater choice of goods. This has the greatest impact on purchase of comparison goods such as furniture, clothing and electrical items. The four Market Town Centres form the core of Huntingdonshire's retail offer and their continued vitality and viability are critical to the success of the local economy.

3.31 The *Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study* (2005, updated 2007) suggests 20,000m² net additional comparison floorspace is needed up to 2021 complemented with 3,900m² net additional convenience floorspace for food shopping. PPS6 emphasises the need for a proactive approach to planning for town centres within a strategic hierarchy and identification of opportunities for regeneration and investment.

3.32 The figures suggested in the *Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study* allow for a modest increase in the proportion of expenditure retained locally as a result of more attractive retail opportunities being offered. It is considered that this will be a challenging level of development to achieve but provision of local shopping facilities is an integral element of promoting sustainable communities by reducing the need to travel. Distribution of new retail development will need to be balanced between the desire to reflect the distribution of additional housing growth, the wish to achieve successful regeneration and investment attractiveness. This may involve extensions of primary shopping areas and extensions of town centres as a whole to accommodate other main town centre uses.

A Spatial Vision for Huntingdonshire

3.33 The Vision for the Local Development Framework has been developed from the key characteristics in the Spatial Portrait, the challenges posed by the Planning Context and the vision from the *East of England Plan*:

The Spatial Vision

In 2026 Huntingdonshire will have retained its distinct identity as a predominantly rural area with vibrant villages and market towns. Residents will be happier, healthier and more active and will enjoy an improved quality of life with improved access to a wider range of local jobs, housing, high quality services and facilities and green infrastructure.

Protection of Character

The traditional hierarchy of Market Towns and larger villages serving the smaller settlements within their rural hinterland will be maintained with increasing emphasis on the promotion of sustainable communities.

The character of our towns, villages and their historic cores will be protected and enhanced with care taken to ensure new development is well integrated with its surroundings.

The integrity of our towns and villages will be maintained by ensuring that there is separation between settlements, and in particular between Peterborough and nearby villages in Huntingdonshire. Villages near Peterborough will benefit from development within the city through access to an improved range of amenities and facilities while the areas of countryside and green space around those villages will act as an important resource for the expanded population of Peterborough.

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The landscape of Huntingdonshire will be protected and enhanced. Housing growth, particularly in the Huntingdon and St Neots areas, will be supported by the protection and enhancement of areas of green space around them including the Ouse Valley, the woodlands around Grafham Water and Brampton and the wetland and woodlands of the Great Fen Project. Further opportunities for improved recreation of these areas and to enhance their biodiversity will be identified together with access to the areas of population.

Sustainable Patterns of Growth and Sufficient Housing to Meet Needs

During this time Huntingdonshire will play a proactive role in accommodating housing growth, including much needed affordable housing, required as part of the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough growth corridor while respecting, maintaining and enhancing the special character of its natural, historic and built environments. The majority of growth will be concentrated in the most sustainable locations namely the market towns. More limited development will be supported in larger villages to help sustain their existing facilities and amenities, without damaging their character. In our rural areas schemes that sustain and enhance the vitality of established communities will be supported. With the housing growth the appropriate provision of health, education, training, and community, leisure and open space facilities will be secured.

Employment that Suits the Needs of the Population and Reduces Out-commuting

Future employment development will be located in the most sustainable locations of the market towns. This is primarily in order to ensure delivery of the most marketable sites but it also follows housing growth to ensure the creation of balanced communities. The provision of a wider range of local employment opportunities, particularly in advanced manufacturing, environmental technologies, ICT and creative industries. This will help limit levels of out-commuting to London, Peterborough and Cambridge and ensure the continuing success of the District's economy.

Enhanced Market Towns

Market towns will be encouraged to respond to pressure from competing centres outside the district in order to further strengthen the District's economy, provide more choice and reduce the need to travel. Appropriate development opportunities will be identified within and close to the town centres to accommodate further investment. Further improvements to the public realm to make the town centres more attractive will be encouraged.

Maximise Use of Previously Developed Land

Proactive measures will be taken to maximise the use of previously developed land. However a significant proportion of sites will come forward on Greenfield land given the limited availability of brownfield land in sustainable locations. Redundant military bases in Huntingdonshire will need careful consideration to ensure that any potential re-use or redevelopment maximises the economic benefit to the District.

Increased Capacity of the Transport Network

The proposed A14 improvements will enable much of the development in the Huntingdon area to take place and will improve access to and around the town centre, while the dualling of the A428 in the St Neots area will be promoted to facilitate development there. Improvements in public transport will enable the promotion of sustainable travel options, particularly through the Cambridge to St Ives Guided Bus with associated bus priority measures between St Ives and Huntingdon, and the provision of high quality public transport along the A428 corridor.

Reasoned Justification

3.34 The Spatial Vision for Huntingdonshire should flow from the visions set out in the key documents of the *East of England Plan* and Huntingdonshire's *Sustainable Community Strategy*. The Core Strategy provides the spatial expression of these for the District and will direct future development to help achieve their visions and objectives. It incorporates the key characteristics that define Huntingdonshire and the ways in which the LDF can address their protection and enhancement. It also seeks to meet the challenges and pressures arising from the issues highlighted in the planning context. The Visions from these two documents are set out below to demonstrate the context in which the Spatial Vision for Huntingdonshire has been developed.

The Vision of the East of England Plan:

'By 2021 the East of England will be realising its economic potential and providing a high quality of life for its people, including by meeting their housing needs in sustainable inclusive communities. At the same time it will reduce its impact on climate change and the environment, including through savings in energy and water use and by strengthening its stock of environmental assets.'

The Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy Vision, 2008:

The Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership is working together to achieve a long term vision for Huntingdonshire as a place where current and future generations have a good quality of life and can –

- make the most of opportunities that come from living in a growing and developing district;
- enjoy the benefits of continued economic success;
- access suitable homes, jobs, services, shops, culture and leisure opportunities;
- realise their full potential;
- maintain the special character of our market towns, villages and countryside; and
- live in an environment that is safe and protected from the effects of climate change and where valuable natural resources are used wisely.

3.35 The first is a very broad, high level Vision. The second sets high level aspirations for Huntingdonshire and the people who live and work within the District. The Spatial Vision for the Core Strategy is intended to anchor them into the local context and direct ways in which they might be focused.

Objectives of the Core Strategy

3.36 A series of spatial objectives are required for the Core Strategy. These summarise its key policy directions and help provide a framework for developing appropriate indicators and targets for monitoring purposes. The objectives have been devised within the context established by the *East of England Plan*.

Objectives

1. To enable required growth to be accommodated in locations which minimise the need to travel and maximise the use of sustainable transport modes, while catering for local needs

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2. To ensure that the types of dwellings built are suited to the requirements of local people, are resilient to projected impacts of climate change and that an appropriate proportion is 'affordable' to those in need
3. To enable specialist housing needs of particular groups to be met in appropriate locations
4. To facilitate business development in sectors that have potential to meet local employment needs and limit out commuting
5. To strengthen the vitality and viability of Huntingdonshire's town centres as places for shopping, leisure and tourism
6. To enable business development in rural areas, in locations and on a scale which helps to provide local jobs, limits commuting and minimises or mitigates against adverse environmental impacts
7. To maintain and enhance the availability of key services and facilities including communications services
8. To maintain, enhance and conserve Huntingdonshire's characteristic landscapes, habitats and species and historic built environment
9. To identify opportunities to increase and enhance major strategic green space
10. To conserve and enhance the special character and separate identities of Huntingdonshire's villages and market towns
11. To ensure that design of new development is of high quality and that it integrates effectively with its setting and promotes local distinctiveness
12. To promote developments that conserve natural resources, minimise greenhouse gas emissions and help to reduce waste
13. To secure developments which are accessible to all potential users, and which minimise risks to health as a result of crime (or fear of crime), flooding or pollution and climate change
14. To increase opportunities for pursuing a healthy lifestyle, by maintaining and enhancing recreation opportunities and encouraging walking and cycling
15. To make best use of existing infrastructure and provide a framework for securing adequate land and infrastructure to support business and community needs
16. To reduce climate change and its effects by minimising greenhouse gas emissions through the use of low carbon and renewable energy sources, reducing the amount of energy used, incorporating adaptation measures in development and facilitating adaptation of biodiversity
17. To enable and prioritise the efficient reuse of sustainably located previously developed land and buildings and minimising the use of Greenfield land.

Reasoned Justification

3.37 These objectives summarise the key policy directions. They provide a suitable framework for developing appropriate indicators and targets for monitoring purposes. There may be tension between objectives but the spatial strategy seeks to achieve the best possible overall balance between the objectives. They are also influenced by the many other strategies and plans which have been taken in to account in the preparation of this document, including the *East of England Plan* and *Sustainable Community Strategy*.

4 The Cornerstone of Sustainable Development

4.1 Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning policy. The aim of sustainable development is to ensure a strong, healthy and just society living within environmental limits both now and in the future. The most commonly used definition of sustainable is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”⁵. It forms an overarching objective that influences all aspects of the Core Strategy. The government’s *Sustainable Development Strategy*⁶ forms the basis of the UK agenda to achieve sustainable development and sets out a strategic framework to achieve sustainable development. *PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development* sets out how sustainable development can be delivered through planning policies and *PPS Planning Climate Change (supplement to PPS1)* provides expanded policy on planning’s contribution to mitigating and adapting to climate change.

4.2 The Council is committed to playing its part in tackling climate change and has signed up to the Nottingham Declaration on climate change. Climate change is also at the heart of the Council’s *Sustainable Community Strategy* and the *Environment Strategy*. The Core Strategy implements the spatial elements of the *Sustainable Community Strategy* and provides a framework to provide policies which promote the adaptability of Huntingdonshire’s built and natural environment to meet the challenge of climate change. The LDF will put the principles of sustainable development at the heart of decisions about spatial planning at a local level in Huntingdonshire.

4.3 The Core Strategy will provide the local context for considering the long-term social, economic and environmental and resource impacts of development up to 2026. The following policy sets out the importance of sustainable development in spatial planning and the key criteria for assessing proposals.

Policy CS 1

Sustainable Development in Huntingdonshire

All plans, policies and programmes of the Council and its partners, with a spatial element, and all development proposals in Huntingdonshire will contribute to the pursuit of sustainable development.

Reflecting environmental, social and economic issues the following criteria will be used to assess how a development proposal will be expected to achieve the pursuit of sustainable development, including how the proposal would contribute to minimising the impact on and adaptability to climate change. All aspects of the proposal will be considered including the design, implementation and function of development. The criteria are:

Making best use of land (including the remediation of contaminated land), buildings and existing infrastructure;

Minimising the use of non-renewable energy sources and construction materials and resources and maximising opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy sources and on-site renewable energy provision and improving energy efficiency;

Reducing water consumption and wastage, minimising the impact on water resources and water quality and managing flood risk;

5 World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987

6 *Securing the Future: Delivering the UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005*

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Minimising and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, oxides of nitrogen, fine particles and other forms of pollution;

Encouraging waste reduction and recycling;

Preserving and enhancing the diversity and distinctiveness of Huntingdonshire's towns, villages and landscapes including the conservation and management of buildings, sites and areas of architectural, historic or archaeological importance and their setting;

Protecting, maintaining and enhancing the range and vitality of characteristic habitats and species to create a viable ecological network;

Promoting sustainable, well designed and accessible places that respect the setting and character of the surrounding area, that are adaptable to meet changing needs and reduce crime, antisocial behaviour and the fear of crime;

Promoting inclusive, cohesive and empowered communities and encouraging community involvement in the design, development and management of places;

Promoting health, well-being and active lifestyles by protecting, maintaining and enhancing green space and sport and recreational facilities;

Supporting the local economy and businesses by providing opportunities for lifelong learning and skills development and by enabling the integration of a mix of uses that provide employment opportunities suitable for local people; and

Minimising the need to travel, promoting and increasing opportunities to make necessary journeys by foot, cycle or public transport.

An assessment will be required to accompany any proposal for major development ⁽⁷⁾ to demonstrate how the criteria have been met.

Reasoned Justification

4.4 One of the most significant challenges in achieving sustainable development is climate change. Climate change is caused by greenhouse gases that are primarily produced through the burning of fossil fuels. Fossil fuels provide the basis for much of the energy and power used to heat our homes and work places and how we travel. It has far reaching effects on the planet and problems commonly associated with it include rising sea levels, rising temperatures and extreme weather patterns. Cambridgeshire County Council has produced a *Climate Change Strategy* (2005) which sets out how climate change affects Cambridgeshire and how it can be tackled locally through involving different partners and agencies. Huntingdonshire District Council's *Environment Strategy* (2008) identifies how climate change is likely to impact upon the District and details measures that the Council is undertaking to help tackle it. Therefore, although climate change is a global problem, tackling it at the local level is important. The District Council is committed to this by promoting an integrated system of plans and strategies. Tackling climate change locally can be achieved by minimising the impact of development on the environment through, for example, locating development in places well served by public transport and accessible services so the need to travel is minimised. It also means ensuring that the built and natural environment can adapt, and is

7 The standard definition of 10 or more dwellings or 1000m² of employment floorspace is used for major development. For the complete definition please see the *General Development Procedure Order* (2006 as amended)

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more robust to the challenges of climate change. Spatial planning provides a key mechanism for delivering adaptation as it goes beyond traditional land use planning to incorporate different sectors such as health and transport and brings together different partners.

4.5 Making the best use of land is a key objective of the planning system in achieving sustainable development. The national target of achieving 60% of all development on previously developed (brownfield) land has been set by central government. The *East of England Plan* includes a regional target of 60% although it is recognised that the extent to which this target can be achieved across the region will vary.

4.6 Due to the largely rural nature of the District there are limited opportunities to develop on brownfield land in sustainable locations. The *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)* has identified the potential land supply across the District and found that brownfield land within the most sustainable locations of the Market Towns is particularly limited, the redevelopment of which will be prioritised in line with government guidance. By making best use of brownfield land in sustainable locations it will also maximise the use of existing infrastructure. However, the limited supply of brownfield land means it will also be necessary to make use of greenfield land in order to accommodate the growth required. In doing so the Council will ensure that only the most sustainable greenfield locations are used and that land is used efficiently by using appropriate densities and design principles.

4.7 Traditional building materials, such as bricks and concrete are non-renewable, generate a lot of embodied energy when produced and can create a lot of waste. It is essential that the construction of buildings is taken into consideration at the early stages of the planning and design processes to ensure that opportunities for using renewable, recyclable and locally sourced materials are maximised. Construction and demolition waste represents the largest waste stream in the region. Sourcing materials locally and making use of recyclable and reclaimed materials wherever possible cuts down on the amount of CO₂, one of the biggest contributors to climate change, emitted during their production and transportation. Locally sourced materials also contribute to sustainability by supporting local businesses. Further information on addressing sustainable construction issues has been produced by the Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire Horizons ⁽⁸⁾.

4.8 The planning system has an important role to play in helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions, particularly CO₂ emissions, through the design of buildings, influencing where and how they are built and the travel mode used. There are four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in Huntingdonshire – Huntingdon, Brampton, St Neots and Fenstanton. These have been identified because of their particularly high levels of nitrogen dioxide; the main source of which is vehicle emissions. Careful monitoring of the nitrogen dioxide levels occurs within these areas and the District Council is developing an *Air Quality Action Plan* which will focus on promoting cycling and walking and reducing the need to travel by car. The District Council has published its own Green Travel Plan to encourage its staff to use sustainable modes of transport to get to work and is committed to promoting sustainable transport. The planning system can promote sustainable travel, for example, by locating development in sustainable and accessible locations. Proposals for renewable energy provision will be encouraged in accordance with the *PPS1 supplement on Climate Change*, and will be considered in the Development Control Policies DPD. Development proposals for renewable energy will need to take into account the Council's *SPD on Wind Power*.

4.9 The East of England is one of the driest regions in the country. As a result of climate change, weather patterns are likely to get more extreme with significantly drier summers but also increased risks of flooding, particularly in the winter. Reduced levels of rainfall in summer mean that potable water will become a dwindling resource. Significant housing and employment growth will have a large impact on water resources, as the amount of water used per person is increasing. It is important that water resources are used carefully to protect against potential shortages in the future.

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4.10 Water resources also have significant ecological value providing habitats and food supplies for a variety of species. Huntingdonshire has a very sensitive natural environment and water is a very important feature with the River Great Ouse, Ouse Washes, and fens to the North and East of the District, particularly the Great Fen, providing important wetland habitats. The effects of climate change will mean that we have to manage surface water flood risk and water shortages by maintaining and creating flood water storage and reservoirs for potable water. Huntingdonshire is vulnerable to some of the likely impacts of climate change, particularly those parts close to, or below sea level and thus vulnerable to rising sea levels and tidal storm surges. It is therefore important to provide appropriate mechanisms that effectively minimise and manage flood risk. All development proposals will have to ensure that there is no additional risk of flooding and that water efficiency measures are incorporated.

4.11 Huntingdonshire District Council is one of the best performing local authorities in the country for recycling. In order to maintain this position, new buildings need to be designed to reduce waste generation and encourage recycling by providing space for storage of recyclables and green waste awaiting collection.

4.12 Huntingdonshire's towns, villages and countryside have very particular characteristics that reflect the unique geography and history of the District. The Spatial Portrait provides an overview of the landscape of Huntingdonshire. The *Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD* (June 2007) provides more detailed information on the landscape character areas of the District and the unique characters of its settlements.

4.13 The Council is committed to ensuring a clean, green and attractive place. The *Design Guide SPD* (June 2007) provides information on how to improve the quality of new development. Conservation Area Character Statements aim to protect special character areas of particular settlements across the District. All development proposals will be expected to make a positive contribution to the built environment by employing the design principles in the Development Control Policies DPD when adopted and those in the *Design Guide SPD*.

4.14 As described in the Spatial Portrait the District has a wide range of sites designated for their sensitive environmental character, flora and fauna and other environmental value. It is critically important that these areas are protected, maintained and where possible enhanced. Development should not adversely affect existing designated environmental areas and, but where this is unavoidable, it will need to provide appropriate mitigation measures. Development can also contribute to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and green infrastructure outside of these designated areas. Areas of Strategic Green Space Enhancement are set out in Policy 9 of the Core Strategy and the accompanying map, and the emerging Development Control Policies DPD contains a detailed policy on protecting and enhancing biodiversity and green infrastructure.

4.15 It is important to ensure that our built and natural environment is able to adapt to climate change. Planning policies can ensure that adaptation is a key consideration in the planning and design of development. The Council uses the *Building For Life Standards* to assess the quality of new development and ensure that it meets the needs of local communities. Design and Access Statements are a national requirement for most planning applications and ensure that inclusive access is taken into account within a development proposal. All development proposals will have to demonstrate that they are designed appropriately to be inclusive and accessible.

4.16 As set out in *Growing Success* the Council is committed to promoting safe, vibrant and inclusive communities. An important element of this is providing opportunities for people to be involved in development proposals. The *Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)* sets out how and when people can participate in the development of planning proposals. Throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy the Council has undertaken extensive consultation to ensure that the plan reflects the issues important to local communities and is responsive to them. By encouraging community engagement the Council is also helping to promote community cohesion as people come together to have an input in the decision making process. In many cases development proposals can provide significant community benefits by providing new or improved infrastructure. This can also help promote community cohesion and can provide significant health benefits, for example, providing new or improved sport and recreational facilities or cycle/footpath links to encourage active lifestyles. It will need to be demonstrated that there have been opportunities for local communities to get involvement in the planning and design of development proposals in

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accordance with the *SCI*. The Council is producing an SPD on Planning Contributions and all major development proposals will have to demonstrate that are providing sufficient contributions towards infrastructure in accordance with the Core Strategy policy 10: Infrastructure requirements and the SPD once adopted.

4.17 The draft *Local Economy Strategy (2008-2015)* identifies a need to maintain a strong local economy in order to promote the vision set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, the spatial elements of which are implemented by the LDF. Planning has a significant role to play in influencing the type of employment provided and the location of employment land. Provision of adequate employment development is a key part of creating sustainable communities. Development proposals for employment will have to demonstrate that they are in a sustainable location, are accessible and are of a high quality design.

5 The Spatial Strategy

5.1 The Spatial Strategy sets out how the Council sees the different parts of the District developing. It identifies the different types of settlement within the District and how they will develop. It shows how and where the growth in housing, employment and retailing will be accommodated, and sets out priorities for areas that will be protected from development pressures.

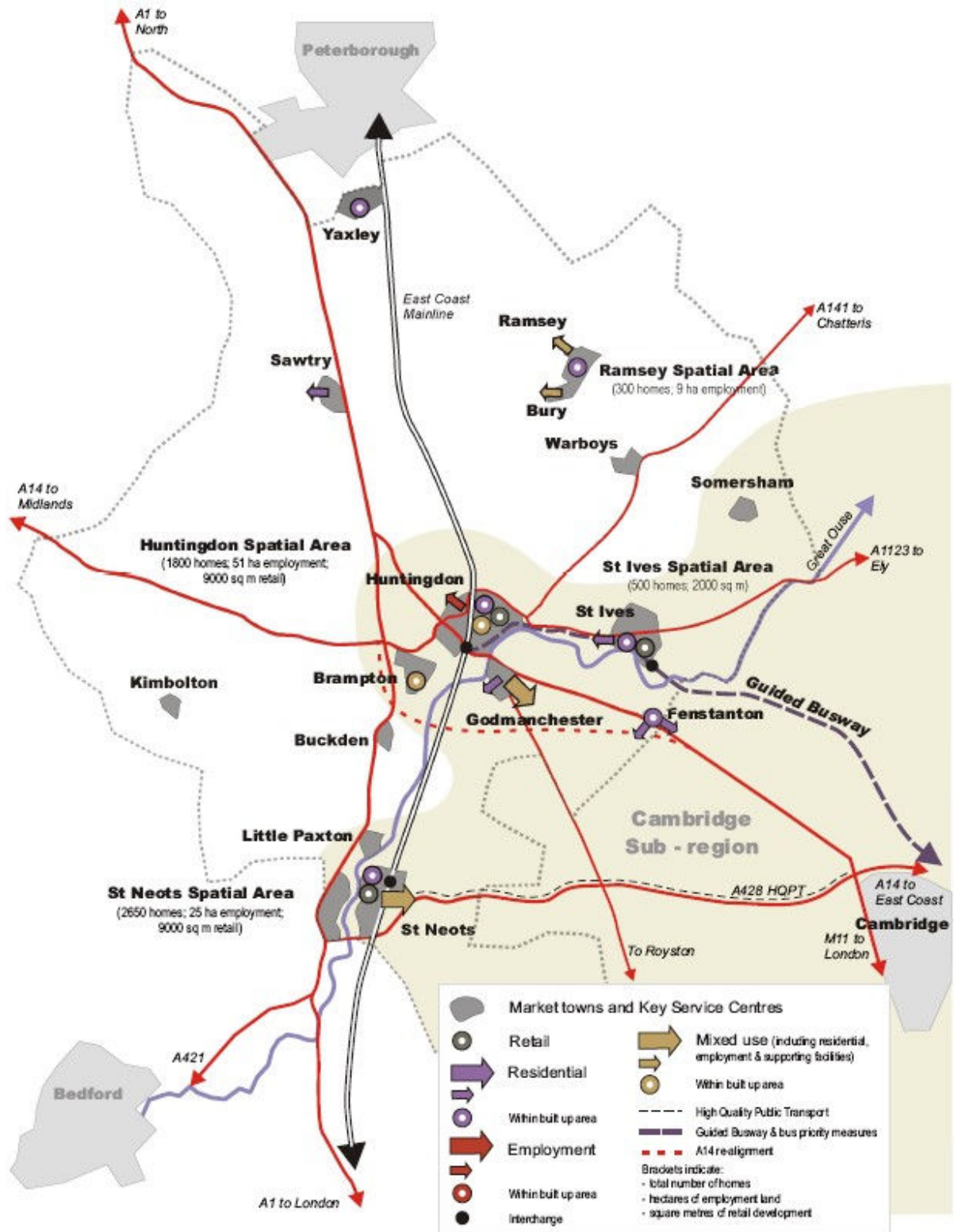
Key Diagram

5.2 The Key Diagram illustrates the locations and directions of growth for the new homes, employment land and retail floorspace identified in the Strategic Housing Development, Employment Land and Retail Development policies. It does not show sites allocated through the *Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration (2002)*, or with existing planning permission, that have not yet been built. For each of the spatial planning areas the total new homes, employment land and retail floorspace are indicated. Also illustrated are planned and identified improvements to the strategic transport network.

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Huntingdonshire Core Strategy Key Diagram.



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Strategic Housing Development

5.3 In spatial planning terms the relationship between the District's four market towns and their nearby settlements is an important consideration. Whilst each settlement possesses its own distinctive character and identity, there are strong functional, economic and social links between settlements so that these nearby settlements benefit from greater sustainability than they would otherwise have. The range of services in the market towns is also supported by a larger population than is available in the towns themselves. Within the areas of the market towns and their nearby settlements that have this reciprocal relationship, existing and future residents enjoy greater opportunities to achieve a sustainable lifestyle. For this Strategy these areas have been identified and are referred to as Spatial Planning Areas. Due to the relationship between the settlements in the Spatial Planning Areas the Council has approached each as a whole as it is considered locations within any of the settlements offer similar opportunities for sustainable development. Cambridgeshire County Council has completed an 'Accession' Assessment of the locational and accessibility aspects of the spatial strategy details of which are contained in Annex 1 of the Statement of Consultation: Audit Trail.

5.4 The Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area includes Huntingdon, Brampton and Godmanchester which already have a physical and functional relationship whilst maintaining different characters and being separated by green spaces and water courses. Together these settlements have around 31,000 residents⁽⁹⁾. The majority of services and facilities are concentrated in Huntingdon but are accessible to Godmanchester and Brampton by public transport, cycling and walking. The area is a key driver of the local economy, particularly in the retail, leisure and office based sectors. The *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)* has identified significant opportunities for development, including previously developed land west of Huntingdon town centre and at RAF Brampton. The realignment of the A14 and proposed removal of the viaduct over the railway will help facilitate further development opportunities after 2015.

5.5 The St Neots Spatial Planning Area includes St Neots and Little Paxton and has a combined population of around 31,200. Little Paxton has its own distinctive identity and is physically separated from St Neots by the River Great Ouse. However, the key concentration of services and facilities of St Neots town centre are as close to Little Paxton as to many parts of the town itself. Along with land in Bedfordshire around Wyboston, the area is also a key driver of the local economy particularly for the manufacturing and warehousing and distribution sectors. The *SHLAA* has identified that this area offers significant opportunities for development especially through the creation of a large sustainable urban extension to the east of the town. The capacity of the A428 may be an issue until the section between the A1 and Caxton Gibbet can be upgraded to a dual carriageway.

5.6 The St Ives Spatial Planning Area includes the town of St Ives and development at London Road just south of the town in the parishes of Hemingford Grey and Fenstanton. It also includes the business development areas immediately to the east of St Ives in Needingworth parish. This area is smaller in scale than Huntingdon and St Neots with a population of just under 16,000 in 2005. The area has enjoyed recent employment growth, particularly to the east of St Ives and has a relatively small but thriving retail sector. It currently offers fewer opportunities for sustainable development options. Flooding is a major constraint to the south and east of the town. St Ives will see a significant improvement in accessibility with the completion of the guided busway.

5.7 The Ramsey Spatial Planning Area includes Ramsey, Bury and part of RAF Upwood, but excludes the small villages of Ramsey Forty Foot, Ramsey Heights, Ramsey Mereside and Ramsey St Marys. The population was around 8,000 in 2005. The town serves as a focal point for a significant rural community. Ramsey has relatively poor transport infrastructure as it is well off the main road network and is relatively remote. As a result it has more limited services and facilities than the other three areas. These factors combine to make this a significantly less sustainable location than the other three spatial planning areas.

9 Cambridgeshire County Council 2005

5.8 Guidance to assist with the identification of Key Service Centres is contained in the *East of England Plan*. The guidance indicates that there will be certain factors that will be common within Key Service Centres such as the existence of a primary school and related good access to secondary education, a doctor's surgery, a good range of shops and services that can meet day-to-day needs, local employment opportunities and a frequent public transport service to higher-order centres. The availability of this range of services and facilities means that these villages have potential for some sustainable development that other villages with less services do not. The Council has completed a Settlement Hierarchy background paper that identifies the villages in the district that have this range of services and can therefore be identified as Key Service Centres.

Policy CS 2

Strategic Housing Development

During the period, from 2001 to 2026, a total of at least 14000 homes will be provided in Huntingdonshire. This is to meet the requirement of at least 11200 homes from 2001 to 2021 identified in the East of England Plan plus at least an additional 2800 homes for the period from 2021 to 2026. These equate to a target development rate of at least 560 homes per year.

From 2001 to 2006	2890	That have been completed
From 2006 to 2026	4265	That will come from existing allocations in the Local Plan ⁽¹⁾
	1345	That will come from non-allocated sites that have planning permission or from urban capacity
	5500	That will be provided in the locations identified below
Total	14000	

1. For more information please refer to the Housing Trajectory in the Implementation Section

Of the 5500 homes for which locations are identified, at least 1575 homes will be on previously developed land and about 3925 homes on greenfield land. About 2200 of these new homes will be provided as affordable housing. Provision will be monitored and the release of locations will be managed and phased during the plan period with the aims of meeting identified needs and demand and maintaining sufficient supply of deliverable sites.

As part of the overall development strategy to concentrate the majority of growth in the Huntingdon and St Neots Spatial Planning Areas whilst observing environmental designations and constraints, it is proposed that strategic housing growth will be located:

In the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area where at least 1800 homes will be provided. Of these, at least 1000 homes will be on previously developed land, about 800 homes will be on greenfield land and about 720 homes will be affordable. Provision will be in the following general locations:

In a significant mixed use redevelopment in Huntingdon in the area west of the town centre covered by the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan and redevelopment of previously developed land within the built up area of Huntingdon;

In a mixed use redevelopment in Brampton on previously developed land;

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In Godmanchester as part of a significant mixed use development on greenfield land to the south east/east after the A14 road improvements have been implemented and on greenfield land to the south west.

In the St Neots Spatial Planning Area where at least 2650 homes will be provided. Of these at least 150 homes will be on previously developed land, about 2500 homes will be on greenfield land and about 1060 will be affordable. Provision will be in the following general locations:

In the first phase of a significant mixed use urban extension on greenfield land to the east of the town and as redevelopment of previously developed land within the built-up area of the town.

In the St Ives Spatial Planning Area where at least 500 homes will be provided. Of these, at least 100 homes will be on previously developed land, about 400 homes will be on greenfield land and about 200 will be affordable. Provision will be in the following general locations:

In a significant greenfield development to the west of the town;

In the redevelopment of previously developed land within the built up area of the town.

In the Ramsey Spatial Planning Area where at least 300 homes will be provided. Of these at least 250 homes will be on previously developed land, about 50 will be on greenfield land and about 120 will be affordable. Provision will be made in the following general locations:

In an employment-led mixed use redevelopments to the west of the town, to the north of the town and redevelopment of previously developed land within the built-up area of the town.

Outside the Spatial Planning Areas, in the Key Service Centres of Fenstanton, Sawtry and Yaxley, about 250 homes will be provided. Of these at least 75 homes will be on previously developed land, about 175 will be on greenfield land and about 100 will be affordable. This provision will be made in all the following general locations, with actual levels being set out in the Planning Proposals DPD:

On land within the built-up area and on land to the east and south of Fenstanton;

On land to the west of Sawtry; and

On previously developed land within the built-up area of Yaxley.

Reasoned Justification

5.9 The *East of England Plan* sets an allocation of 11,200 new homes to be built in Huntingdonshire for the period 2001 to 2021. Allowing for completions from 2001 to 2006 this is the equivalent of 550 per year up to 2021. As the plan period is already part way through about 8,500 homes have already been built or are accounted for in permissions granted since 2001, as identified in the policy. This leaves 2,700 homes to be achieved before 2021. PPS3: Housing also requires the Council to ensure that there is at least a 15 year supply of land for housing from when the Core Strategy is adopted. As the Core Strategy is due to be adopted in 2009 the plan period to 2021 would not achieve this PPS3 requirement. Regional policy advises that the highest average annual build rate between 2001 and 2021 or between 2006 and 2021 be used. For Huntingdonshire this means using the 560 annual average to provide for at least a further 2,800 new homes between 2021 and 2026. The end date of 2026 will allow for a 15 year land supply upon adoption of the Core Strategy and will mean that the overall District housing figure for the period 2001-26 is at least 14,000 new homes with 5450 to be allocated.

5.10 The strategy is based on a combination of options. The Cambridge Sub-region is identified in the *East of England Plan* and previously in the *Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003)*. The strategy recognises the significance of the Sub-region by concentrating housing development in the towns and Key Service Centres which lie within it. St Neots has been identified as an important location where there is the opportunity for significant benefits from a large scale urban extension on land to the east of the town and the East Coast Mainline railway. Land in this location will play a significant role, particularly in later phases of the plan period, in ensuring housing delivery is maintained above the annual rate and this location offers a unique opportunity to create a truly sustainable community with a new secondary school a higher level of employment than envisaged in the Employment Land Review, and the construction of a viable new District Centre which will complement the town centre. All the options considered were evaluated to ascertain their potential highway impacts. Details of *Atkins' Huntingdonshire Spatial Strategy Options Assessment* are given in Annex 1 of the Statement of Consultation: Audit Trail.

5.11 The approach to affordable housing has been informed by the *Huntingdonshire Housing Needs Survey (2003)*, the update of that survey from 2006, the recently published *Cambridge Housing Sub-Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment* and policy in the *East of England Plan*.

5.12 In line with national and regional policy the approach is to develop sustainable brownfield land first. Due to the predominantly rural character of the District there is not sufficient well-located brownfield land to achieve the national target of 60%. However, Brampton and the Huntingdon West area are particularly significant areas where brownfield redevelopment can be achieved. Land east of St Neots offers the best opportunity in the District to create sustainable development on Greenfield land.

5.13 Other housing will come forward on 'windfall' sites within the built up areas of the towns and villages in line with the scales of development set out in the Settlement Hierarchy. This will be in excess of the 5500 homes planned for through the strategic development opportunities identified above.

5.14 The *SHLAA* has considered the potential suitability of sites in market towns and key service centres and while there are sites in and around most settlements capable of being developed for moderate scale development these should accord with the settlement hierarchy. Sites capable of accommodating moderate scale developments will be considered in light of continued monitoring of housing delivery and where appropriate will be allocated in the Planning Proposals DPD along with sites in the locations identified in this policy.

5.15 The built-up area is considered to be the existing built form excluding buildings that are clearly detached from the main body of the settlement, gardens and other undeveloped land within the curtilage of buildings at the edge of the settlement, especially where these relate more to the surrounding countryside than they do to the built-up parts of the village.

Settlement Hierarchy

5.16 The settlement hierarchy provides a framework to manage the scale of housing development appropriate on unallocated sites.

5.17 The settlement hierarchy continues the strategic aim of concentrating development in the larger sustainable settlements that offer the best levels of services and facilities and protects the character and scale of smaller villages and the countryside. It will help increase the opportunities for sustainable lifestyles, reduce the need to travel and make good use of existing infrastructure.

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Policy CS 3

The Settlement Hierarchy

The hierarchy identifies;

Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey and Bury as 'Market Towns' in which development schemes of all scales may be appropriate within the built-up area;

Brampton, Buckden, Fenstanton, Godmanchester, Kimbolton, Little Paxton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys and Yaxley as 'Key Service Centres' in which development schemes of moderate and minor scale and infilling may be appropriate within the built-up area;

Abbotsley, Abbots Ripton, Alconbury, Alconbury Weston, Alwalton, Bluntisham, Brington, Broughton, Buckworth, Bury - Holy Cross⁽¹⁰⁾, Bythorn, Catworth, Chesterton, Colne, Conington, Covington, Diddington, Earith, Easton, Ellington, Elton, Farcet, Folksworth, Glatton, Grafham, Great Gidding, Great Gransden, Great Paxton, Great Raveley, Great Staughton, Great Stukeley, Hail Weston, Hamerton, Hemingford Abbots, Hemingford Grey, Hilton, Holme, Holywell, Houghton and Wyton, Keyston, Kings Ripton, Leighton Bromswold, Little Stukeley, London Road (St Ives)⁽¹¹⁾, Molesworth, Needingworth, Offord Cluny, Offord D'Arcy, Oldhurst, Old Weston, Perry, Pidley, Pondersbridge (part)⁽¹²⁾, Ramsey Forty Foot, Ramsey Heights, Ramsey Mereside, Ramsey St Mary's, Southoe, Spaldwick, Stibbington, Stilton, Stonely, Stow Longa, Tilbrook, Toseland, Upton, Upwood, Wansford (part)⁽¹³⁾, Waresley, Water Newton, Winwick, Wistow, Woodhurst, Woodwalton, Wyton-on-the-Hill, and Yelling as Smaller Settlements in which residential infilling will be appropriate within the built-up area; and

All other areas as part of the countryside, including those hamlets and isolated groups of buildings where nearly all services and facilities must be accessed in higher order settlements. In this tier residential development will be strictly limited to that which has an essential need to be located in the countryside. Such development will be prescribed in the Development Control Policies DPD.

Development proposals of a larger scale may be allowed where site specific circumstances demonstrate that this secures the most sustainable option for the site. Schemes will be judged on individual merit taking into account the availability of a range of services and public transport appropriate to support the form of the housing to be provided and performance against the criteria set out in Policy CS1. In Smaller Settlements development proposals in excess of minor scale as defined in this policy will require strong justification of how the proposal would make the most efficient use of land and existing infrastructure and how a wide range of services could be accessed by sustainable modes.

As an indication of the scale of development likely to be acceptable the following definitions should be used:

Large scale development: 60 or more dwellings

Moderate scale development: 10-59 dwellings

Minor scale development: up to 9 dwellings

10 The built-up area of Bury village around Holy Cross church east of Bury Bridge

11 The built up area adjoining London Road to the south of St Ives, and lying within the parishes of Fenstanton and Hemingford Grey

12 The greater part of this settlement lies within the neighbouring Authority (Fenland)

13 The greater part of this settlement lies within the neighbouring Authority (Peterborough)

Residential infilling: up to 3 dwellings

Reasoned Justification

5.18 In the Cambridge Sub-Region, the *East of England Plan* includes the three settlements of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives as Market Towns. They have a wider range of facilities and employment opportunities compared to other settlements in the District. Ramsey and Bury lie outside the Cambridge Sub-Region. Ramsey and Bury provide a similar ranges of services and facilities justifying its designation as a Market Town although the scale of provision is below that of the other Market Towns and the availability of employment is comparatively limited. The Market Towns are defined as the first tier in the hierarchy.

5.19 The *East of England Plan* identifies the criteria for Key Service Centres as large villages with a good level of services such as a primary school within the village, a secondary school within the village or easily accessible by public transport, primary health care facilities, such as a GP surgery, a range of shops and services that can meet day-to-day needs, local employment opportunities and a reasonable public transport service to higher order settlements. The villages of Brampton, Buckden, Fenstanton, Godmanchester, Kimbolton, Little Paxton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys and Yaxley all meet these criteria despite ranging in size and function from sizeable settlements with similar services and facilities to the market towns to large villages with a range of facilities sufficient for most day to day requirements. They are therefore defined as Key Service Centres and form the second tier of the hierarchy.

5.20 Huntingdonshire has a great many other villages of varying size and character all offering different levels of services and facilities to their residents. These are classed as Smaller Settlements in the third tier of the hierarchy. The main distinction between these Smaller Settlements and the Key Service Centres is that none offer a sufficient range of services and facilities to sustain daily living without the need to access services and facilities elsewhere.

5.21 The countryside contains a number of hamlets, groups of houses and individual properties typical of an historic and productive agricultural economy. These offer virtually no services for residents and typically contain less than 30 homes. Government policy clearly indicates that such locations should not be a focus for further development.

5.22 The Council has produced a background paper on the *Settlement Hierarchy* and the Key Service Centres. Updated in October 2007, this paper provides further information on the criteria used to determine a settlement's position in the hierarchy.

5.23 Policy CS2 focuses on identifying locations for strategic scales of growth. However, non-strategic housing developments are likely to come forward during the plan period. The indicative scales of development set out in the Settlement Hierarchy are intended to guide the volume of growth likely to be acceptable in different types of location and to protect the overall strategy of focusing growth in the Market Towns.

5.24 Large scale development is defined as being that of 60 dwellings or more or 2 ha or more of land. Within Huntingdonshire this scale of development is sufficient to have a significant impact on the settlement where it is proposed.

5.25 Moderate scale growth is defined as being that between 10-59 dwellings, or broadly up to 2 ha of land based on PPS3's recommended minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare. Proposals of this scale can be sensitively developed within Key Service Centres and occasionally can be integrated into some of the larger Smaller Settlements which benefit from a wider range of services.

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5.26 Minor scale growth accords with the national definition. Residential infilling is defined as the development of a small site within the existing built-up area of a settlement by up to 3 dwellings.

Addressing Housing Need

5.27 It has become increasingly difficult for local people on low to modest incomes to gain access to suitable housing. A growing gap between average earnings and housing costs, a limited supply of new affordable properties and the loss of existing social housing through 'right to buy' / 'right to acquire' provisions have all contributed to this problem. The planning system has a key role to play in making more affordable properties available, through securing contributions from market housing schemes and by enabling rural 'exceptions' sites to come forward. It is necessary to define the scope of what constitutes 'affordable housing' in order to develop policies specifying where and when its provision will be required.

5.28 *PPS3* sets out up-to-date definitions of affordable housing, distinguishing between social rented and intermediate housing tenures which will be used when considering proposals. It acknowledges that to be deemed 'affordable', housing must be made available at a cost low enough for eligible households to afford when compared to local incomes and house prices. It specifies that low cost homes for sale can contribute towards the supply of intermediate housing but specifically excludes low cost market housing from the definition of affordable housing. In order to add to the definition for Huntingdonshire, intermediate housing is housing for people who may not receive sufficient priority to be offered a social rented property but whose incomes are insufficient to enable them to access market priced housing. Rents for intermediate rented housing should not exceed 30% of net median household incomes in Huntingdonshire and housing costs (mortgage and rent) for low cost home ownership (shared equity), should not exceed 30% of gross median household incomes in Huntingdonshire.

5.29 Housing Needs Surveys in the District have shown a significant demand for affordable housing, far exceeding that likely to be built. Thus, it is important to ensure that provision caters for priority needs. The Housing Needs Surveys have advised that a District-wide target should be set to enable the Council to respond to its responsibility at a District-wide level in order to meet need where it can best do so. A Strategic Housing Market Assessment has recently been completed. Although it is difficult to compare previous surveys and this assessment directly due to differences in the methodologies used, the findings support the previous needs surveys. The affordable housing need identified is well in excess of that which is likely to come forward under existing policies. In such circumstances where need outstrips supply, the use of rural exceptions sites to provide schemes with only affordable housing is justified.

Policy CS 4

Affordable Housing in Development

In order to address the need for affordable housing in the district 40% of all housing proposed in developments in the following categories should be provided as affordable housing:

on proposals of 15 or more homes or 0.5ha, or more in all parts of the District; or

on proposals of 3 or more homes or 0.1ha, in all smaller settlements as defined in the settlement hierarchy.

Provision should be made in the form of free serviced land. The affordable housing provision should comprise at least 70% social rented accommodation with the balance being provided as Intermediate housing. These proportions may be varied where justified and with agreement with the Council.

In determining the amount of affordable housing to be delivered, specific site conditions and other material considerations including viability, redevelopment of previously developed land or mitigation of contamination may be taken into account.

Where appropriate for specific sites, criteria setting out variations in the form the contribution should take, including tenure will be provided in the Planning Proposals DPD and the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan. Additional detail will be provided in the Developer Contributions to Affordable Housing SPD.

Reasoned Justification

5.30 The *East of England Plan* includes a target of an average of 35% to be achieved across the region, which applies to all housing development. In order to achieve the average when a site threshold is used, a higher percentage must be sought on eligible sites, as some sites will not contribute because they are below the threshold. Similarly some sites will provide a lower level of affordable housing due to specific site conditions.

5.31 The *SHMA* identifies need for Huntingdonshire of 1205 affordable homes per year for the first five years, and then once the backlog is cleared, an ongoing need for an additional 534 affordable homes per year. Over the next 15 years this is equivalent to the affordable homes requirement being more than the total proposed housebuilding targets. This level of provision is clearly impossible to achieve. This evidence of overwhelming need further justifies the levels of affordable housing being sought, which are consistent with the target set by the East of England Plan.

5.32 *PPS3* sets 15 dwellings as a nationally accepted level for the threshold at which a site should have to contribute affordable housing. It is considered that this threshold is appropriate in Market Towns and Key Service Centres in Huntingdonshire. The Council considers it is viable and practical to set requirements for affordable housing from development in rural areas that reflect the need and type of development likely to take place in these areas. With these characteristics in mind, the threshold at which affordable housing is sought is lowered to three dwellings. It is also considered appropriate to include site thresholds expressed in both number of homes and in land area in order to promote the most efficient use of land.

Rural Exceptions Housing

5.33 House prices, particularly in some of our villages, are unaffordable to many local people leading to significant demand in some locations for provision of affordable housing to prevent people having to move away or to enable those with local connections to return.

5.34 In the settlement hierarchy most new housing will be built in the Market Towns and to a lesser extent the Key Service Centres, but where rural housing need is high, like in Huntingdonshire, it is important to have a mechanism for addressing affordable housing needs that arise within the District's rural areas. The exceptions process is well established. It is so called because an exception to the prevailing policy that determines where and what scale of housing development can take place, is made, as long as it is for affordable housing to meet the needs of local people.

Policy CS 5

Rural Exceptions Housing

In exceptional circumstances, affordable housing development will be considered acceptable within or adjacent to the built up area of a Key Service Centre or Smaller Settlement subject to the following criteria:

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The proposal is limited in number and type of housing to that which can be justified by evidence of need from a local needs survey for affordable housing arising from people who are either currently or formerly resident, have an existing family or employment connection or some other connection as agreed with the Council, in the individual settlement or adjacent settlements;

There is reasonable access to at least a basic range of services appropriate to the form of housing proposed;

Appropriate safeguards are put in place that ensure that the housing will remain affordable for successive occupiers.

Reasoned Justification

5.35 In settlements that are unlikely to see significant housing development, housing need may go unmet if left to normal market forces and the proportion of affordable housing sought through policy CS4. In order to try to tackle housing need in these locations exceptions to the normal housing policies are made for development of purely affordable housing. It is considered appropriate to include Key Service Centres in the settlements able to take advantage of this policy because this is an enabling policy and the Council is determined to tackle housing need across the district and as such it would be wrong to artificially exclude settlements that are rural in character and where housing need may need addressing.

5.36 It is considered important that in order for occupiers of new properties to be able to live as sustainably as possible they should have access to at least a basic level of facilities appropriate to their needs, to help reduce their need to travel. For instance access to a food shop and also a primary school where the houses will be occupied by families would be expected. The level of services available locally, along with the form and location of affordable housing, will be informed by Parish Plans where they are available.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

5.37 The Government, in *Circular 01/2006*, requires local authorities to provide for the housing needs of gypsies and travellers through a rural exception sites policy and the allocation of sites in a Development Plan Document. The Circular considers rural sites, where not subject to special planning constraints, to be acceptable in principle; and points to the benefits that sites can bring to previously developed, untidy or derelict land. *Circular 01/2006* defines Gypsies and Travellers while *Circular 04/2007* defines Travelling Showpeople.

5.38 Land in urban areas which is suitable for housing may also be suitable for Gypsy and Traveller sites but may have land prices which are effectively beyond the reach of the Gypsy and Traveller community.

5.39 The East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) is preparing a single issue review of the *East of England Plan* which will address the needs of Gypsies and Travellers across the region. EERA published a draft policy which was subject to consultation from February to May 2008. The draft policy sets the number of additional permanent residential pitches to be provided in Huntingdonshire at 20 pitches for the period up to 2011 and thereafter provision to be made for an annual 3% increase, to be calculated from overall planned provision in 2011.

5.40 This is generally consistent with the *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)* for the wider Cambridge Sub-Region which was published in May 2006; it identified the need in Huntingdonshire for the period to 2011 to be for an additional 15 to 25 pitches. In Huntingdonshire at the time of the survey (2005) there were 20 pitches (with a capacity for 36 caravans) on the County Council owned site at St Neots, while the average number of unauthorised caravans 2002-2004 was 14 caravans.

5.41 Huntingdonshire is committed to preparing a Development Plan Document (DPD) for Sites for Gypsies and Travellers and the programme for its preparation is set out in the *Local Development Scheme*. The programme reflects the need to ensure that the DPD is consistent with the RSS policy and policies in the Core Strategy.

Policy CS 6

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Account will be taken of the need to ensure that Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are accommodated in sustainable locations where essential services such as water and sewerage are provided and with good access by foot, cycle or public transport to services such as education and health. Account will also be taken of the rural nature of Huntingdonshire where the availability of public transport is limited.

Providing sites in appropriate locations will help prevent the social exclusion of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and conflict with settled communities. Consideration will be taken of the preference of many Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople for a rural location with a degree of separation from the settled community.

The number of pitches should be appropriate to the size of the site and the availability of infrastructure and services and facilities in accordance with the general principles set out in the settlement hierarchy. The following criteria will guide the provision of sites:

there would be no significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents or operations of adjoining land uses;

the development should not adversely impact on the character of the landscape and appropriate landscaping and boundaries should be provided;

adequate schools, shops and other community facilities are within reasonable travelling distance, and can be reached by foot, cycle or public transport;

the site is served (or can be served) by an adequate water supply and appropriate means of sewage disposal which meets national standards;

the health and safety of occupants are not put at risk including through unsafe access to sites, poor air quality and unacceptable noise (as for example close to trunk roads) or unacceptable flood risk so that the quality of the environment is at the same acceptable standard as for the settled community;

there should be adequate space for operational needs including the parking, turning and servicing of vehicles.

Reasoned Justification

5.42 *Circular 01/2006* requires the Core Strategy to set out the criteria for the location of gypsy and traveller sites, as the Government sees this as a strategic issue, which will be used to guide the allocation of sites in the DPD and to meet demand which may result in planning applications on land as a rural exception site either before the DPD is prepared or in addition to sites allocated.

5.43 Additionally, "*Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites: Good Practice Guide*" (DCLG May 2008) sets out the features needed to help ensure a site is successful, easy to manage and maintain, including site location, layout, size and the services and facilities needed to make it operate effectively.

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Economic Development

5.44 The *Employment Land Review (ELR)* and the draft *Local Economic Strategy* both identify the strong economic performance that Huntingdonshire has enjoyed recently. Both the number of jobs and the number of businesses being created have been well above the national and regional averages. The *East of England Plan* identifies a target for jobs growth in Cambridgeshire of 75,000, but gives only limited guidance as to how this figure might be made up from jobs growth in the local authorities in the County. However, forecasts predict that at least 13,000 jobs will be created in Huntingdonshire.

5.45 The *ELR* looks at various models that seek to predict the amount of employment growth during the plan period, and compares this with evidence of land take up in recent years. The *ELR* concludes that of the two approaches considered planning for a 'low carbon future' is the most appropriate model and that at least 66ha of land for employment uses should be identified. The Strategy aspires towards the 'Low Carbon Future' approach, as this is recognised as the most sustainable, making the most efficient use of land and limiting impact of climate change. However the need to retain flexibility and ensure an adequate supply of deliverable land in locations where significant housing growth will be delivered is recognised and so a balance between the two approaches is taken.

5.46 Most of the jobs growth in recent years has been centred in and around Huntingdon and this trend is predicted to continue. However, to support the creation of sustainable communities it is necessary to increase the amount of employment land provided in Godmanchester, Brampton and St Neots.

5.47 Alconbury airfield has been identified as a strategic employment site in the saved structure plan Policy P2/3 in recognition of the warehouse commitment on this site that is still outstanding. As at 2008 it is being used for a variety of manufacturing and storage uses with temporary permission. The existing commitment is not likely to be implemented and the future potential of Alconbury Airfield (together with Wyton airfield) will need to be considered in the longer term as part of the next review of the Regional Spatial Strategy. That review will need to take into account wider strategic issues for the region and the range of sustainable options available.

Policy CS 7

Employment Land

At least 85ha of new land for employment will be provided before 2026 in order to support the creation of at least 13,000 jobs and reduce the significant level of out-commuting. Of this at least 15ha will be on previously developed land. Provision will be monitored regularly and the release of locations will be managed and phased during the plan period with the aims of meeting identified needs and demand and maintaining sufficient supply of deliverable sites.

As part of the overall development strategy to concentrate the majority of growth in the Huntingdon and St Neots Spatial Planning Areas, whilst observing environmental designations and constraints, strategic employment growth will be located:

In the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area where 51ha of land will be provided, of which at least 13ha will be on previously developed land and about 38ha will be on greenfield land. Provision will be made in the following general locations:

In a mixed use redevelopment in Huntingdon, for B1 ⁽¹⁴⁾uses to the west of the town centre covered by the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan, and in greenfield development for B1, B2 and B8 uses to the north west of the town.

In a mixed use redevelopment for B1 uses on land within Brampton;

In Godmanchester as part of significant, mixed use, greenfield development to the south east/east of Godmanchester, after the A14 road improvements have been implemented.

In the St Neots Spatial Planning Area where 25ha of land, all of which is greenfield land, will be provided in the following general location:

In a significant mixed use urban extension for B1, B2 and B8 uses on greenfield land to the east of St Neots.

In the St Ives Spatial Planning Area;

On existing commitments which might come forward during the plan period.

In the Ramsey Spatial Planning Area where at least 9ha of land, of which at least 2ha will be on previously developed land and about 7ha will be on greenfield land, will be provided in the following general locations:

In an employment led mixed use redevelopment for B1 and B2 uses to the west of Bury;

In a mixed use development in a previously identified location to the north west of Ramsey.

Outside of the Spatial Planning Areas, in the Key Service Centres of Little Paxton, Sawtry and Yaxley, on existing commitments which might come forward during the plan period.

Reasoned Justification

5.48 This approach is based on the *ELR* which concludes that the most sustainable option is the provision of at least 66ha of additional employment land by 2026. Past development has been at various densities and the move to more efficient use of land and the nature of the locations that will be identified (less warehousing land for instance) indicate that it will be possible to achieve much higher job densities than before and hence the need for less land.

5.49 The Council's *Economic Strategy* is promoting jobs that will feed off the growth in the high-tech economy centred around the Cambridge area and is seeking higher quality, more sustainable locations to achieve this. These will tend to be closer to the town centres and built at higher densities and often on previously developed industrial sites. Other local jobs will be created in the retail, leisure and tourism sectors as a result of population growth. The area of land identified has, however, been increased to take into account a number of factors. To reflect the main market preference for new employment land, the potential locations available and as Huntingdon has been identified as having the best balance between jobs and homes, it is considered appropriate to identify locations for additional local employment opportunities in the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area. This would help to ensure an adequate supply of deliverable sites around Huntingdon. All the options considered were evaluated to ascertain their potential highway impacts. Details of the *Huntingdonshire Spatial Strategy Options Assessment* are given in Annex 1 of the Statement of Consultation: Audit Trail.

14 For definitions of all use classes refer to the Use Classes Order revised 2006

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5.50 In St Neots, the target of 25ha of employment land is higher than the requirement identified in the ELR, in order to have a balance in the Spatial Strategy with its emphasis on substantial residential growth in the St Neots Spatial Planning Area. This also reflects the Spatial Strategy Options Assessment which noted that in most of the proposed growth options considered, the housing provision for St Neots was relatively large compared to the employment provision. Given that the proportion of residents working within the town is already high, there were concerns that this could lead to an increase in out-commuting. The higher level will help ensure more balanced communities with less out-commuting as the employment land will be integrated with new housing development and will maximise opportunities for residents to live and work in close proximity.

5.51 St Ives has outstanding commitments for employment which are considered to be sufficient to match the growth and market pressure for land.

5.52 There have been significant efforts to bring forward regeneration projects for Ramsey in recent years and to stimulate appropriate employment. To bring the supply of employment land into better balance with prospective demand the *ELR* recommended adjustments to the allocations put forward in the 1995 Local Plan for Ramsey. Therefore new directions of growth and approximate land areas involved are identified in the policy.

5.53 Little Paxton, Sawtry and Yaxley have significant outstanding commitments which are considered to be sufficient to meet expected growth and market pressures for land.

Retail

5.54 Huntingdonshire faces a number of challenges over the plan period in terms of retailing and the District's town centres. These have been identified as the need to retain more of the retail expenditure in the District to the benefit of the town centres and the wider economy of the District, to continue to improve the environment and public realm in town centres and to provide opportunities for residents to access town centre services sustainably.

5.55 National planning policy for town centres requires local authorities to identify where new retail facilities will be focused. Huntingdon and St Neots, being the main foci for growth, will take the larger proportion of retail development. Retail development in the other key settlements is important for maintaining services, providing sustainable options for residents and retaining retail expenditure.

Policy CS 8

Land for Retail Development

At least 20,000m² of comparison floorspace and 4,000m² of convenience floorspace will be provided before 2026. As part of the overall development strategy to concentrate the majority of growth in the Huntingdon and St Neots Spatial Planning Areas:

At least 9,000m² of comparison floorspace will be located in Huntingdon, concentrated in the town centre and complementary and appropriate development in significant mixed use redevelopment in the area west of the town centre covered by the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan;

At least 9,000m² of comparison floorspace will be located in St Neots, concentrated in the town centre and complementary and appropriate development as part of significant mixed use urban extension on greenfield land to the east of the town;

At least 2,000m² of comparison floorspace will be located in St Ives concentrated in the town centre; and

At least 4,000m² of convenience floorspace will be located to serve population growth in town centres across the District.

Reasoned Justification

5.56 The *Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study (HRAS)* was completed in September 2005 and updated in 2007. The Study (2005) included forecasts of floorspace requirements for both the comparison and convenience retail sectors over several different time periods, and contained advice on how best to accommodate identified requirements. The Update (2007) gives a range of comparison retail floorspace requirements for Huntingdonshire ranging between 13,900m² and 20,000m². Of these it was recommended that the higher of these two should be the Council's policy target in order to claw back lost retail expenditure to other centres.

5.57 The scale of convenience retail floorspace requirements identified was modest at around 3,900m², which was to be predominantly generated by expenditure increases after 2011 and so there was no immediate need to identify sites for further major foodstore provision in the short term. Although it was noted that after 2011 it is likely that further development will be required. A discount foodstore in Huntingdon town centre could be supported on grounds of increasing choice and there may be scope for other schemes increasing the diversity of choice in individual centres.

5.58 In order to recognise the comparatively strong retail and leisure operator demand for locations in Huntingdon, and the relative size and growth potential, retail expenditure available and level of operator interest in St Neots, the amount of floorspace was distributed in equal amounts to these two centres. The residue was directed to St Ives where there is already a relatively strong representation of the comparison goods sector. Further retail growth in Ramsey would be treated in the same way as other key settlements.

5.59 Huntingdon is the higher order centre within the District and market demand for further retail development is greatest. The implementation of the Chequers Court Phase II scheme in Huntingdon town centre is the Council's top retail priority as this is a previously developed site within the existing town centre. Delivery of this scheme is expected to attract additional comparison goods retailers to Huntingdon offering a greater diversity of shopping opportunities which is critically important for the retention of comparison retail expenditure. Compared to the other Market Towns, Huntingdon has more opportunities for use of previously developed land in and adjacent to the town centre to strengthen the range of retail provision in locations most easily accessed by sustainable modes of transport.

5.60 St Neots has been identified as the location for the majority of residential growth. Easy access to shops and services by sustainable modes of transport will be vital to promoting this as a sustainable community. The town centre should benefit from increased consumer demand and expenditure and opportunities should be maximised to provide additional retail floorspace within the town centre to reduce residents' need to travel elsewhere to shop. To promote social cohesion the urban extension will include a new district centre incorporating shops and other services that residents will require on a day-to-day basis. This should complement the town centre not compete with it.

5.61 St Ives has many specialist independent retailers and competes well with other market towns. In order to maintain its competitiveness a modest amount of comparison floorspace is considered appropriate.

5.62 Ramsey has an outstanding convenience floorspace commitment in the form of a new supermarket at the northern end of the town which was taken into account in the *Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study* before the figure of 3,900m² was recommended.

5.63 The Development Control Policies DPD will provide more detailed guidance on the preferred scale and location of retail development, including the focus on town centre shopping and provision of local shopping facilities.

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5.64 Future retail demand is particularly difficult to predict beyond about a 10 year horizon as it is such a dynamic part of the economy. Thus, it is very important to monitor development and review provision requirements.

Areas of Strategic Greenspace Enhancement

5.65 Huntingdonshire's countryside needs to respond to changing economic and environmental circumstances. Improving the ecological, visual and recreational value of the countryside brings environmental, social and health benefits. It can also boost the local economy through increased visitor spending. It is something that should be addressed by all proposals within or adjoining the countryside and some particular opportunities for significant enhancement have been identified. Access to quality green space is a priority for the Council as set out in *Growing Success*, the Corporate Plan. Green space forms an important part of the District's Green Infrastructure which can come under considerable pressure as a result of new development. Green Infrastructure is essential to enhancing biodiversity by providing important green linkages for species and helping to protect against habitat fragmentation.

5.66 Green infrastructure and particularly green space has an important role to play in tackling the effects of climate change. Green space provides important cooling, shading and filtering effects that will become even more significant as temperatures rise as predicted. Trees and woodland in particular have a role to play as they store carbon dioxide and intercept rainfall which can help to reduce erosion and prevent flooding.

5.67 The following areas of 'Strategic Green Space Enhancement' reflect the targets for habitat creation identified in the *Structure Plan* and the Biodiversity Partnership for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's *50 Year Wildlife Vision*. They also reflect the Green Infrastructure Initiatives set out in the Cambridgeshire Horizons Green Infrastructure Strategy. The process of improving and linking these corridors and habitats is known as 'strategic green space enhancement.'

Policy CS 9

Strategic Green Space Enhancement

Areas of Strategic Green space Enhancement, along with new and enhanced green corridors connecting them with areas of population growth in order to form a coherent network are identified as follows and depicted in the figure below 'Policy CS9 - Strategic Greenspace Enhancement':

The Great Fen Project area with links to the Peterborough Green Parks, Ramsey and Huntingdon;

The Grafham Water / Brampton Woodlands area with links to Huntingdon and St Neots; and

The Great Ouse Valley area with links between St Neots and Earith.

Within these areas and along the corridors coordinated action will be taken via consultation with statutory and other agencies to:

safeguard existing and potential sites of nature conservation value, including ancient woodlands and historic landscape features;

create new wildlife habitats;

contribute to diversification of the local economy and tourist development through enhancement of existing and provision of new facilities;

create appropriate access for a wide range of users to enjoy the countryside; and
contribute where possible to enhanced flood protection.

It is particularly important that resources are concentrated in these areas in the early part of the plan period in order to create opportunities for additional outdoor recreation facilities for the growth in population expected and the early creation of new green corridors.

In the longer term the enhancement of the following green corridors will provide additional corridors and connections with key areas across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and enhancement of a coherent network:

Grafham Water area with the Great Fen Project area;

The Great Fen project area with Needingworth Wet Fen (Fen Edge project) and South Peterborough Green Park;

The Great Ouse and the East of St Neots area with the proposed Forest of South Cambridgeshire.

Reasoned Justification

5.68 Huntingdonshire is a predominantly rural area with a variety of green spaces including rivers, gardens, parks, farmland and woods which make up a large proportion of the District. These green spaces support a great variety of plants and animals. Focusing countryside enhancement efforts on the areas identified in Policy 9 will give maximum scope for consolidating and linking important habitats, and enable complementary access improvements to be pursued. Within the defined areas, it will be important to ensure that development proposals do not conflict with this vision and, when development does occur, that the design, landscaping and any community benefits contribute to its realisation.

5.69 Cambridgeshire Horizons' *Green Infrastructure Strategy* is a valuable source of information that seeks to enhance, reinstate and create green infrastructure and a network of corridors connecting the key areas across Cambridgeshire. The corridors will allow sites important for biodiversity to be connected thus encouraging the spread of wildlife and will also create opportunities for countryside recreation including walking and cycling.

5.70 Green infrastructure is defined as a network of protected sites, nature reserves, green spaces (including local parks, sports grounds, cemeteries, school grounds, allotments, commons and historic parks and gardens) woodlands (including Ancient Woodlands) and green-way links. It offers opportunities to provide for a number of functions, including recreation and wildlife as well as landscape enhancement. Policy CS9 aims to promote green corridors and habitat linkages within and between the identified areas to form a network of connected green space.

5.71 Ensuring a clean, green and attractive environment is a key priority of the Council. One of the aims in the Corporate Plan *Growing Success* is to maintain existing areas of open and green space and provide strategic new areas. This is supported by the *Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)* which aims to promote efficient resource use and an environment that is protected from and adaptable to the effects of climate change. Policy 9 implements these spatial elements of *Growing Success* and the SCS.

5.72 The Great Fen Project encompasses an area that incorporates Woodwalton Fen and Holme Fen. Woodwalton Fen is a RAMSAR site of international significance and both Fens are important National Nature Reserves. The project involves a major initiative of landscape scale restoration in partnership with other agencies to protect and enhance Fenland habitats and to link Woodwalton Fen and Holme Fen National Nature Reserves.

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A masterplan and management plan will be produced to balance the need to enhance biodiversity, provide areas for public access and countryside recreation, provide visitor facilities, undertake hydrological engineering and provide flood storage and further economic activity compatible with the aims of the project.

5.73 The area of strategic green space created through the Great Fen Project will complement the rapid rise in population in the northern part of the London Stansted Cambridge Peterborough growth area. Additionally it will contribute to the economic regeneration of north east Huntingdonshire in and around the market town of Ramsey where the local economy has been in decline in parallel with the decline in the agricultural workforce as farming becomes more efficient. It will also enable habitats to adapt to the long term effects of climate change. Policies will be included in the Development control DPD to promote and control development within the project area and surrounding area to ensure that the restoration is enabled and not prejudiced.

5.74 Grafham Water offers opportunities for water and land based recreation together. It also has scope for the creation of wildlife habitats and better links to nearby woodlands such as Brampton Wood as well as other links to green space, such as Hinchingsbrooke Country Park for people and wildlife through green corridors incorporating sustainable access routes where possible. A major focus of initiatives in this area will be the provision of improved linkages for biodiversity corridors and habitats. Improvements to Hinchingsbrooke Country Park will be identified in the emerging Huntingdon West Area Action Plan. Existing habitats and species will be protected and the scope for wider enhancement and development considered. The County Biodiversity Action Plan provides guidance on specific species and habitats to target.

5.75 The Great Ouse Valley is a distinctive lowland landscape of extensive areas of wetlands, including major areas of water filled sand and gravel pits such as Paxton Pits and Needingworth Quarry, and meadows which require sensitive agricultural management. It is close to centres of population and there needs to be a balance struck between the needs of recreation and biodiversity. Major expansion is scheduled at Paxton Pits nature reserve. A focus of initiatives in the Great Ouse Valley will be enhanced access for all and by sustainable means including foot, cycle, horse and boat. Gaps in the network should be addressed including suitable bridging points where feasible. Existing and new routes should act as biodiversity corridors as well as access points. The demands of access will need to be carefully managed to protect sensitive environments and balanced with the need to promote and enhance the local diversity. Again, the County Biodiversity Action Plan provides guidance on specific species and habitats to target.

5.76 As emphasised in policy CS9 by the inclusion of the green corridor to the Forest of South Cambridgeshire, links with green infrastructure initiatives outside of the District are important. The aim of policy CS9 is to create a well connected network of green corridors which integrates into the wider green corridor network of neighbouring Districts.

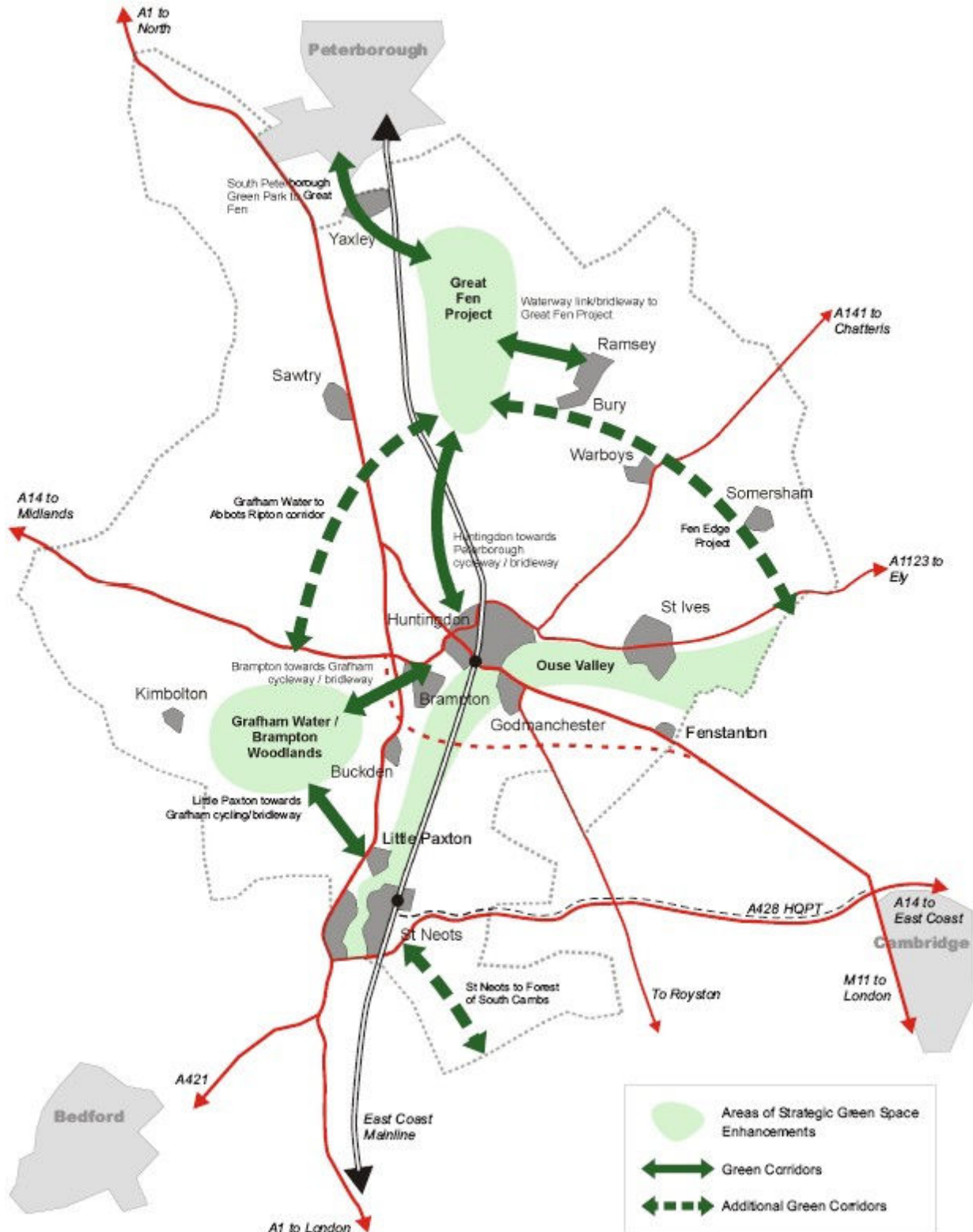
5.77 Other types of green space outside of the identified strategic areas of green space enhancement also make an important contribution to biodiversity and the character and attractiveness of places. Although not identified in the same way as strategic areas of green space enhancement, these additional areas make up part of the green infrastructure of Huntingdonshire. Such areas may be locally recognised and designated, for example a County Wildlife Site, or they may simply be footpaths or roadside verges. These areas are important to protecting and enriching biodiversity as they provide important green corridors and are home to a variety of species. They also provide opportunities for people to interact with and learn about wildlife on their doorsteps and, in conjunction with open space and recreational facilities, encourage healthy and active lifestyles by giving people opportunities to walk, cycle and play. The Council is committed to ensuring the promotion of quality open space and has carried out an audit and assessment of open space provision in the District. Development proposals will be required to contribute to open space provision and should not entail the loss or partial loss of open space in accordance with the emerging policies on sports and recreational facilities and open space in the Development Control Policies DPD. Standards will be set out in the Development Control Policies DPD regarding the provision of open space required from new development.

5.78 All policies within the LDF will be carefully assessed as part of the Sustainability Appraisal process which aims to ensure that policies are sustainable. There are a number of sustainability objectives which relate to green space and a summary of the conclusions drawn from the Sustainability Appraisal can be found in Annex 1 of the Statement of Consultation: Audit Trail. An Appropriate Assessment has been carried out to ensure that the Core Strategy will not have significant effects on sites of international importance such as Woodwalton Fen.

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Policy CS9 - Strategic Greenspace Enhancement



Infrastructure and Implementation

5.79 The delivery of growth and development is dependent on the timely delivery of supporting infrastructure. The ability to deliver infrastructure and the timing of its delivery are critical determinants of the scale, location and timing of development. It will be important to ensure that infrastructure is provided ahead of development to safeguard against adverse environmental impact. Transport infrastructure and services play a key role in creating sustainable travel patterns to, from and within development areas. Equally water, energy and green infrastructure are all important requirements in achieving development which is sustainable. Social infrastructure must be provided that can meet the emerging demands from new communities and anticipated changes in the existing population.

Existing Delivery Mechanisms

5.80 The District Council's delivery roles and responsibilities sit within a wider partnership structure operating from the local to the regional and even national level. The Cambridgeshire Together Board has jointly established a *Vision for Cambridgeshire* to be a county of strong, growing, prosperous and inclusive communities supported by excellent services where people can fulfil their potential, live longer, have healthier lifestyles and influence decision-making.

5.81 Cambridgeshire's Local Area Agreement (LAA) will be the three year delivery plan for this vision. The LAA, alongside the Action Plans developed by other key partnerships, will focus on delivery of outcomes that will make a difference on the ground. In order to fulfil the requirement of having a LAA framework that builds on the work of district-based LSPs, the main priorities identified in Cambridgeshire's five Community Strategies have been consolidated and integrated into the LAA.

5.82 Growth in the Cambridge sub-region is coordinated by Cambridgeshire Horizons whose aim is to drive forward the development of new communities and infrastructure in the area. To ensure this is done in an integrated, coherent and consistent manner a Joint Strategic Growth Implementation Committee has been established to provide a strategic mechanism for each authority and Cambridgeshire Horizons to explore the issues relating to growth. Delivery boards currently exist for Northstowe and (Cambridge) Urban Fringes as these will see significant growth; consideration is being given to the establishment of a Market Towns delivery board too.

5.83 The Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership (HSP) involves representatives from agencies including Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Constabulary, environmental agencies, local businesses and voluntary sector organisations. These agencies provide important services to the public such as health care, community safety, transport, education, environmental protection, leisure, economic development and planning. These agencies have teamed up to work together more effectively to tackle the 'big issues' in the area and improve quality of life. They do this by 'joining-up' their activities to make the best use of resources and by sharing knowledge and expertise.

5.84 The Cambridgeshire Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Consortium was established in 2004 and, as at June 2008, 22 infrastructure organisations were members including Councils for Voluntary Service, Directions Plus, Care Network, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Council for Voluntary Youth Services, Cambridgeshire Independent Advice Centre and Cambridgeshire ACRE. The Consortium's main role has been to identify gaps in VCS infrastructure service provision and deliver a funded programme of improvements linked to such prioritised objectives as ICT and governance.

5.85 The lead agencies in the delivery of transport projects are Cambridgeshire County Council, the Highways Agency, the Department for Transport and Network Rail. Cambridgeshire County Council delivers projects through the Local Transport Plan (LTP). Funding for the LTP is obtained from a number of sources the major ones being:

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- Central Government Integrated Transport block
- Developer funding
- Growth Areas Fund (GAF)
- Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF)
- Transport Innovation Fund (TIF)
- Kickstart Bus Funding (DfT)

5.86 The Highways Agency is responsible for directing funds to the strategic road network, which would include the proposed improvements to the A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton and the A428 Caxton to St Neots.

Infrastructure Requirements

5.87 Infrastructure is provided by a variety of commercial and public bodies through a range of different funding and delivery mechanisms. Decisions about the prioritisation and delivery are taken at different levels varying from the national level, through regional to the local level, or at a combination of these. As a result coordination can be problematic. Decisions relating to development contributions and prioritisation are taken at the local level with regard being had to other funding and delivery mechanisms.

5.88 Huntingdonshire District Council's approach to funding delivery will be set out in a Local Investment Framework (LIF) for the District commissioned in March 2008. Initial research for this has informed this section. This approach will allow consideration and understanding of potential funding available to underpin delivery of the spatial strategy and establish the relevant bodies and agencies roles and responsibilities who will be instrumental in delivering the strategy and act together as a delivery vehicle. This will determine:

- the specific local and regional infrastructure requirements identified on a phased basis
- a cost plan for this provision
- the likely scale of public sector funding for these works
- the level of contribution from private sector development
- the technical justification for these levels of contribution
- the potential funding gaps between infrastructure requirements and likely available public and private funding sources
- proposals for land value capture mechanisms, delivery mechanisms and accountable body arrangements
- guidance on the inter-agency approach and roles and responsibility of each of the public sector bodies including the local authorities, infrastructure providers and delivery agencies
- the future monitoring and review process

5.89 The provision of infrastructure will be dependent on significant levels of mainstream public sector funding sources (LTP, LSC) as well as Growth Area Funding (GAF) and Community Infrastructure Funding (CIF). Justifying the level of expenditure will require a comprehensive business plan-led solution that links the infrastructure provision to growth trajectories. A principal concern is the relatively short timescale of public sector funding programmes, for instance three years for GAF funding cycles. To add to the complexity, utilities works and funding are subject to their own five year Asset Management Plans.

5.90 The Core Strategy has been determined following consultation with the bodies responsible for infrastructure delivery. Whilst the views of those bodies have been used in testing the strategy for robustness of delivery and underpin the strategy, there remain some areas which will require further detailed evidence based assessment in consultation with the responsible bodies and agencies. The principal reason for this is differences in the planning cycles of some organisations and the Core Strategy. This is a particular issue for utility companies because the regulators do not permit them to spend unlimited sums on the provision of infrastructure that may or may not be required. The utility companies must justify their proposals and the impact this will have on their customers. Essentially, the utility companies plan the strategic works that need to be undertaken in five year periods. The

decisions taken are often based on assumptions regarding growth trajectories, either sub-regionally or at specific locations, and whilst the overall provision is intended to meet each utility company's statutory obligations in a cost-effective manner, developers may be faced with large off-site costs if the available supply is remote from their proposed development. Certain works have long lead-in times and developers have to allow for this and the impact that has on their construction programmes and cash flow. Huntingdonshire District Council will work in partnership with service providers and developers to ensure that necessary infrastructure is provided in a timely fashion.

5.91 In Huntingdonshire the critical areas of dependency between development and infrastructure arise in transport and access including public transport provision; the provision of utilities including water supply and sewage treatment, and supporting community infrastructure including health facilities and education. The key dependencies between the delivery of the spatial strategy and infrastructure provision are set out below.

5.92 Research for the Council's emerging Watercycle Study has identified where current treatment infrastructure has insufficient capacity for development in its catchment. The scale of proposed development at St Neots is such that a new treatment works and increase in discharge consent is likely to be required. The design, construction and commissioning period for a new treatment plant is in the order of 5 years and, if land purchase negotiations are added, the period could be 8 years. This constraint could have a significant impact on the timing of growth at St Neots, particularly if funding is not obtained until the period 2015 – 2020. Any development proposals falling within the Upwood Sewage Treatment Works catchment will need to ensure that no adverse effect would arise impacting on Woodwalton Fen.

5.93 The transport network across Huntingdonshire is dominated by the north-south corridor of the A1(M) and East Coast mainline and east-west A14(T) route. Existing infrastructure contributes to the dominance of the car both in physical terms as a barrier and in operational terms through congestion. The A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton improvement scheme will alleviate the situation, with the preferred route having been confirmed. The Cambridgeshire Guided Busway is programmed to commence operation in spring 2009. Phasing of strategic greenfield sites close to the A14 within the plan period will be required to coincide with the associated works with the A14 improvements. Junction improvements will be required to the A428 to overcome objections to further development in St Neots. Any further works to the road network (such as the A1 at Buckden) that are identified during the plan period may affect the phasing of sites where it is proven that the development is significantly dependent on that infrastructure.

5.94 The proposed growth in St Neots would require a new primary substation (10-12MW). For Huntingdon and St Ives improvement to the grid is being undertaken along with additional circuits to provide increased capacity and reliability of supply within EDF's control. These are expected to be completed in 2013. Godmanchester is expected to require around £3-4 millions of improvements. For Ramsey the scale of development may trigger the need for a second circuit transformer. For Sawtry existing supplies are expected to be adequate for the limited scale of housing growth envisaged but may not be for any high demand employment use. Significant problems reinforcing the supply to Peterborough previously have resulted in difficulties increasing the supply beyond what is now available.

5.95 Housing and employment growth within Huntingdonshire needs also to address the District's current deficits in social and community infrastructure. The rural nature of the district creates problems in relation to social infrastructure development due to a lack of critical mass. This is reflected in relatively poor access to education, childcare and health care services in the more rural parts of the District particularly in villages to the north and west.

5.96 With extensive population growth centred around existing larger settlements the demand for social and community facilities will grow significantly. Furthermore, social and community facilities can often be the anchor that draws different communities together and so will play an increasing role in the District to ensure that new and

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existing communities become integrated. The level of social infrastructure (and housing typology) will need to reflect the future demographics of the District, with an ageing population expected, creating a higher level of dependants in the latter age ranges and a lower proportion of children aged 0-14 years.

5.97 Although there is spare capacity within the District's existing network of schools, new provision will be required in conjunction with major new housing developments to ensure adequate proximity and promote opportunities for children to reach school by foot or cycle. Adequate community and leisure centres will be required to meet the needs of residents in new residential areas to contribute to achieving the Core Strategy's objectives for healthy, socially cohesive communities. The Market Towns are currently reasonably well served by police stations. There are seven fire stations and three ambulance stations with poorer services generally to the north of the District where there are lower concentrations of residents. Adequate emergency and essential services will be required to accompany new development.

5.98 Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust is responsible for the overall commissioning of health care services in Cambridgeshire. National and local health policy is seeking to provide a greater range of health care services in accessible locations, closer to patients' homes. Considerable expansion and improvements to the community based health infrastructure in Huntingdonshire will be required during the period covered by the Core Strategy. The PCT identifies potential sources of capital and revenue funding for health infrastructure, including contributions from new housing developments.

Co-ordinating Delivery and Implementation

5.99 The District Council will work with Cambridgeshire Horizons, members of the HSP, private sector delivery agencies and service providers as appropriate in preparing the LIF and identifying key roles and responsibilities for delivering the LIF. The District Council has endeavoured to consider the implications of known infrastructure requirements in devising the spatial strategy. However, significant delay or non-delivery of major infrastructure projects, such as the A14 improvements, may trigger a review of the Core Strategy.

Statement of Intent

The District Council will work with Cambridgeshire Horizons, members of the HSP, private sector delivery agencies and service providers as appropriate in preparing the LIF and identifying key roles and responsibilities for delivering the LIF.

The HSP Growth and Infrastructure Group will become the Project Board responsible for coordinating delivery of the LIF projects, priorities and interventions.

The District Council and the HSP Growth and Infrastructure Group will be responsible for identifying the infrastructure and project priorities, and therefore investment decisions, which are needed to support the Huntingdonshire housing and employment trajectories. HDC and the HSP Growth and Infrastructure Group will liaise, as appropriate, with the LAA Board and Cambridgeshire Horizons as these priorities and investment decisions are identified to ensure consistency with projects and investment at the sub-regional level.

HDC will investigate the extent to which the Huntingdonshire tariff/ Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) arrangement can be coordinated with tariff proposals being developed by Cambridgeshire Horizons.

5.100 The detailed framework for delivering infrastructure requirements identified in the LIF and for calculating and negotiating necessary obligations will be set out in separate Supplementary Planning Documents which will be updated on a regular basis. Consideration will be given to the possibility of the CIL replacing some obligations in due course. Huntingdonshire forms part of a wider growth area, and some of the items for which contributions

will be required may be strategic in nature (such as strategic open space). Contributions from individual developments may be pooled where appropriate, but in all such cases the nature and scale of contributions sought will be related to the size of scheme and the extent to which it places additional demands upon the area.

Policy CS 10

Contributions to Infrastructure Requirements

Development proposals will be expected to provide or contribute towards the cost of providing appropriate infrastructure, and of meeting social and environmental requirements, where these are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms where this complies with the requirements set out in Circular 5/2005 or successor documents.

Contributions may also be required to meet the management and maintenance of services and facilities provided through an obligation where this complies with the requirements set out in Circular 5/2005. The appropriate range and level of contributions will be assessed in a comprehensive manner, taking into account strategic infrastructure requirements and using standard charges where appropriate. Standards and formulae for calculating contributions will be set out in separate Supplementary Planning Documents or Development Plan Documents. Where appropriate, the particular requirements of specific sites, including any additional or special requirements will be set out in other DPDs.

In order to prevent avoidance of contributions any requirement will be calculated on the complete developable area, rather than the area or number of homes/ floorspace of a proposal, where the proposal forms a sub-division of a larger developable area.

The nature and scale of any planning obligations sought will be related to the form of development and its potential impact upon the surrounding area. Where appropriate, any such provision will be required to be provided on site. Where this is not possible, a commuted payment is likely to be sought. In determining the nature and scale of any planning obligation, specific site conditions and other material considerations including viability, redevelopment of previously developed land or mitigation of contamination may be taken into account. The timing of provision of infrastructure and facilities will be carefully considered in order to ensure that appropriate provision is in place before development is occupied.

Contributions that may be required include the following:

- affordable and key worker housing;

- open space and recreation (including leisure and sports facilities);

- strategic green infrastructure;

- transport (including footpaths, bridleways, cycleways, highways, public transport, car parks and travel planning);

- community facilities (including meeting halls, youth activities, play facilities, library and information services, cultural facilities and places of worship);

- education, health and social care and community safety;

- utilities infrastructure and renewable energy;

- emergency and essential services;

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environmental improvements;
drainage / flood prevention and protection;
waste recycling facilities; and
public art, heritage and archaeology.

Reasoned Justification

5.101 Increased investment in infrastructure is required to mitigate the impact of development and enable growing communities to be as sustainable as possible. Development can place additional demands upon physical infrastructure and social facilities, as well as having impacts upon the environment. In many cases planning obligations will be required, so that provision is made for the necessary improvements to services and facilities, or to secure compensatory provision for any loss or damage arising, for instance the loss of open space. Obligations may also be necessary for corporate planning objectives to be secured, in particular, the provision of affordable and key worker housing where this is justified.

5.102 This approach highlights the general principle that obligations will be required where necessary in planning terms, and indicates the broad range of matters that may need to be addressed. The detailed framework for calculating and negotiating obligations will be set out in separate Supplementary Planning Documents which will be updated on a regular basis. Huntingdonshire forms part of a wider regional and sub-regional growth area, and some of the items for which contributions will be required will be strategic in nature.

5.103 The District Council will liaise with other stakeholders who provide infrastructure and other facilities to contribute to the achievement of their aspirations and objectives, insofar as their activities may be affected by the changes resulting from delivery of this Core Strategy. This may involve infrastructure and facilities outside the District. For example, liaison with Anglian Water over changes to the management of Rutland Water necessary as a result of increased visitors from Huntingdonshire.

6 Monitoring

6.1 Monitoring and review are key aspects of the development plan system with its emphasis on delivery of sustainable development and sustainable communities. Local Development Frameworks should be regularly reviewed and revised to ensure that components of the framework are updated to reflect changing circumstances nationally, regionally and locally. In the Core Strategy there should be a focus on implementation, setting out agreed delivery mechanisms to ensure that policies achieve desired results in the required time frame. Monitoring will evaluate progress being made towards delivering the spatial vision and objectives through the implementation of policies. The results of such monitoring should provide the basis for any contingencies to be implemented or the need for a review to be undertaken.

6.2 PPS3 requires Local Planning Authorities to set out a housing trajectory to illustrate the expected rate of housing delivery for the plan period. Housing trajectories show past performance and estimate future performance in relation to housing delivery, thus supporting the 'plan, monitor, manage' approach of the planning system. A trajectory illustrates this data in graphical form, enabling local planning authorities to monitor any shortfall or surplus in housing supply, and to manage future provision to ensure the required amount of housing is delivered.

6.3 When preparing the strategic housing development policy for consultation, completion data was only available up to March 2006. Therefore the total housing target was derived from this data and has not been changed in order to avoid confusion. The trajectory below has been updated to include completions from April 2001 to March 2007. The projected annual completions are based on information included within the *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment*.

6.4 PPS3 places significant emphasis on achieving efficient use of land. Local Planning Authorities are required to set out how they will achieve this having regard to the targets set out in National and Regional policy. The National and Regional targets for the reuse of previously developed land (PDL) for housing are both set at 60%. The *East of England Plan*, however identifies that this target will not be achievable in some districts while in others substantially more will be possible due to the character of the authority in question. Huntingdonshire, as set out in 'A Spatial Portrait of Huntingdonshire', does not have the heritage of PDL of more urban or industrialised authorities.

6.5 The Council is committed to achieving sustainable development and to the reuse of previously developed land where it is well located. To this end the Council has established a sequence of development that promotes the use of well located PDL in advance of greenfield land. The sequence is defined by the planned provision of infrastructure. In the short to medium term, delivery mainly comes from existing commitments, which can mostly be delivered without significant additional infrastructure provision. This is then followed by the development of PDL in locations identified in policy CS2, particularly in Huntingdon. Again these locations are not dependent on significant additional infrastructure provision. The next phase will see the start of strategic greenfield development, particularly near St Neots. This phase will be dependent on provision of a significant amount of local infrastructure, in particular water supply and education infrastructure will be required in St Neots. The last phase will be that greenfield development around Huntingdon that is dependent on the improvements to the A14 and will therefore not be able to go ahead until about 2015 when the improvements are complete and the changes to the local road network in Huntingdon have been made.

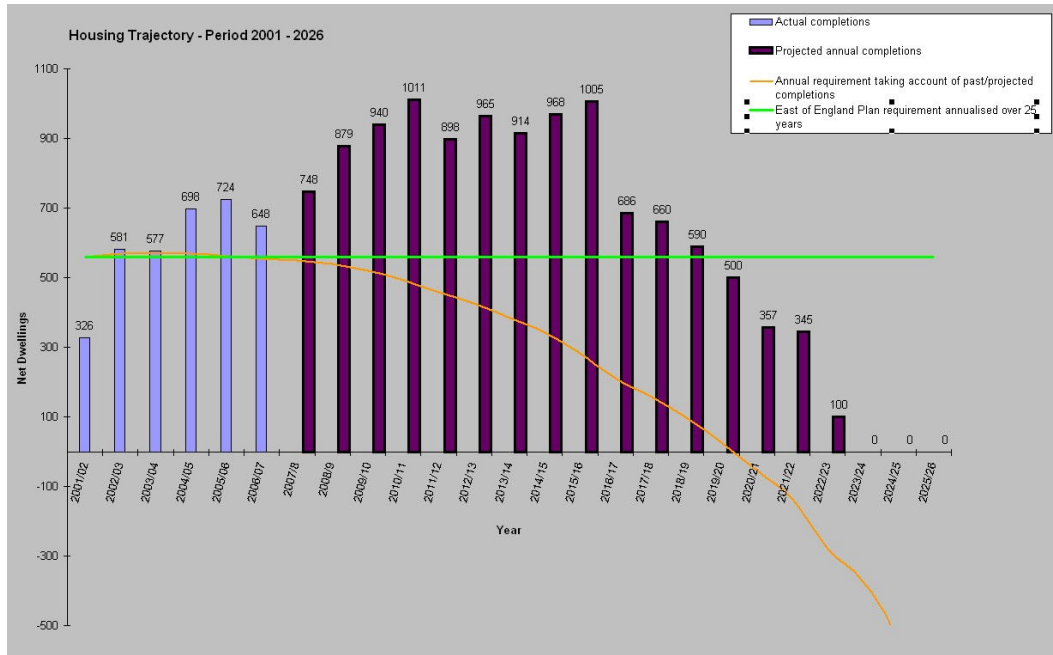
Monitoring

Huntingdonshire LDF | Submission Core Strategy 2008

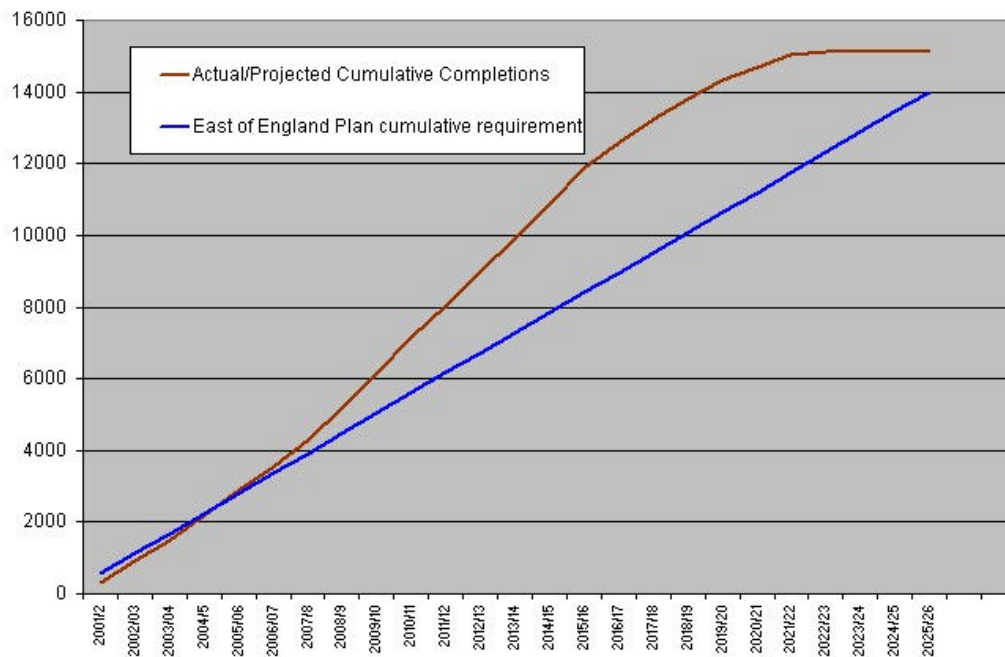
Annual Completions and Projections Data as at 31 March 2007

Period 2001 - 2026	COMPLETIONS										PROJECTIONS															
	Year	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Actual completions	326	581	577	698	724	648																				
Projected annual completions							748	879	940	1011	898	965	914	968	1005	686	660	590	500	357	345	100	0	0	0	0
Annual requirement taking account of past/projected completions	560	570	569	569	563	555	550	539	519	492	458	426	385	341	284	212	159	97	26	-53	-135	-280	-373	-560	-1120	
East of England Plan requirement annualised over 25 years	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560

Housing Trajectory 2001 to 2026 as at 31 March 2007



Actual and Projected Cumulative Completions and Projections against the East of England Plan requirements



Monitoring

Huntingdonshire LDF | Submission Core Strategy 2008

6.6 In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Council will produce an *Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)* containing an assessment of Local Development Document preparation against milestones set out in the *Local Development Scheme (LDS)*, and the extent to which policies set out in Local Development Documents are being achieved and targets being met. The *AMR* will be the main mechanism for assessing the LDF's performance and effect. As well as linking with spatial objectives and policies, indicators in the *AMR* will also link to sustainability appraisal objectives in order to identify the significant effects of policy implementation. If, as a result of monitoring, areas are identified where a policy is not working, or key policy targets are not being met, this may give rise to a review of the Core Strategy or other parts of the LDF. Information on housing delivery in terms of net additional dwellings, in the form of the housing trajectory will be set out in the *AMR* .

6.7 The following table sets out performance indicators and targets which will form the basis for identifying where the spatial strategy needs to be strengthened, maintained or revised.

Performance indicators and targets

Indicator	Indicator Type	Related Spatial Objective(s)	Related SA Objective(s)	Related Policy	Target	Responsible Agencies	Implementation
Land, Water and Resources							
Number of dwellings completed (net)	Core indicator, Significant effects	1, 2, 3	16	CS2	550 per annum	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector, Registered Social Landlords	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs
% housing completions on previously developed land	Core output, Significant effects	8, 12	1	CS2	29%	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector, Registered Social Landlords	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions, SPDs and UDFs
Estimated household water consumption	Local output, Significant effects	12	2	CS1	Reduce per capita water consumption rates	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs
Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality.	Core output, Significant effects	2, 13	2, 6	CS1	Reduce number of planning permissions granted contrary to EA advice.	Huntingdonshire District Council	Through development control decisions
Biodiversity							
Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance:	Core output, Significant effects	8, 9	1, 3, 12	CS1 & CS9	Increase the number of ha of specified target habitats	Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambs Biodiversity Partnership, Natural England, RSPB	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs, Countryside Services Initiatives
1. change in priority habitats and species (by type)							
2. change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional, sub-regional or local significance							
Landscape, Townscape and Archaeology							

Monitoring

Huntingdonshire LDF | Submission Core Strategy 2008

Indicator	Indicator Type	Related Spatial Objective(s)	Related SA Objective(s)	Related Policy	Target	Responsible Agencies	Implementation
Large scale housing sites meeting 'Building for Life' equivalent standards	Local output, Significant effects	10, 11, 12, 13	4, 5, 10, 13	CS1	60% to achieve Silver Standard equivalent	District Council, Private Sector	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs, Conservation initiatives
Climate Change and Pollution							
% household waste which is recycled or composted	Local output, Significant effects	12	8	CS1	50% by 2011 56% by 2016 60% by 2021	District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council	Provision of recycling facilities, Recycling campaigns, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Waste Strategy
% of housing completions in Market Towns and Key Service Centres	Local output, Significant effects	1, 12, 13	7, 9	CS2 & CS3	Maximise the % of housing completions in Market Towns and Key Service Centres	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector, Registered Social Landlords	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs
Inclusive Communities							
% of housing completions on qualifying sites which are affordable	Core output, Significant effects	2, 3	15, 16	CS4 & CS5	40%	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector, Registered Social Landlords	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions
Amount of new residential development within 30 mins public transport time of GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, areas of employment and a major retail centre	Core output, Significant effects	1	14, 15	CS1	Maximise the amount of new residential development within 30 mins public transport time of GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, areas of employment and a major retail centre	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector, Registered Social Landlords	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs
Number of permissions granted for new public or private Gypsy, Traveller & Travelling Showpeople sites, or expansion of existing sites	Core output	3	15, 16	CS6	Increase provision of pitches available on legal sites for Gypsies, Travellers & Travelling Showpeople	County Council, Registered Social Landlords, Private Sector	Through Gypsies and Travellers DPD and development control decisions
Economic Activity							

Indicator	Indicator Type	Related Spatial Objective(s)	Related SA Objective(s)	Related Policy	Target	Responsible Agencies	Implementation
Amount and % of employment floorspace developed on previously developed land	Core output, Significant effects	6, 8, 12	1	CS7	Maximise the % of completed employment floorspace on previously developed land	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs
Amount of land for which planning permission has been granted for employment uses	Local output, Significant effects	4, 6, 15	17, 18	CS7	Annual average 4.3 ha	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs
% of retail completions in Huntingdon and St Neots	Local output, Significant effects	5, 7	14, 17, 18	CS8	Ensure a balance between the two main market towns of Huntingdon and St Neots	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs

Appendix 1 Glossary

Adoption

The point at which the final agreed version of a document comes fully into use.

Affordable Housing

Housing available at a significant discount below market levels so as to be affordable to householders who cannot either rent or purchase property that meets their needs on the open market. It can include social-rented housing and intermediate housing. It is defined in PPS3: Housing.

Amenity

A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the inter-relationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquility.

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)

Document produced each year to report on progress in producing the *Local Development Framework* and implementing its policies.

Areas of Strategic Greenspace Enhancement

Areas which have been identified as having opportunities to expand and create strategic greenspace.

Biodiversity

The whole variety of life on earth. It includes all species of plants and animals, their genetic variation and the ecosystems of which they are a part.

Brownfield

Previously developed land (PDL). In the sequential approach this is preferable to Greenfield land. Previously developed land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings), and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition includes the curtilage of the development. Previously developed land may occur in both built-up and rural settings. A precise definition is included in Planning Policy Statement 3 'Housing'.

Built-up area

Excludes buildings that are clearly detached from the main body of the settlement, and gardens and other undeveloped land within the curtilage of buildings at the edge of the settlement, especially where those gardens relate more to the surrounding countryside than they do to the built-up parts of the settlement.

Community Infrastructure

Facilities available for use by the community that provide for the health, welfare, social, educational, leisure, recreational and cultural needs of the community. Examples include village halls, doctors' surgeries, pubs, churches and children play areas. It may also include areas of informal open space and sports facilities.

Comparison Floorspace

Shops retailing items not obtained on a frequent basis. These include clothing, footwear, household and recreational goods.

Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)

The power given to the Local Authority to acquire land for redevelopment which may include development by private developers.

Conservation Area

A designated area of special architectural and/or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. It is a recognition of the value of a group of buildings and their surroundings and the need to protect not just individual buildings but the character of the area as a whole.

Convenience Floorspace

Shops retailing everyday essential items, including food, drinks, newspapers/magazines and confectionery.

Core Strategy

The main document in the *Local Development Framework*. It is a *Development Plan Document* containing the overall vision, objectives, strategy and key policies for managing development in Huntingdonshire.

County Structure Plan

An existing document containing strategic planning policies and proposals for the county. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 it will be phased out and replaced by policies in the *Regional Spatial Strategy* and *Development Plan Documents*.

Curtilage

The area occupied by a property and land closely associated with that property. E.g. in terms of a house and garden, the garden normally forms the curtilage of the property, but fields and paddocks would be outside the curtilage.

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

The Government department responsible for planning and production of planning guidance

Development Plan

The documents which together provide the main point of reference when considering planning proposals. The Development Plan includes the *Regional Spatial Strategy* and *Development Plan Documents*.

Development Plan Documents

A document containing local planning policies or proposals which form part of the *Development Plan*, which has been subject to independent examination.

European Sites

Consist of Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), RAMSAR sites and sites on draft lists for protection as outlined in Regulation 10 of the Habitats Regulations 1994.

Examination

Independent inquiry into the soundness of a draft *Development Plan Document* or *Draft Statement of Community Involvement*, chaired by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State, whose recommendations are binding.

Green Infrastructure

Network of protected sites, nature reserves, green spaces (including local parks, sports grounds, cemeteries, school grounds, allotments, commons and historic parks and gardens) woodlands (including Ancient Woodlands) and green-way links. It offers opportunities to provide for a number of functions, including recreation and wildlife as well as landscape enhancement.

Greenfield

Land which has not been developed before. Applies to most sites outside built-up area boundaries.

Habitat

The natural home or environment of a plant or animal.

Glossary

Huntingdonshire LDF | Submission Core Strategy 2008

Housing Needs Assessment

An assessment of housing needs in the local area. This assessment plays a crucial role in underpinning the planning policies relating to affordable housing. In addition, the information on local needs is required to determine the location of such housing and guide new investment.

Infrastructure

A collective term for services such as roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.

Issues and Options preliminary consultation document

This is the first stage in the production of development plan documents. The Council brings possible issues and options for the District into the public domain, in order to generate responses to aid the development of the 'Preferred Options' development documents.

Key Workers

Essential public sector workers such as nurses, teachers and social workers.

Landscape Character Assessment

An assessment to identify different landscape areas which have a distinct character based on a recognisable pattern of elements, including combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.

Large scale development

The creation of 60 or more dwellings on one site.

Local Development Document

The collective term for *Development Plan Documents*, the *Proposals Map*, *Supplementary Planning Documents* and the *Statement of Community Involvement*.

Local Development Framework

The collective term for the group of documents including the Local Development Documents, the Local Development Scheme and the annual Monitoring Reports.

Local Development Scheme

Sets out the Council's programme for preparing and reviewing Local Development Documents.

Local Strategic Partnership

A group of public, private, voluntary and community organisations and individuals that is responsible for preparing the Community Strategy.

Major Development

Development above a particular scale as defined in the General Development Procedure Order (2006) as amended.

Market Housing

Private housing for rent or sale where the price is set in the open market.

Material consideration

Factors that may be taken into account when making planning decisions.

Minor scale development

The creation of not more than 9 dwellings on one site.

Mitigation measures

These are measures requested/ carried out in order to limit the damage by a particular development/ activity.

Moderate scale development

The creation of between 10 and 59 dwellings on one site.

Open Space and Recreational Land

Open space within settlements includes parks, village greens, play areas, sports pitches, undeveloped plots, semi-natural areas and substantial private gardens. Outside built-up areas this includes parks, sports pitches and allotments.

Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG)/ Planning Policy Statements (PPS)

Central Government produce Planning Policy Guidance Notes, to be replaced by Planning Policy Statements which direct planning in the country.

Preferred Options

Public consultation on the intended content of a *Development Plan Document*, prior to the DPD itself being drafted. It is a statutory stage of the Local Development Framework preparation for the District.

Previously Developed Land (PDL)

(See definition for *Brownfield*.)

Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS)

Plan covering the East of England as a whole, and setting out strategic policies and proposals for managing land-use change.

Registered Social Landlords

These are independent housing organisations registered with the Housing Corporation under the Housing Act 1996. Most are housing associations, but there are also trusts, co-operatives and companies.

Residential infilling

The development of a small site within the built-up area or defined limits of a settlement by up to 3 dwellings.

Rural Exceptions Site

Sites solely for the development of affordable housing on land within or adjoining existing small rural communities, which would not otherwise be released for general market housing.

Sequential Approach

A planning principle that seeks to identify, allocate or develop certain types or locations of land before others. For example, brownfield sites before greenfield sites, or town centre retail sites before out-of-centre sites. In terms of employment a sequential approach would favour an employment use over mixed use and mixed use over non-employment uses.

Settlement Hierarchy

Settlements are categorised in a hierarchy based on the range of services, facilities and employment opportunities in the settlement, access to education and non-car access to higher-order centres.

Social rented

Social Rented Housing is housing available to rent at below market levels. Lower rents are possible because the Government subsidises local authorities and registered social landlords in order to meet local affordable housing needs.

Glossary

Huntingdonshire LDF | Submission Core Strategy 2008

Spatial Planning

Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning. It brings together and integrates policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function. This will include policies which can impact on land use, for example, by influencing the demands on or needs for development, but which are not capable of being delivered solely or mainly through the granting of planning permission and may be delivered through other means.

Stakeholders

Groups, individuals or organisations which may be affected by or have a key interest in a development proposal or planning policy. They may often be experts in their field or represent the views of many people.

Statement of Community Involvement

Document setting out the Council's approach to involving the community in preparing planning documents and making significant development control decisions.

Statement of Compliance

A report or statement issued by the local planning authority explaining how they have complied with the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2004 and their Statement of Community Involvement during consultation on Local Development Documents.

Statutory Development Plan

The Development Plan for an area which has been taken to statutory adoption. In other words, it has been through all the formal stages and has been approved by the relevant Government office and adopted by the Council.

Statutory Organisations

Organisations the Local Authority has to consult with at consultation stages of the Local Development Framework.

Strategic Green Space

These are areas of green space that serve a wider population than just the District, for example Paxton Pits and The Great Fen.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

A study intended to assess overall potential for housing development in an area, including the identification of specific housing sites with development potential over a 15 year time span.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment

A study intended to review the existing housing market in an area, consider the nature of future need for market and affordable housing and to inform policy development.

Submission

Point at which a draft *Development Plan Document* (or the draft *Statement of Community Involvement*) is published for consultation. At the same time it is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Provides additional guidance on the interpretation or application of policies and proposals in the *Local Plan* or *Structure Plan*. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 this will be phased out and replaced by *Supplementary Planning Documents*.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Provides additional guidance on the interpretation or application of policies and proposals in a *Development Plan Document*.

Sustainable Development

In broad terms this means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Government has set out five guiding principles for sustainable development in its strategy "*Securing the future - UK Government strategy for sustainable development*". The five guiding principles, to be achieved simultaneously, are: Living within environmental limits; Ensuring a strong healthy and just society; Achieving a sustainable economy; Promoting good governance; and Using sound science responsibly.

Sustainable Drainage System

Previously known as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, these cover a range of approaches to surface water drainage management including source control measures such as rainwater recycling and drainage, infiltration devices to allow water to soak into the ground, vegetated features that hold and drain water downhill mimicking natural drainage patterns, filter drains and porous pavements to allow rainwater and run-off to infiltrate into permeable material below ground and provide storage if needed and basins and ponds to hold excess water after rain and allow controlled discharge that avoids flooding.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)/ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires Local Development Documents to be prepared with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainability appraisal is a systematic appraisal process. The purpose of sustainability appraisal is to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of the strategies and policies in a Local Development Document from the outset of the preparation process. This will ensure that decisions are made that accord with sustainable principles.

Tenure

Refers to the way in which a property is held e.g. freehold, leasehold, shared equity or rented.

Tests of Soundness

These are tests to ensure that the document produced is sound. For further guidance please refer to 'Development Plans Examination - A Guide to the Process of Assessing the Soundness of Development Plan Documents' produced by the Planning Inspectorate (2005).

Use Class Orders

Planning regulations outlining a schedule of uses to which a given premises or building can be put. Some changes of use require planning permission.

Vitality and Viability

In terms of retailing, vitality is the capacity of a centre to grow or to develop its level of commercial activity. Viability is the capacity of a centre to achieve the commercial success necessary to sustain the existence of the centre.

Windfall site

A previously developed site not specifically allocated for development in a development plan, but which unexpectedly becomes available for development during the lifetime of a plan. Most "windfalls" are referred to in a housing context.

Zero carbon building

A building with a net energy consumption of zero over a typical year. This can be measured in different ways relating to cost, energy or carbon emissions.

Evidence Base

Huntingdonshire LDF | Submission Core Strategy 2008

Appendix 2 Evidence Base

National

Securing the Future - UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy, (HM Government 2005)

Regional

A Sustainable Development Framework for the East of England, (Sustainable Round Table for the East of England 2001)

Sustainable Communities in the East of England, (ODPM 2003)

Towards Sustainable Construction - A Strategy for the East of England (EP, CE, GO-East, PECT, 2003)

Sustainable Development

Huntingdonshire Community Strategy, (HDC, 2004)

Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy, (HDC forthcoming 2008)

Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD, (HDC 2007)

Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD, (HDC, 2007)

Environment Strategy, (HDC, 2008)

Statement of Community Involvement, (2006)

Health Impact Assessment (Partial), (HDC, 2007)

Sustainable Construction in Cambridgeshire - A Good Practice Guide, (Cambridgeshire Horizons and Cambridgeshire County Council 2006)

Climate Change Strategy, (Cambridgeshire County Council 2005)

Housing

Huntingdonshire Housing Needs Survey, (HDC 2002)

Huntingdonshire Housing Needs Assessment Update, (HDC 2006)

Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy 2006 - 2011, (HDC 2006)

Cambridge Housing Sub Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment, (Cambridgeshire Horizons 2008)

Huntingdonshire Housing Land Availability Study, (HDC 2007)

Huntingdonshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, (HDC 2008)

Huntingdonshire Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper Update, (HDC 2007)

Homes for the Future - More Sustainable, More Affordable, (DCLG, 2007)

Cambridge Sub Region Traveller Needs Assessment (Cambridgeshire County Council 2006)

Employment

Employment Land Review, (Warwick Business Management Ltd on behalf of HDC 2007)

Huntingdonshire Local Economy Strategy 2008 - 2015, (HDC 2008)

Retail

Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study, (Roger Tym and Partners on behalf of HDC 2005)

Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study Update, (Roger Tym and Partners on behalf of HDC 2007)

Strategic Green space

50 Year Wildlife Vision for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, (Cambridgeshire County Council 2002)

Green Infrastructure Strategy (Cambridgeshire Green Vision), (Cambridgeshire Horizons 2006)

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment, (PNP on behalf of HDC 2006)

Great Fen project brochure, (2006)

Habitats Regulations Assessment, (Scott Wilson Ltd on behalf of HDC 2008)

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)

Infrastructure

Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, (Mott MacDonald on behalf of HDC 2004)

Water Cycle Strategy, (EDAW on behalf of HDC forthcoming 2008)

Huntingdonshire Spatial Strategy Options Assessment, (Atkins on behalf of HDC forthcoming 2008)

Local Investment Framework, (EDAW on behalf of HDC forthcoming 2008)

Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 (Cambridgeshire County Council 2006)

Saved Policies to be Superseded

Huntingdonshire LDF | Submission Core Strategy 2008

Appendix 3 Saved Policies to be Superseded

Saved policies from the Local Plan 1995 that are superseded by Core Strategy Policies

Saved Policies	Subject	Core Strategy Policy
H22	Agricultural Land Protection	CS1 Sustainable Development
H44	Gypsy Sites	CS6 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
E9	Employment in Ramsey	CS7 Employment
E13	Employment Development Causing Environmental Problems	CS1 Sustainable Development
S15	Vacant floorspace over shops in town centres	CS1 Sustainable Development
T21	Public Transport Services	CS10 Infrastructure Provision
R14	Grafham Water	CS9 Areas of Strategic Greenspace Enhancement
R16	After Use of Gravel and Claypits	CS9 Areas of Strategic Greenspace Enhancement
R18	Provision for Art	CS10 Infrastructure Provision

Saved Policies from the Local Plan Amendment 2002 that are superseded by Core Strategy Policies

Saved Policies	Subject	Core Strategy Policy
STR1	The Huntingdonshire settlement hierarchy	CS3 Settlement Hierarchy
STR2	Housing development definitions	CS3 Settlement Hierarchy
STR3	Settlements designated as market towns	CS3 Settlement Hierarchy
STR4	Yaxley designated as a rural growth village	CS3 Settlement Hierarchy
STR5	Settlements designated as group villages	CS3 Settlement Hierarchy
STR6	Settlements designated as infill villages	CS3 Settlement Hierarchy
HL7	Previously developed land and buildings	CS1 Sustainable Development
HL8	Scale of development appropriate in group villages	CS3 Settlement Hierarchy
HL9	Scale of development appropriate in infill villages	CS3 Settlement Hierarchy
AH4	Site targets for affordable housing	CS4 Affordable housing
AH5	Rural exceptions policy	CS4 Affordable housing and P5 Rural exceptions
OB1	Nature and scale of obligations sought	CS10 Infrastructure requirements

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Standards Committee

Report of the meeting held on 5th June 2008

Matter for Decision

1. LOCAL ASSESSMENT OF CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS: REQUIREMENTS OF NEW REGIME

The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 came into force on 8th May 2008 and provide for the initial assessment of allegations of Member misconduct to be transferred from the Standards Board for England to local authority Standards Committees which will have to decide whether each allegation appears to disclose a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members and whether it merits investigation.

The Committee has considered the arrangements which are required to respond effectively to the new Regulations and these are described in the report of the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer which is appended hereto.

Principally, these will involve the establishment of Referrals (Assessment) and Review Sub Committees and the approval of appropriate terms of reference for each Sub Committee. These Sub-Committees, which will comprise one Independent Member, one Town and Parish Councillor and one District Councillor, will have responsibility for the initial assessment of allegations, decide whether a particular allegation should be investigated and review decisions made on an original allegation should the complainant request it. Implementation of the requirements under the 2008 Regulations will require a series of changes to the Constitution and these will be presented to the Corporate Governance Panel prior to adoption by the Council.

Mindful of the requirement to ensure that membership of the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee and Review Sub-Committee do not overlap when the latter considers the same matter and conscious of the need to establish a framework with sufficient flexibility to respond to the demands of the new regime, it is considered necessary to appoint an additional Independent Member to serve on the Committee. Although the Regulations are silent on the issue of overlap with any hearing that might be necessary, the Committee is anxious to prevent any perception of bias and therefore, to be able to respond with sufficient flexibility the Committee –

RECOMMEND

that the Council appoint an additional Independent Member to serve on the Standards Committee for the remainder of the current four year term to May 2011.

2. APPLICATION FOR DISPENSATION

Following an application from the Town Clerk, the Committee has granted a dispensation to sixteen Members of St Ives Town Council who act as trustees to the Norris Library and Museum Charity, to enable the Councillors to speak and vote at meetings of the Town Council or at any of its Committees on matters relating to the Library and Museum for the period ending 30th April 2012.

3. APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER

Having regard to the impending retirement of the Director of Central Services, the Committee has noted the designation of the Head of Legal and Estates as Interim Monitoring Officer pending a new appointment to the Director's post.

4. DELIVERING THE GOODS: LOCAL STANDARDS IN ACTION

The Committee has authorised the attendance of Messrs. P Boothman and D L Hall, Independent Members, and Mr G Watkins, town and parish council representative, at the Annual Assembly of Standards Committees which is to be held at the International Conference Centre, Birmingham on 13th and 14th October 2008. This year's conference will focus on the new local Standards framework and the delivery of effective local assessment of allegations.

D L Hall
Chairman

**LOCAL ASSESSMENT OF CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS –
REQUIREMENTS OF THE NEW REGIME
(Report by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 came into force on 8th May 2008. The Regulations provide for the initial assessment of allegations of Member misconduct to be transferred from the Standards Board for England to local authority Standards Committees which will have to decide whether each allegation appears to disclose a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members and whether it merits investigation.

2. NEW FRAMEWORK – KEY CHANGES

- 2.1 In brief, the 2008 Regulations provide for –
- ◆ standards committees to establish a Referral (Assessment) Sub-Committee which will have responsibility for the initial assessment of allegations and determining whether a particular allegation should be investigated, and a Review Sub-Committee which will have responsibility for considering any requests from the complainant to review a decision of the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee not to investigate a particular allegation;
 - ◆ undertaking an initial assessment within 20 working days of receipt of an allegation;
 - ◆ Standards Committees to be composed of at least 25% independent Members and to be chaired by an Independent Member; and
 - ◆ an increase in the maximum sanction available to Standards Committees from 3 months to 6 months suspension or partial suspension.
- 2.2 In addition, the Standards Board will be responsible for monitoring and ensuring the effectiveness of local arrangements, including supporting authorities which are experiencing difficulties and improving their performance. Standards Committees will have to report periodically to the Standards Board on their performance of these new functions.

3. NEW PROCEDURE: ESTABLISHING THE SUB-COMMITTEES

- 3.1 The establishment of the two new Sub-Committees is mandatory under the Regulations, as is the transfer of functions to them. The composition of the Sub-Committees is also closely defined, requiring a meeting of a Sub-Committee to be chaired by an Independent Member and for there to be at least three Members of the Sub-Committee present for the duration of the meeting, including at least one Member of the authority and at least one parish Member where the allegation relates to a parish councillor. The membership of the Referral (Assessment) Sub-Committee for a particular matter cannot overlap with that of the Review Sub-Committee when the latter considers the same matter.

- 3.2 The Sub-Committees must be established by the Standards Committee but nothing in the Regulations requires a sub-committee to have a fixed membership or chairmanship.
- 3.3 Although it is difficult to anticipate the scale of the workload arising from the new Regulations, the Council has recognised the importance of flexibility and to ease the burden which might be placed on the existing Parish Council representatives has, with effect from 14th May 2008, increased the membership of the Standards Committee to allow for the appointment of one additional town or parish councillor to represent town and parish councils in the District. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils have been invited to nominate the additional Member.
- 3.4 To continue the theme of flexibility, it is suggested that the Committee only appoint a named (lead) Independent Member to chair each Sub-Committee and that the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer (or in his absence, the Head of Legal & Estates) be authorised, after consultation with the relevant lead Independent Member to convene meetings of the Sub-Committees when required drawing upon the existing Members of the Standards Committee always bearing in mind that membership of the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee for a particular matter cannot overlap with that of a Review Sub-Committee when the latter considers the same matter.
- 3.5 Conscious of the need to establish a framework with sufficient flexibility to respond to the demands of the new regime and to populate the various sub-committees as and when they are required, it is also considered that the terms of reference for each sub-committee should allow for a substitute Independent Member to take the place of the Independent Chairman, in the event of their inability to attend meetings on any occasion.
- 3.6 The new Regulations provide that information presented to the Referrals (Assessment) Sub Committee or to a Review Sub Committee shall be 'exempt information' for the purpose of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, thus giving each of the Sub-Committees a power to exclude the press and public from their meetings. As this is a discretion, it will still be necessary for each meeting to resolve whether to exclude the press and public.
- 3.7 **Accordingly, it is recommended that –**
- ◆ **the Committee establish and appoint a Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee comprising one Independent Member, one Parish Council representative and one District Councillor;**
 - ◆ **that the Committee establish and appoint a Review Sub-Committee comprising one Independent Member, one Parish Council representative and one District Councillor;**
 - ◆ **that dates for monthly meetings of the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee be established for a six-month period until December 2008 given the difficulty in assessing the workload**

which is likely to arise from the new Regulations and the timescales to which the Sub-Committee would be expected to work;

- ◆ that the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer (and in his absence, the Head of Legal & Estates and Deputy Monitoring Officer) be authorised, after consultation with the relevant Chairman to convene meetings of the Referrals (Assessment) and Review Sub-Committees as necessary;
- ◆ that the Referrals (Assessment) and Review Sub Committees hold their meeting in private unless the relevant sub committee determine otherwise in the case under consideration; and
- ◆ that the proposed terms of reference for each Sub-Committee enclosed at Annexes A and B be approved.

4. APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL INDEPENDENT MEMBER

- 4.1 Members will recall that Messrs Hall, Boothman and Lynch were appointed by the Council to serve on the Committee in May 2007 for a four-year term. Written applications for the office were submitted in response to a press advertisement.
- 4.2 The Panel appointed to interview candidates for the office considered that one of the unsuccessful applicants had the necessary attributes to be suitable and successful in the post of Independent Member in the event of the need to appoint an additional post. It is understood that the individual may still be available and that she has reaffirmed an interest in serving on the Committee. Although the Regulations are silent on the issue of any overlap with any hearing that might be necessary any duplication of membership could give rise to a perception of bias and to guard against this situation and again to build into the arrangement sufficient flexibility to respond when necessary, the Committee may wish to consider whether it would be appropriate to recommend to Council the appointment of additional Independent Member subject, of course, to preliminary consultation with the individual concerned.
- 4.3 **It is recommended that Council appoint an additional Independent Member to serve on the Standards Committee for the remainder of the current four-year term to May 2011.**

5. LOCAL HEARING ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1 The process for the consideration of the Monitoring Officer's report following investigation is similar to that previously adopted by the District Council for allegations which had been investigated locally. Whether a report concludes that there has or has not been a failure to observe the code of conduct, the Monitoring Officer is required to report to the Standards Committee which then decides whether to accept the Monitoring Officer's conclusion and close the matter, or refer the matter for a formal hearing.
- 5.2 At their meeting held on 17th December 2003, and in their consideration of a draft procedure for the local investigation and determination of allegations against Councillors, the Committee

resolved to authorise the Executive Director of Central Services, after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, to administer the pre-hearing process and to convene and to appoint Members to hearings as necessary. To ensure this arrangement can continue -

it is recommended that subject to the replacement of the post title of 'Executive Director of Central Services' with that of 'Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer' the resolution made at the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 17th December 2003 be reaffirmed.

6. OTHER ISSUES

6.1 As lead Officer on probity issues, adviser to the Standards Committee, confidential adviser to Councillors and the responsible officer for initial assessment, investigations and hearings, the role of the Monitoring Officer has increased significantly under the new Regulations. To ensure that the necessary arrangements to discharge the functions in relation to the initial assessment and review of allegations are effectively administered in accordance with a clear and transparent procedure, it is proposed that a Monitoring Officer protocol setting out the responsibilities and discretions of the Monitoring Officer be introduced and that this should form part of the District Council's Constitution. A proposed protocol is enclosed at Annex C. The protocol refers, for example, to procedures for notifying Members who become subject to a code of conduct complaint, local resolution of complaints, how to deal with anonymous complaints, plus other matters relating to investigations.

6.2 Implementation of the requirements under the 2008 Regulations will require changes to the District Council's Constitution and in particular amendments to –

- ◆ Article 9 - Standards Committee;
- ◆ Article 12 – Officers (where reference is made to the duties and responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer/ Deputy Monitoring Officer);
- ◆ Part 3 – Responsibility for Functions – Table 2 – Responsibility for Council Functions (where the terms of reference and membership of the Standards Committee are described); and
- ◆ Part 5 – Codes and Protocols – the insertion of the new Monitoring Officer protocol.

6.3 Changes to the Constitution will be dependent on the decisions taken at today's meeting and subsequently by the Council and will be subject to consideration by the Council's Corporate Governance Panel who have responsibility for oversight of the Constitution.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The Committee is requested to consider the recommendations contained in paragraphs 3.8, 4.2 and 5.2 and as a consequence the Corporate Governance Panel be requested to endorse a series of variations to the District Council's Constitution as referred to in paragraph 6.2.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Council's Constitution
Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008

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**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE
REFERRALS (ASSESSMENT) SUB-COMMITTEE**

Terms of Reference

1. The Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee will receive allegations that a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council or the Parish Councils within the District may have failed, to comply with their Authority's Code of Conduct.
2. Upon receipt of each allegation and any accompanying report by the Monitoring Officer¹, the Sub-Committee shall make an initial assessment of the allegation and shall then do one of the following: -
 - (i) refer the allegation to the Monitoring Officer, with an instruction that he/she undertake a formal investigation of the allegation, or directs that he/she arrange training, conciliation or such appropriate alternative steps as permitted by the Regulations;
 - (ii) refer the allegation to the Standards Board for England;
 - (iii) decide that no action should be taken in respect of the allegation; or
 - (iv) where the allegation is in respect of a person who is no longer a Member of the Authority, but is a Member of another relevant Authority (as defined in Section 49 of the Local Government Act 2000), refer the allegation to the Monitoring Officer of that other relevant Authorityand shall instruct the Monitoring Officer to take reasonable steps to notify the person making the allegation and the Member concerned of that decision.
3. Where the Sub-Committee resolves to recommend any of the actions set out in paragraph 2 above, the Sub-Committee shall state its reasons for that decision.
4. The Sub-Committee shall consider any application received from any Officer of the District Council for exemption from political restriction under Sections 1 and 2 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 in respect of the post held by that Officer and may direct the District Council that the post shall not be considered to be a politically restricted post and that the post be removed from the list maintained by the District Council under Section 2 (2) of that Act.

¹ Where the post of Monitoring Officer is referred to, the text should read, with effect from 27th June 2008, Interim Monitoring Officer until such time as a new Director of Central Services is appointed.

5. The Sub-Committee shall, upon the application of any person or otherwise, consider whether a post should be included in the list maintained by the Authority under Section 2 (2) of the 1989 Act, and may direct the Authority to include a post in that list. The Sub-Committee shall report their decision, for information, to the next available meeting of the Standards Committee.

Composition of the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee

6. The Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee shall comprise three Members of whom one shall be an Independent Member of the Standards Committee who shall chair the Sub-Committee, one Member of the District Council and one Town or Parish Council representative.

Quorum

7. In the event of the unavailability of the Independent Chairman of the Sub-Committee, the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer (or in his absence, the Head of Legal and Estates) be authorised, after consultation with the Chairman of the Standards Committee, to select a substitute Independent Member to chair the Sub-Committee as necessary.

Frequency of Meetings

8. The Sub-Committee shall endeavour to complete its initial assessment of an allegation within an average of 20 working days.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

1. The Review Sub-Committee will review, upon the request of a person who has made an allegation that a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council or the Parish Councils within the District has failed, or may have failed, to comply with the Code of Conduct, a decision of the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee that no action be taken in respect of that allegation.
2. Upon receipt of each such request and any accompanying report by the Monitoring Officer¹, the Sub-Committee shall review the decision of the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee and shall then do one of the following:
 - (i) refer the allegation to the Monitoring Officer, with an instruction that he/she undertake a formal investigation of the allegation, or specifies that he/she take an alternative action as permitted by the Regulations;
 - (ii) refer the allegation to the Standards Board for England;
 - (iii) decide that no action should be taken in respect of the allegation; or
 - (iv) where the allegation is in respect of a person who is no longer a Member of the Authority, but is a Member of another relevant Authority (as defined in Section 49 of the Local Government Act 2000), refer the allegation to the Monitoring Officer of that other relevant Authority;and shall instruct the Monitoring Officer to take reasonable steps to notify the person requesting the review and the Member concerned of that decision.
3. Where the Sub-Committee resolves to do any of the actions set out in paragraph 2 above, the Sub-Committee shall state its reasons for that action.

Composition of the Review Sub-Committee

4. The Review Sub-Committee shall comprise three Members, of whom one shall be an Independent Member of the Standards Committee who shall chair the Sub-Committee, one elected Member of the District Council and one Town and Parish Council representative.

¹ Where the post of Monitoring Officer is referred to, the text should read, with effect from 27th June 2008, Interim Monitoring Officer until such time as a new Director of Central Services is appointed.

Quorum

5. The quorum for a meeting of the Sub-Committee shall be three Members. In the event of the unavailability of the Independent Chairman of the Sub-Committee, the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer is authorised, after consultation with the Chairman of the Standards Committee to select a substitute Independent Member to chair the Sub-Committee as necessary.

Frequency of Meetings

6. The Review Sub-Committee shall meet as and when required to enable it to undertake the review of any decision of the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee within three months of the receipt of the request for such a review from the person who made the allegation.

MONITORING OFFICER PROTOCOL

For the discharge of functions in relation to the initial assessment and review of an allegation that a member of Huntingdonshire District or the Parish in the District has failed to comply with the adopted Code of Conduct

1. RECEIPT OF ALLEGATIONS

- 1.1 The Monitoring Officer¹ shall ensure any allegation made in writing that a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council or one of the Parishes in the District may have failed to comply with their Authority's adopted Code of Conduct is referred to him/her immediately upon receipt.
- 1.2 The Monitoring Officer shall maintain a register of such allegations to ensure that the District Council can comply with its obligations under the relevant legislation.
- 1.3 Complaints shall only be valid where they are signed by the complainant, but the Monitoring Officer is authorised to maintain the confidentiality of the identity of the complainant where and for so long as in his/her opinion that would be in the public interest.

2. NOTIFICATON OF RECEIPT OF ALLEGATIONS

- 2.1 All relevant allegations must be assessed by the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee, so the Monitoring Officer has no authority to deal with an allegation which appears to be an allegation of failure by a relevant Member to observe the Code of Conduct other than by reporting it to the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee. The Monitoring Officer shall therefore determine whether the allegation appears to be a substantive allegation of misconduct. Where it appears not to be, he/she shall ensure that the matter is dealt with under a more appropriate procedure, for example where it is really a request for service from the Authority, a statement of policy disagreement, a legal claim against the Authority or a complaint against an Officer of the Authority.
- 2.2 Following receipt of the allegation and where the allegation does appear to be a complaint of misconduct against a relevant Member, the Monitoring Officer will –
 - (i) acknowledge receipt of the allegation and confirm that the allegation will be assessed by the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee at its next convenient meeting and establish a time line for dealing with the allegation;

¹ Where the post of Monitoring Officer is referred to, the text should read, with effect from 27th June 2008, Interim Monitoring Officer until such time as a new Director of Central Services is appointed.

- (ii) notify the Member against whom the allegation is made of receipt of the complaint, together with a written summary of the allegation and the date upon which the allegation will be assessed by the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee. Where the Monitoring Officer is of the opinion that such notification would be contrary to the public interest or would prejudice any person's ability to investigate the allegation, he/she shall consult the Chairman of the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee, or in his/her absence the Chairman of the Standards Committee, and may then decide that no such advance notification shall be given;
- (iii) collect such information as is readily available that would assist the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee in its function of assessing the allegation;
- (iv) seek local resolution of the matter where practicable, in accordance with paragraph 3 below;
- (v) place a report, including a copy of the allegation, such readily available information and his/her recommendation as to whether the allegation discloses an apparent failure to observe the Code of Conduct, on the agenda for the next meeting of the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee.

3. LOCAL RESOLUTION

- 3.1 Local resolution is not an alternative to reporting the allegation to the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee, but can avoid the necessity of a formal local investigation.
- 3.2 Where the Monitoring Officer is of the opinion that there is the potential for local resolution, he/she shall approach the Member against whom the allegation has been made and ask whether he/she is prepared to acknowledge that his/her conduct was inappropriate, and whether he/she would be prepared to offer an apology or undertake other appropriate remedial action. With the consent of the Member concerned, the Monitoring Officer may then approach the complainant and ask whether the complainant is satisfied by such apology or other remedial action. The Monitoring Officer should then report to the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee as required, and at the same time report the response of the Member concerned and of the complainant. Where the Member has acknowledged that his/her conduct was inappropriate, and where the complainant is satisfied with the proffered apology or remedial action, the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee might take that into account when considering whether the matter merits investigation.

4. REVIEW OF DECISIONS NOT TO INVESTIGATE

- 4.1 Where the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee has decided that no action be taken on a particular matter, the Monitoring Officer shall advise the complainant of the decision, and the complainant may then within thirty days of receipt of notification request that the Review Sub-Committee review that decision.

- 4.2 Whilst the review shall normally be a review of the reasonableness of the original decision rather than a reconsideration, the Monitoring Officer shall report to the Review Sub-Committee the information which was provided to the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee in respect of the matter, a summary of the decision of the Referrals Sub-Committee and any additional relevant information which has become available prior to the meeting of the Review Sub-Committee.

5. LOCAL INVESTIGATION

- 5.1 It is recognised that the Monitoring Officer will not personally conduct a formal local investigation.
- 5.2 It will be for the Monitoring Officer, where appropriate after consultation with the Chairman of the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee, to determine who to instruct to conduct a formal local investigation and this may include another senior Officer of the Authority, a senior Officer of another Authority or an appropriate experienced consultant.

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Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework)

Report of the meeting held on 3rd June 2008

Matters for Information

1. BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN (MTP) PROCESS 2009 - 2010

The Panel has reviewed the approach, process and timing for the review and approval of the financial strategy, the 2009/10 budget and the 2010/14 Medium Term Plan (MTP). Attention has been drawn to the Council's financial performance in previous years, likely future inflation trends and Executive Councillors' role in compiling next year's budget. The Panel has been informed of the order of required additional income or reduced spending in 2009/10 and in subsequent years and of the need for ongoing efficiency savings to be identified throughout the Council. Assurances have been received from the Executive Councillor for Finance and Environment that Executive Councillors will consider all future MTP bids critically in light of the Council's current financial position.

Members' attention has also been drawn to future years' forecast variations from the current year's budget, including the reasons for the variations, and the projected income, planned use of resources and additional savings that are required in the period to 2012/13. The Panel has noted that a number of financial receipts are expected in the course of next year, which will be included in the budget. As a result of this, the Panel has noted that changes will not be needed to the Council's service plans.

Having queried the financial implications of the Council's Environment Strategy, it has been reported that provision for it has been included within the MTP for the current year and in the following two years.

Following concerns raised regarding the impact on the Council of increased fuel costs, the Panel has been advised that efforts are being made across the Council to enhance energy use efficiency. Changes in the cost of fuel will be factored into inflation calculations in September for use in future forecasting.

Members have been encouraged to forward to Officers suggestions for spending adjustments before September 2008. The Panel has recommended that the Cabinet should approve the timetable and

stages for considering amendments to service plans, the financial strategy, budget and MTP and confirm the importance of identifying efficiency savings across the Council.

2. HUNTINGDONSHIRE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND LOCAL ECONOMY STRATEGY

The Panel has discussed the outcome of work to refine the outcomes and objectives contained within the Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy and to develop delivery plans for each of the strategic themes.

With regard to the strategic theme for Growth and Infrastructure and, particularly the need to improve the provision of school and health facilities, the Panel has been advised that it is intended to produce an Investment Strategy for Huntingdonshire. The Strategy will be based on evidence and will include likely costs for proposed schemes. The Panel has suggested that reference to surface drainage water should be included under Item 6 of the Plan. The Panel has been advised that communities not experiencing growth will be addressed through parish plans.

The Panel has been advised that the Council's Environment Strategy will form the basis of the Action Plan for the Environment strategic theme.

In respect of the Children and Young People's strategic theme, comment has been made on the fact that contact with some statutory organisations, such as Connexions, is not compulsory for young people. Following further comment on the importance of providing means of access for young people to facilities and services, the Panel has been advised that the Inclusive, Safe and Cohesive Communities strategic theme includes reference to community transport. Members also have been reminded that the Council has appointed Councillor Hansard as its Champion for Children and Young People. Having noted the range of work already being undertaken by the Council to incorporate children and young people's views into its policies and services, Members have been advised that, in the short term, funding for projects under this strategic theme will be available from external sources and through the Council's MTP. In the longer term, further consideration will need to be given to this matter.

In examining the Action Plan for the Inclusive, Safe and Cohesive Communities strategic theme, the Panel has discussed the potential benefits of providing advocacy services for migrant workers. Having been acquainted with the likely financial implications for the Council of this suggestion, the Panel has been reminded of a previous Scrutiny Panel recommendation that Cambridgeshire should attempt to become a targeted area for English for Speakers of Other Languages, which is being pursued via the Regional College.

As a result of a previous request the Panel has reviewed the Action Plan associated with the Local Economy Strategy for

Huntingdonshire. Members have noted that new statutory powers have become available with which to pursue the current work and that the Plan will be used to attract funding and to influence regional activities. Work with partners to deliver sub-regional and regional initiatives will directly relate to the priorities contained in the Local Economy Strategy. The Action Plan also aims to add value to a range of work currently undertaken in the District and to promote joint initiatives which will lead to sustainable growth in the local economy. The Panel has requested that pump priming for commercial sites be included in the Plan. Finally, Members have discussed the agricultural industry in the District. As it represents a small proportion of economic activity and of employment locally it has not been included as one of the sectors that the Plan intends to promote. It will, however, be promoted through the local procurement network.

The Action Plans have yet to be finalised and Members have been invited to submit comments on them for this purpose. Completed Action Plans for all the strategic themes will be presented to the Panel in September. Furthermore, the Local Strategic Partnership structure is currently under review and Members will be informed of the resulting changes at a seminar in July 2008.

S J Criswell
Chairman

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Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery)

Report of the meeting held on 3rd June 2008

Matters for Information

1. CAMBRIDGE SUB-REGION STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT

The Panel has appraised the contents of the Cambridge Sub-Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment and its implications for the District. The resulting document sets out the evidence of need and demand for market and affordable housing based on seven local authority areas within the region. The document will replace the need for local Housing Needs Assessments and will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

The Panel has discussed housing register trends, migration into and out of the District and the availability of affordable housing in light of current economic trends throughout the country. With regard to the latter, the Panel has been informed that there has not to date been an increase in homelessness. Furthermore, the government is currently discussing with the Housing Corporation the possible relaxation of restrictions which might enable registered social landlords to utilise unoccupied private sector housing as, at present, the specification for these buildings is not the same as that required for social housing.

2. CORPORATE EQUALITY POLICY: ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

The Panel has been acquainted with the progress made to date in respect of the Council's Corporate Equality Policy Action Plan. Having noted the achievements under the Plan that have been made by the Council over the previous year, including the attainment of Level 2 of the Equality Standard, Members have been advised that the Council will now work towards achieving Level 3 of the Standard.

The Panel has been informed that a random sample survey carried out by an independent market research company has revealed that 84% of local people believe that the Council offers services that meet their needs. The target for 2008/09 for this indicator is 85%.

Regarding the availability of bilingual staff and literature on Council services in other languages, the Panel has been advised that the Council maintains a directory of employees fluent in other languages and that an interpretation service, both face to face and via the

telephone, is available if required. In terms of literature, documents are made available in the four main languages spoken in the District.

As a result of their deliberations the Panel has suggested that the Cabinet should approve the new Corporate Equality Action Plan and a revised Equality Impact Assessment timetable.

3. GROWING SUCCESS: PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Panel has reviewed the Council's performance against its priority objectives. The report identified two areas where the Council has not achieved its targets. With regard to the key measure concerning attendance at school, outreach and holiday activity programmes, the quarterly targets that had been set did not reflect seasonal variations. Additionally, the programmes offered by the five Leisure Centres across the District have not been incorporated within the measure. Both matters will be factored into this measure in future.

In terms of the key measure relating to the delivery of a proportion of affordable housing (commitments) on qualifying sites, the Panel has been advised that the actual performance has been affected by the fact that limited affordable housing had been allocated in the particular area that had been constructed during that period.

The Panel has expressed their satisfaction with the levels of performance achieved by the Council in 2007/08. A review of Growing Success will be completed over the ensuing months and the views of the Corporate Plan Working Group will be taken into account during this process.

4. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY) – STUDIES

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies and considered its work programme for the forthcoming year. The Panel has been reminded of the adoption of a study template following an internal audit of the Overview and Scrutiny function in the previous year and that both Scrutiny Panels had a budget of approximately £6,000 for use to pursue their study aims.

In reviewing the existing programme of studies and membership of Working Groups, the Panel has decided that as the study on Grant Aid is nearing completion, it will not be necessary to appoint any new Members to the Working Group. However, owing to their interests in the study, Councillors M F Shellens and J S Watt have been appointed to the Adoption of Roads and Sewers Working Group.

In acknowledging that the study on Disability Access will conclude shortly, the Panel has discussed potential future study areas, including the Community Safety Partnership, the Great Fen Project and the impact of the new A14 in terms of air quality and noise pollution. A meeting of the Great Fen Project will be held shortly, and following this, Councillor P G Mitchell has been asked to report back to the next Panel meeting on whether a study needs to be

undertaken. The Panel has made a request for a scoping report on Community Safety Partnerships to be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.

Other Matters of Interest

5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the relevant Forward Plan of Key Decisions and noted the background to the items on Community Engagement, Insurance Test Case – Zurich Municipal/MMI, Response to Consultation on Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Grant Aid to Voluntary and Community Organisations.

6. SCRUTINY

The Panel considered the latest edition of the Decision Digest and discussed matters contained therein.

S J Criswell
Chairman

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Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)

**Report of the meetings held on 8th April and
10th June 2008**

Matters for Information

1. SEWERAGE PROBLEMS, ST AUDREY'S LANE, ST IVES

Following the consideration of a petition signed by 26 people at its February meeting, the Panel has considered further information on the sewerage problems experienced by residents in St Audrey's Lane, St Ives and the responsibilities of those parties involved in the drainage of this area. The Panel's attention has been drawn to the Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) 2008 which came into force on 1st April 2008 and provides for financial compensation to customers for each and every occurrence of internal and external flooding from foul sewers and this information has been conveyed to the residents.

Having listened to the concerns of local residents and been advised of the outcome of recent discussions and correspondence with Anglian Water, the Panel has invited representatives from the company to attend its meeting in July 2008 to discuss potential solutions to the problem. In the interim, the Panel has appointed Councillors K M Baker, M G Baker and J W Davies to a working group to gather further information from local residents about the extent and frequency of the problems and they have visited the site and discussed the situation with them in readiness for the meeting with Anglian Water.

2. REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY – PLANNING FOR GYPSY & TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION (DRAFT POLICY)

The Panel has considered the Council's suggested response to the draft policy by the East of England Regional Assembly on the number of gypsy and traveller pitches to be accommodated by each local planning authority as part of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

In doing so, the Panel endorsed the recommended response as a practical and sensible approach to the draft. However concerns have been expressed about the potential for some authorities to object to the proposed allocation if they wish to make no or inadequate provision for gypsies and travellers and for any consequential re-

distribution of pitches which could adversely impact on Huntingdonshire's currently proposed allocation.

The Panel is also concerned that the preparation of a Development Plan Document (DPD) to determine sites for gypsies and travellers in the District is unlikely to be finalised until some time in 2009 as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF). Having regard to the potential difficulty in dealing with unauthorised encampments and determining planning applications in the interim, the Panel has suggested to the Cabinet that the DPD should be developed as soon as practicable within the LDF timescale.

3. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: THE CORE STRATEGY SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

The Panel has considered the submission document for the Core Strategy before it is approved by Council for formal submission to the Secretary of State. (Item No.1 of the report to Cabinet refers).

The Panel has expressed its support for the proposed policies within the submission document but considers that insufficient importance has been paid to the role of agriculture in the local economy and as a local land use. Recent world food shortages and the growth in the use of bio-fuels has increased the demand for agricultural crops but the Panel feels that the Core Strategy has failed to recognise the emergence of these trends in recent months, for example by referring in the Core Strategy to the historic role of agriculture and food production in Huntingdonshire. Although the Core Strategy places emphasis on the need for strategic green space enhancement, the Panel is concerned at the possible implication that access and enjoyment of the countryside may be regarded as more important than the contribution that agriculture makes to the local economy and wider market. The Panel has therefore suggested that a change in wording and emphasis to retain the value of local agriculture in the Core Strategy would be advisable and helpful.

4. CYCLING IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

Following the conclusion of its investigations into the Council's expenditure on cycling in Huntingdonshire earlier in the year, the Panel has been acquainted with details of progress being made in developing a revised action plan for safe cycle routes, including a revised list of cycle schemes for Huntingdonshire.

Although the Panel is pleased with the progress which has been made, Members remain of the view that the County Council should invest more funding into cycleway development in the District. Having been advised that a revised list of cycle routes is to be submitted to the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee (AJC), the Panel has also raised questions over the involvement of ward members in revising and updating the list which originates from the Cycling Strategy last approved by the Council in 2000.

5. PARKING FOR HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES

The Panel has received the final report of its Working Group which had been established to investigate the issue of Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) parking throughout the District. The matter had been raised initially by Councillor P Dakers in response to the closure of the "Night Owl" lorry parking facility at Alconbury and his concerns relating to a reduction in overnight parking facilities for HGVs across the District.

The Panel has acknowledged that there is a clear need to provide suitable parking on the trunk road network to avoid the problems which arise from a lack of provision for local authorities, local communities and haulage drivers alike. The problem is being compounded by proposals to rationalise lay-by arrangements along the A14 corridor. However, the Panel has recognised that there is very little that the District Council can do in isolation to tackle a national problem and that the Council's main influence on the provision of lorry parking facilities in Huntingdonshire will be through the Local Development Framework in terms of the identification of sites for HGV parking and opposing the redevelopment of closed sites for alternative uses.

Having regard to issues that are being experienced elsewhere within the County, the Panel have concluded that a collaborative approach involving all local authorities within Cambridgeshire would be the most effective way of raising awareness and achieving progress. The Panel has therefore recommended to the Cabinet:-

- ◆ that the County Council be invited to establish a countywide forum, involving the County Council, District Councils, local Members of Parliament, Cambridgeshire Constabulary and HGV operators to lobby Government to investigate the problem urgently and take steps to resolve it;
- ◆ that the matter be raised through the Cambridgeshire Together: Local Area Agreement Board; and
- ◆ that the District Council as local planning authority seek to influence the development of suitable HGV parking opportunities on the trunk roads across the District.

6. MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

The Panel has been updated on the receipt and expenditure of money negotiated under Section 106 Agreements by the Council.

7. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Council's performance against the targets within the Corporate Plan – "Growing Success" has been reviewed by the Panel.

The Panel has been pleased to note that most of the targets were being met or exceeded. However the Panel had observed a failure to

achieve the target relating to the objective of ensuring that the Council is an employer that people wish to work for. As the measure of satisfaction was derived from a staff survey, the Panel has asked for further details of the analysis of the staff response to ascertain whether there are any particular reasons that can be identified for the failure to meet the target and whether any measures have been or need to be introduced to address this issue.

8. WORKPLAN STUDIES

The Panel has been advised of progress to date on its studies into a Parish Charter for Huntingdonshire and the negotiation and expenditure of Section 106 Agreements. It is anticipated that the final report on the Parish Charter will be submitted to the July meeting of the Panel.

Further ideas for future studies will be discussed at the July meeting.

9. FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the forward plan of forthcoming key decisions prepared by the Leader of the Council. In doing so, Members have identified a number of items for consideration at future meetings.

10. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT) - PROGRESS

The Panel has been apprised of progress on actions required as a result of previous decisions.

Arising from a recent countywide scrutiny conference, the Panel has asked the Head of Administration to make arrangements for a briefing session for all Members on the Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement and its operation.

The Panel has also noted that a report outlining the comments received on the operation of the procedure for public speaking at meetings of the Development Control Panel will be considered at its July meeting.

J A Gray
Chairman

Development Control Panel

**Report of the meetings held on 21st April, 19th May
and 16th June 2008**

Matter for Decision

1. **DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION –
DEVELOPMENT OF NEW COLLEGE CAMPUS AND ACCESS
WORKS, ASSOCIATED PARKING AND SPORTS PITCHES, PART
OF SPORTS GROUND, CAMBRIDGESHIRE CONSTABULARY,
HINCHINGBROOKE PARK, HINCHINGBROOKE PARK ROAD,
HUNTINGDON**

Enclosed at Agenda Item No. 5 for the Council meeting is a report by the Head of Planning Services containing details of an outline application considered by the Panel for the erection of a new college campus, car parking, a multi-utility games area (MUGA) and a football pitch on a site previously used as a sports pitch, owned by Cambridgeshire Constabulary and located on land west of Brampton Road and north of Hinchingbrooke Park Road, Huntingdon. Matters relating to the appearance, layout and scale of the development are reserved subject to the determination of the outline application. The applicant, Huntingdonshire Regional College, has submitted a transport assessment, proposed access arrangements from Hinchingbrooke Park Road and an indicative layout plan.

The application is placed before the Council as a departure because land which was previously designated as open space in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan, 1995 would be reclassified as building land if the proposal was to be supported.

When considering the application, the Panel received representations from District Councillors P J Downes, T D Sanderson and M F Shellens, objectors Mr K Nancekievill and Dr Cracknell and from Ms A Constantine on behalf of the applicant. The Team Leader, Transportation addressed the Panel to assist in its understanding of the traffic management projects proposed in the vicinity of the development.

During its deliberations, the Panel considered whether there are any material planning considerations which justify supporting the development as a departure from the adopted Development Plan. Government advice provides that facilities such as those for a college should be within town centres or in sustainable locations. The Panel was of the view that the proposed site meets this criteria in that it is accessible by various modes of transport, has pedestrian/cycle links to the town centre and will benefit from the new guided bus way. In

addition, the proposed development would retain a large open space as part of the site, accords with emerging policy for the development of the Huntingdon West area and presents an opportunity to secure a 'fit for purpose', modern college in the District.

The Panel was satisfied that the transport assessment reflects the demands of existing and projected traffic flows and addresses the implications of the A14 improvements. Therefore, having considered the balance of the arguments put forward and taking into account the relevant material considerations, the Panel

RECOMMEND

- (i) that subject to conditions to be determined by the Head of Planning Services, the application for the erection of a new college campus and access works, associated parking and sports pitches on land that forms part of the sports ground, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Hinchingsbrooke Park, Hinchingsbrooke Road, Huntingdon be approved;**
- (ii) that, if the application is approved by the Council, the Government Office for the Eastern Region be invited to consider whether they wish to call in the proposal; and**
- (iii) that, in the event that the proposal is not called in by the Government Office, the Director of Environmental and Community Services be authorised to advertise the application as a departure from the Development Plan.**

Matters for Information

2. DESIGN SCORING EXERCISE

In Item No. 18 of its Report to the meeting of the Council held on 20th February 2008, the Panel reported its intention to review four housing schemes in Huntingdon using a design review methodology to assess completed developments with a view to improving the planning application and design process for the future.

This exercise was undertaken in February and whilst useful, the Panel was of the view that the scoring mechanism required improvement to more accurately differentiate between variations in the scores attributed to each site. It was also considered that additional training in the use of the scoring mechanism would have improved the outcome, that additional Members should, in future, be encouraged to participate and that consideration should be given to the creation of a team of advisers, including representatives from the Police and Environmental Management, to accompany the site visits to contribute to the debate on design from alternative viewpoints. Notwithstanding these comments, the Panel has indicated its support

for the continuation of the design scoring initiative and requested that visits to St. Ives and St. Neots be arranged in due course.

3. SOMERSHAM CONSERVATION AREA: BOUNDARY REVIEW AND CHARACTER STATEMENT DOCUMENTS

The District Council is committed to the production of Conservation Area Character Statements which provide an analysis of the special interests of all 60 Conservation Areas in the District. These documents guide decisions on planning matters and other changes to the fabric of the Conservation Areas to ensure their character and appearance is not diminished. The boundary of the Somersham Conservation Area was first designated in 1974 and the proposed new boundaries will better reflect the historic interest of the settlement, the wider setting of the village and significant views and vistas within the parish.

Having commented on the importance of the work which is considered essential to protect the village from development pressures, the Panel has recommended the Cabinet to adopt the Somersham Conservation Area Boundary Review and Character Statement documents as Council policy.

4. DESIGN BRIEF – FORMER HEALTH AUTHORITY OFFICES, PRIMROSE LANE, HUNTINGDON

Further to Item No. 21 of its Report to the meeting of the Council held on 16th April 2008, the Panel has been able to consider early responses received to consultation on a Design Brief which examines the redevelopment opportunities presented by the site of the former health authority offices, south of Primrose Lane, Huntingdon.

Comments received thus far support the retention of one of the two victorian/edwardian buildings on the site to maintain some of the historic fabric of Huntingdon town. Although the period of consultation with local and statutory bodies has yet to expire, the Panel has advised the Cabinet that it would prefer to retain the Primrose Building as part of future development of the site at Primrose Lane but that consideration should be given to its demolition in the event of a submission of a scheme of high quality for planning consent.

5. DESIGN BRIEF – MAYFIELD ROAD, HUNTINGDON

The views of the Panel have been requested on the development opportunities presented by an area of open space along Mayfield Road, Huntingdon. The site is currently in the ownership of the District Council and discussions have taken place with registered social landlords to deliver a high quality, sustainable, eco-friendly, affordable residential development on the site. Although the Design Brief still is subject to a period of consultation with local and statutory bodies, the Panel has endorsed the content of the Brief and recommended the Cabinet to adopt the document as Interim Planning Guidance subject to the retention of approximately one third of the site as open space.

6. ENFORCEMENT ACTION

Having regard to the continuation of an unauthorised use, the Panel has authorised the Head of Legal and Estates to take appropriate enforcement action to secure the cessation of a wood shaving line operation at Sundown Straw Limited, Station Road, Tilbrook or the implementation of the access arrangements for which planning consent has previously been approved within six months of the date upon which the enforcement notice is served.

7. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

In receiving a statistical report on the performance of the Development Control Section over the period 1st January – 31st March 2008, the Panel was pleased to note that the Development Control Section has met all national performance targets for the determination of major, minor and other applications over the period.

8. DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

In addition to the application discussed at Item No. 1, the Panel has determined, over three meetings, a total of thirty seven development applications of which twenty two were approved, thirteen refused and two deferred.

9. THE EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN – THE REVISION TO THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE EAST OF ENGLAND

The Government Office for the East of England has issued the East of England Plan – The Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England. The Strategy contains a vision and objectives for the period to 2021 and beyond and refers in particular to climate change, housing, the region's economy, quality of life and environmental conservation. As part of the statutory Development Plan, the Panel has noted that the East of England Plan will guide and influence all strategic development and planning decisions in the region and therefore have a fundamental impact upon the future character of Huntingdonshire. In practice the East of England has superseded the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan and its policies will, in future, be relevant in the determination of development applications.

P G Mitchell
Chairman

Employment Panel

Report of the meeting held on 3rd June 2008

Matters for Information

1. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY POLICY

Arising from recent legislation which has placed a greater accountability on employers for ensuring that there is equality of opportunity in the workplace, the Panel has endorsed the contents of a policy outlining the District Council's commitment to equality of opportunity for employees and Councillors. The Policy details how this is to be achieved and monitored and will complement the existing Corporate Equality Policy.

The Policy can be viewed on the website and a paper copy obtained on request from Democratic Services.

2. REQUESTS TO FILL VACANT POSTS

The Panel has considered the circumstances applicable to a number of vacancies across the Council's Directorates and has authorised the Head of HR and Payroll Services to recruit to the following posts:-

- ◆ Housing Services Administrator
- ◆ Benefits Manager
- ◆ Environmental Health Officer; and
- ◆ Director of Central Services

3. RETIREMENT OF PERSONNEL - ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Panel has placed on record its recognition of, and gratitude for, the excellent contributions made by the following employees during their employment in the local government service and conveyed its best wishes to them for a long and happy retirement.

Name	Directorate	Local Government Service
Mr P Watkins	Central Services	43 years
Mrs A Carter	Environmental & Community Services	24 years

Mrs B E Boddington
Chairman

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