

A meeting of the **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** will be held in the **BURGESS HALL, ST IVO LEISURE CENTRE, WESTWOOD ROAD, ST IVES, PE27 6WU** on **WEDNESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2009** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

**Time
Allocation**

PRAYER

Father Paul Maddison, Parish Priest of the Church of the Sacred Heart, St Ives will open the meeting with prayer.

APOLOGIES

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 12) | 2 minutes |
| To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 24th June 2009. | |
| 2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS | 2 minutes |
| 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. | |
| 3. BY-ELECTION - RAMSEY WARD | 2 minutes |
| The Returning Officer to report that Mr D P Reeve has been elected to the Office of District Councillor for the Ramsey Ward at a by-election held on 23rd July 2009. | |
| 4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 84 - HUNTINGDON NORTH | 2 minutes |
| The Chief Executive to report on the resignation of Councillor Ms S L Kemp with effect from 1st September 2009 and that the vacancy in the Huntingdon North Ward would be filled at a by-election to be held in the Autumn. | |
| 5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME | 10 minutes |
| A member of the public has given notice that he wishes to ask the following question – | |
| “What steps has the Council taken to bring privately owned residential properties that have been empty for a significant period, into use as they are surely needed to help alleviate the shortage of houses in the District?”. | |
| 6. COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES (Pages 13 - 14) | 5 minutes |
| To consider the suspension of Council Procedure Rule 11 on the rules | |

of debate at meetings of the Council for the purposes of Agenda Item Nos. 7 and 8 ante. Report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services.

- 7. COUNCIL DEBATE** **60 minutes**
- How successful are the Council and its partners in tackling anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime in Huntingdonshire?
- The debate to be opened by Chief Superintendent M Gipp, Cambridgeshire Constabulary and Councillor K J Churchill, Executive Councillor for Housing and Public Health.
- 8. EXECUTIVE POLICY ISSUES: GAMBLING ACT 2005 - STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES** **10 minutes**
- Councillor J M Sadler, Chairman of the Licensing Committee to inform the Council that a consultation exercise has begun to review the statement of principles under the Gambling Act 2005 to come into effect in January 2010.
- 9. HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT CORE STRATEGY 2008 - DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT - THE INSPECTOR'S BINDING REPORT/ADOPTION PROCEDURES** (Pages 15 - 44) **15 minutes**
- The Executive Councillor Planning Strategy and Transport to present the Development Plan Document – Core Strategy 2008 to the Council for adoption.
- 10. REPRESENTATION OF POLITICAL GROUPS ON DISTRICT COUNCIL PANELS** (Pages 45 - 50) **5 minutes**
- (a) To consider a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services on the representation of political groups on Panels, etc in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 and the District Council's Constitution.
- (b) To vary the membership of the Council's Committees and Panels as appropriate.
- 11. REPORTS OF THE CABINET, PANELS AND COMMITTEES** **30 minutes**
- (a) Cabinet (Pages 51 - 144)
- (b) Standards Committee (Pages 145 - 148)
- (c) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Pages 149 - 152)

- (d) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) (Pages 153 - 156)
- (e) Overview and Scrutiny (Social Well-Being) (Pages 157 - 160)
- (f) Development Management Panel (Pages 161 - 162)
- (g) Employment Panel (Pages 163 - 164)
- (h) Licensing Committee (Pages 165 - 166)
- (i) Corporate Governance Panel (Pages 167 - 168)

12. ORAL QUESTIONS

30 minutes

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

13. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 85

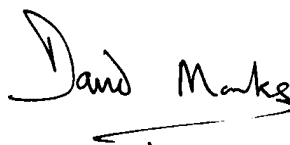
2 minutes

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

CLOSE

It is intended that the meeting will end no later than 10.00 pm.

Dated this 15th day of September 2009



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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Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Great Hall, Priory Centre, St Neots, PE19 2BH on Wednesday, 24 June 2009.

PRESENT: Councillor J W Davies – Chairman.

Councillors M G Baker, I C Bates,
Mrs B E Boddington, P L E Bucknell,
K J Churchill, W T Clough, Mrs K E Cooper,
S J Criswell, D B Dew, P J Downes,
J J Dutton, R W J Eaton, R S Farrer,
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, L W McGuire,
P G Mitchell, A Monk, M F Newman,
D J Priestman, T V Rogers, J M Sadler,
T D Sanderson, M F Shellens, L M Simpson,
C J Stephens, P A Swales, Ms M J Thomas,
G S E Thorpe, R G Tuplin, P K Ursell,
P R Ward, J S Watt and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J D Ablewhite, K M Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, J T Bell, E R Butler, Mrs J A Dew, Ms S Kemp and Mrs D C Reynolds.

14. PRAYER

The Reverend M Savage, Team Vicar of the Huntingdon Ministry, opened the meeting with Prayer.

15. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Councillor R Powell and former Councillor A Stenner

The Chairman paid tribute to Councillor R Powell who had died on 3rd June 2009, having served as a District Councillor for the Ramsey Ward for the past seven years. Tribute also was paid to former Councillor A Stenner, a District Councillor for the Buckden Ward for two years, who had died recently. Both Members had been extremely active in community life in their local areas. Councillor P J Downes, Leader of the Opposition and Councillors J J Dutton and P L E Bucknell paid tribute to Councillor Powell's tenacious character and to his motivation and desire to serve the interests of the people of Ramsey, mentioning in particular his campaign for safer roads in the Fens. Councillors Bucknell and Downes also commended the support given by former Councillor Stenner to the Huntingdonshire Society for Blind and to his overall contribution to the life of the District and County. After prayer by the Reverend Savage, Members stood and observed a minute's silence in their memory.

(b) **Armed Forces Week**

The Chairman reported that he had been honoured to host a ceremony on 22nd June 2009 to mark the commencement of Armed Forces Week which had been attended by distinguished guests including the Deputy Lord Lieutenant and representatives of the Armed Forces.

(c) **Recognitions and Award**

The Council announced that the Council's Fraud Team had been shortlisted for the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation "Excellence in Anti-Fraud" Team of the Year Award and if successful would go forward to the final at the IRRV Conference in October 2009. Congratulations also were extended to the CCTV Team whom had been awarded "Supporter of the Year" 2008/9 for the third year running by the Huntingdon Businesses Against Crime.

(d) **Members Vs Officers Cricket Match**

The Chairman updated the Council on arrangements for the annual cricket match between Members and Officers which had been re-arranged for Monday, 30th July 2009 at the St Ivo Outdoor Complex.

16. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 13th May 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors Mrs K E Cooper, R W J Eaton, G S E Thorpe and P K Ursell declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No. 7 (d), Item No 1 by virtue of their membership of St Neots Town Council.

18. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 84 - RAMSEY WARD

The Chief Executive reported that following the recent death of former Councillor R Powell, the resultant vacancy in the Ramsey Ward would be filled at a by-election to be held on 23rd July 2009.

19. FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2009/10

By reference to a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), Councillor J M Sadler, Chairman of the Licensing and Protection Panel, reminded the Council that the Food Standards Agency required the Council to prepare a Food Safety Service Plan annually in accordance with an agreed framework. A full copy of the Food Safety Service Plan 2009/10 had been made available in the Members' Room (an executive summary of the Plan is appended to the report now submitted).

Members were reminded of the objectives of the Service Plan in

terms of identifying resources, establishing a work programme and providing a means by which to measure and manage performance.

In terms of performance, the Food Service Team had inspected 98% high risk and 98.5% low risk food premises, a total of 1,118 inspections and visits in 2008/09 as part of programmed activities and in response to complaints and food alerts. Councillor Sadler also drew the Council's attention to the success of the "Huntingdonshire Scores on the Doors" food hygiene rating scheme which had attracted 30,000 searches on the website since its introduction in October 2008 and had contributed to an increase in hygiene standards across the District.

Councillor Sadler advised Members that in 2009/10, the Team would continue to direct their resources towards high risk food premises, explore the use of alternative enforcement strategies and develop healthy eating initiatives for businesses and the community as identified in "Growing Success" and the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Whereupon, after noting the support for the Plan on the part of the Licensing and Protection Panel, the Council

RESOLVED

that the Food Safety Service Plan 2009/10 be adopted.

20. CABINET PROCEDURE RULES - DELEGATION BY THE LEADER

In accordance with the Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution, the Council noted the allocation of executive functions for the ensuing Municipal Year contained in a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book).

In response to questions, the Leader assured the Council that he had confidence in his Executive Councillors to advise him should any concerns arise over the extent of their particular portfolios.

21. REVIEW OF THE DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE/CONSTITUTION

Further to Minute No. 66 of the meeting of the Council held on 22nd April 2009, the Chairman of the Democratic Structure Working Group, Councillor K J Churchill, presented a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which summarised those issues which had emerged from recent reviews requiring variations to the District Council's Constitution.

The Council was reminded that any Motion to add to, vary or revoke the Council's Rules of Procedure, when proposed and seconded, needed to stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council. Therefore, having acknowledged the opportunities presented by the changes to reinvigorate participation in the democratic process and thanked Members and Officers for their contribution to the Working Party's review, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the following variations to the Council Procedure Rules (Standing Orders) be adopted –
- (i) that major policy decisions that are reserved to Council be the subject of debate at Council meetings before public consultation, that innovative ways be used to brief Members on the subjects to stimulate debate, that arrangements be made for single issue debates (in addition to normal business) and the opposition political parties be invited to choose a subject for debate at one meeting per annum;
 - (ii) that a public question time be introduced at Council meetings as set out in the procedure appended at Annex B to the report now submitted;
 - (iii) that meetings of the Council commence at 7.00 pm in the interests of consistency with the starting times of the Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny and Development Management Panels which the public might be expected to attend;
 - (iv) that in Part 4 – Council Procedure Rules (Standing Orders) the following amendments be made:-
 - ◆ the following words be added at the end of Rule 9.1 – “The submission of a written notice of motion via e-mail will be acceptable.”;
 - ◆ the following words be inserted after the word “Group” in the tenth line of Rule 10A.3 – “and where the matter relates to a development or licensing application.”;
 - ◆ that the paragraph entitled “Who is permitted to speak to the Panel?” in Annex (iii), which relates to Rule 27(a) – Public Speaking at Development Control Panel, be amended so that the sixth bullet point is annotated with an asterisk and the following words be inserted at the end of that section – “Supporters of an application may speak on any application but will only be permitted to do so if an applicant or his representative decides not to speak or to use less than the time permitted. In any case, the time limit of three minutes for speaking in support of an application should not be exceeded.”; and
 - (v) that in the second and penultimate lines of paragraph 24, the words "Overview and Scrutiny Panel" be deleted, and a second paragraph added to paragraph 24 to read "Any Member wishing to have an item placed on an agenda for

a meeting of an Overview and Scrutiny Panel will comply with the Councillor Call for Action procedure, a guide to which is attached at Annex (iv)."

(b) that the following changes to the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution be approved -

(i) the first and second paragraphs of Item 7 be deleted and replaced by the following -

"A Member may raise an item on an Overview and Scrutiny Panel agenda in accordance with the Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) procedure. A member of a Panel may raise an item on an agenda for a meeting of that Panel which relates to the functions of that Panel. Any Member may raise an item on an agenda of a meeting of a relevant Panel if it relates to the discharge of any of the Council's functions or it affects that member's ward or any person who lives or works there. In certain circumstances CCfA may be omitted from an agenda if it is an excluded matter. A guide to CCfA is attached to the Council Procedure Rules as annex (iv)";

(ii) the third paragraph of Item 9 be deleted and replaced with the following -

"An Overview and Scrutiny Panel may choose to publish a report and recommendations

"An Overview and Scrutiny Panel must, by notice in writing, require the Council or Cabinet to consider the report and recommendations and respond indicating what action (if any) they propose to take. If the Overview and Scrutiny Panel has published its report and recommendations, the Council or Cabinet must publish their response within two months of receiving the Panel's report or the notice (if later)."

(iii) the last sentence of the first paragraph of Item 10 be deleted and replaced by the following -

"The Council or the Cabinet shall respond to a report and recommendations of an Overview and Scrutiny Panel within 2 months of receiving the report or a written notice from the Panel requiring them to consider the report (if later)."

(iv) in the penultimate sentence of the third paragraph of Item 10, the following words be added before the end of the sentence "or the written notice (if later)".

- (c) that the job or role descriptions approved by the Council under Minute No. 66 resolution (nn) in respect of the Chairman of the Council and Speaker of the Council be rescinded and the revised role description for the Chairman of the Council as set out in Annex D to the report now submitted be approved.

22. REPORTS OF THE CABINET, PANELS AND COMMITTEES

(a) Cabinet

Councillor I C Bates, Leader and Chairman of the Cabinet presented the Report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 23rd and 30th April, 14th May and 18th June 2009.

.....

In connection with Item No. 3 and in response to a question from Councillor M F Shellens, the Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services, Councillor C R Hyams undertook to advise the questioner in writing, of the timescale for the review of the maintenance programme for the Riverside Park, Huntingdon.

.....

In connection with Item No. 4 and in response to questions from Councillors W T Clough, P J Downes and T D Sanderson, the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, Councillor D B Dew assured Members that a comprehensive programme of public consultation and meetings for local town and parish councils would take place on proposals for the development and regeneration of land west of Huntingdon town centre, that he was confident that the current proposals for improvement works to the A14 would be pursued and that he concurred with the view that the Council should engage at the earliest opportunity in discussions with Cambridgeshire County Council on the effect on the local road network and particularly Brampton Road of the detrunking of the A14.

.....

In connection with Item No. 5 and in response to a question from Councillor P L E Bucknell, the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, Councillor D B Dew assured the questioner that the District Council would robustly resist any proposal which suggested that the District Council should meet the deficit in housing growth rejected by other Cambridgeshire authorities.

.....

In connection with Item No. 7 and in response to a question from Councillor M F Shellens regarding the consultation exercise for development of land to the east of Sapley

Square, Huntingdon, the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, Councillor D B Dew indicated that the District Council would consider all comments received during the public consultation exercise.

.....

In connection with Item No. 10 and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy, Councillor A Hansard advised the questioner that the District Council would respond to enquiries from local businesses under the Federation of Small Businesses Accord and that the Economic, Prosperity and Skills Group of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership would act as the vehicle for engagement with local businesses.

.....

In connection with Item No. 19 and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, the Executive Councillor for Environment and Information Technology, Councillor J A Gray advised the questioner that the estimated net financial saving of £1.1m arising from a reduction in the District Council's carbon dioxide emissions over a five-year period was a cumulative figure.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 23rd and 30th April, 14th May and 18th June 2009 be received and adopted.

(b) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being)

Councillor G S E Thorpe presented the Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) held on 11th June 2009.

.....

In connection with Item No. 3 and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, the Vice-Chairman of the Panel, Councillor G S E Thorpe, assured the questioner that the Panel would be advised when further details came to light on the Government's proposals for promoting the sustainability of local communities arising from the Sustainable Communities Act.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) held on 11th June 2009 be received and adopted.

(c) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being)

Councillor P M D Godfrey presented the Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) held on 9th June 2009.

.....

In connection with Item No. 3 and in response to a question from Councillor G S E Thorpe, Councillor Godfrey assured the questioner that he would continue to monitor performance under the Corporate Plan "Growing Success" for the financial year 2008/09 to ensure that where measures had been met and exceeded new stretching targets would be set.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) held on 9th June 2009 be received and adopted.

(d) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)

Councillor S J Criswell presented the Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 2nd June 2009.

.....

In connection with Item No. 1 and in response to a question from Councillor G S E Thorpe regarding progress of discussions on the Sydney Banks Playing Field, and on the possibility of consultation with St Neots Town Council and future partnership arrangements, Councillor Criswell replied that whilst he was content with the progress of the project thus far, he would seek further information on progress of work from the Executive Councillor for Leisure, Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds.

.....

In connection with Item No. 4 and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, Councillor Criswell drew the questioner's attention to the content of the response to the consultation on the NHS Cambridgeshire Strategic Plan 2009 -14 contained in the Panel agenda which had

incorporated the views expressed by Panel Members in relation to customer care.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 2nd June 2009 be received and adopted.

(e) Development Management Panel

Councillor P G Mitchell presented the Report of the meetings of the Development Management Panel (formerly the Development Control Panel) held on 20th April, 18th May and 15th June 2009.

.....

In connection with Item No. 4 and in response to a question from Councillor W T Clough, Councillor Mitchell assured the questioner that the new development management process would continue to robustly monitor and manage planning development in the District.

.....

In connection with Item No. 7 and in response to a question from Councillor P L E Bucknell, regarding the proposed residential element of the development adjacent to Ramsey Industrial Park, Stocking Fen Road, Ramsey, Councillor Mitchell explained that the appropriate consent had been granted for that part of the scheme which he hoped would be pursued within the time limits specified under the planning permission.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Development Management Panel and formerly Development Control Panel held on 20th April, 18th May and 15th June 2009 be received and adopted.

(f) Employment Panel

Councillor Mrs B E Boddington presented the Report of the meeting of the Employment Panel held on 16th June 2009.

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Councillor Mrs Boddington drew the Council's attention to the forty five years of local government service by Mr G Crocker, latterly employed in the Planning Division of the Environmental and Community Services Directorate.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Employment Panel held on 16th June 2009 be received and adopted.

(g) Licensing and Protection Panel

Councillor J M Sadler presented the Report of the meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel held on 17th June 2009.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel held on 17th June 2009 be received and adopted.

23. ORAL QUESTIONS

In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules (paragraph 8.3 of the Rules), the Chairman proceeded to conduct a period of oral questions addressed to Executive Councillors and Panel Chairmen as follows:-

Question from Councillor R S Farrer to the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, Councillor D B Dew

In response to a question regarding the working practices of the Enforcement Team in the Planning Division, Councillor Dew informed Members that four Enforcement Officers were employed to cover the District, that the numbers of enforcement enquiries recently had increased substantially and that the Team was reviewing its workload to ensure that the more serious breaches of planning control were prioritised.

Question from Councillor P L E Bucknell to the Leader of the Council, Councillor I C Bates

In response to a question regarding the nature of the assistance being offered by the District Council to the unemployed in Huntingdonshire, Councillor Bates, having acknowledged that it was a difficult time for individuals and businesses, assured the Council that the Sustainable Economic Development Team were continuing to encourage the development of employment opportunities and the growth of new businesses in the District and that he would request

the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships to brief Councillor Bucknell in detail on the various activities being pursued by the Team.

Question from Councillor M G Baker to the Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services, Councillor C R Hyams

In response to a question regarding the Council's policy of identifying those properties occupied by the frail, elderly and vulnerable for refuse collection purposes and the steps being taken to vary a well intentioned practice which continued to place individuals at risk, Councillor Hyams replied that he was reviewing the practices of other local authorities and would welcome the questioner's support and involvement in seeking to improve the current arrangements.

Question from Councillor R W J Eaton to the Executive Councillor for Housing and Public Health, Councillor K J Churchill

In response to a question in relation to home improvement grants for those in receipt of a war disability pension, Councillor Churchill encouraged those wishing to apply for home improvement grants to contact the Home Improvements Agency for advice or to seek further information from the District Council's website.

Question from Councillor T D Sanderson to the Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services, Councillor C R Hyams

In response to a question, Councillor Hyams undertook to contact Twigden Homes regarding the adoption by the Council of open space at Hinchingbrooke Park.

Question from Councillor R S Farrer to the Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services, Councillor C R Hyams

In response to a question, Councillor Hyams undertook to keep Councillor Farrer informed of the action proposed to be taken to address anti-social behaviour around the trim trail at the Pocket Park, Eynesbury.

24. 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.

25. MEMBERSHIP OF PANELS/COMMITTEES

RESOLVED

that Councillor D J Priestman be appointed to serve on the Licensing and Protection Panel/Licensing Committee.

The meeting concluded at 3.45 pm.

Chairman

Council Procedure Rules

Report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council has approved the recommendations of the Structure Review Working Party with regard to a change in format of Council meetings, including the introduction of headline debates and Cabinet 'white paper' proposals.
- 1.2 The Council Procedure Rules (Standing Orders) specify the rules of debate that apply during meetings of the Council. These include a requirement for a Motion to be seconded before it can be debated, an inability for a Member to speak more than once except in certain prescribed instances, amendments to motions etc. It was felt during the course of the discussion on the Working Party's recommendations by Council on 22nd April that the rules of debate would hinder a free flowing discussion and exchange of views when the headline debate and white paper items were being considered by Council. The Working Party was therefore asked to look at this matter again in the light of its on-going deliberations.

2. RULES OF DEBATE

- 2.1 Rather than compile new rules of debate for such circumstances, the Working Party's view is that the most appropriate course is for Council Procedure Rule 11 to be suspended for the items relating to the headline debate and white paper items only. In its absence, common law rules of debate would apply. Members will realise that a greater onus is being placed on the Chairman to chair the discussion in a flexible and open manner and that he will be obliged to exercise some discretion in his interpretation of common law principles.
- 2.2 Council Procedure Rules can be suspended by a majority vote as long as two thirds of the Members are present. However they can only be suspended on a meeting by meeting basis. In the event of difficulties being encountered in terms of the absence of formal rules of debate on the agenda items in question, it is open to the Council to decide not to suspend the Rules of Debate at a subsequent meeting. It is therefore in the interests of all Members not to take advantage of the absence of this element of the Procedure Rules.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 To facilitate the intended full exchange of views and a free flowing discussion, the Council is therefore invited to consider suspending the

formal rules of debate. In the event that this leads to problems being encountered, further consideration may need to be given to the drafting of formal alternatives or a reversion to the existing Rules which may constrain the headline debate.

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 It is therefore

RECOMMENDED

that Council Procedure Rule 11 (Rules of Debate) be suspended for the duration of the discussion on Item Nos. 7 and 8 on the Agenda and at such time, the common law rules of debate be observed by Members and applied by the Chairman.

Contact Person: Roy Reeves, Head of Democratic and Central Services
☎ 01480 388003

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

The Council's Constitution
Knowles on Local Authority Meetings – A Manual of Law and Practice

The Huntingdonshire District Core Strategy 2008 – Development Plan Document – The Inspector’s Binding Report/Adoption Procedures

Report by Head of Planning Services

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Council that, following his examination of the submitted Core Strategy, the Inspector has now issued his binding report which outlines his considerations and sets out his conclusions regarding the soundness of the DPD.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As Members will be aware the Council, acting in respect of its role as the Local Planning Authority, needed to fundamentally update its local development plan documents and accordingly, following a protracted preparation process, the Core Strategy was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination in July 2008.
- 2.2 The appointed Planning Inspector, Eric Searle, conducted the examination by way of written exchanges and via public hearing sessions held earlier this year. The Inspector has considered all of the representations received in respect of the Core Strategy and he has now issued his formal report outlining his findings and conclusions regarding the soundness of the document.

3. THE INSPECTORS REPORT

- 3.1 The Inspector has issued his binding report and
- ◆ In Section 1 he outlines the basis of the applicable procedures and the relevant tests that he applied to his examination.
 - ◆ In Section 2 he outlines and comments upon the Council’s compliance with all of the applicable legal requirements.
 - ◆ In Section 3 he considers whether the proposed strategy is justified, effective and consistent with national policy. In doing that he has:
 - endorsed the Council’s vision and objectives for the future development of the district, and accepted the suggested criteria that will be applied in order to deliver sustainable development;
 - supported the proposed general distribution of future growth across the district, endorsing the proposed settlement hierarchy, the strategic directions of growth and the related proposals to appropriately restrict dispersed growth;

- supported the Council's aspirations to seek to deliver 40% affordable housing on all eligible sites;
 - amended the proposed wording of the proposed Gypsy and Traveller policy in order to clarify that developments should not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape;
 - endorsed the proposed quantum of housing development and employment land provision for the plan period and the proposed distribution and locations of the strategic directions of growth; which are primarily focussed on the Huntingdon, St Neots and to a lesser extent St Ives SPA's;
 - positively supported the Council's strategy for employment led, rather than residential led, regeneration in the Ramsey SPA;
 - endorsed the proposed distribution of retail development; specifically acknowledging the importance of regenerating Chequers Court in Huntingdon in conjunction with the complementary retail element in Huntingdon West;
 - recognised the applicable infrastructure needs, and related nature of the developer and other contributions, that will be required to support the delivery of the strategy.
- ◆ In Section 4 he outlines his approach to dealing with the agreed and proposed changes to the submitted document.
- 3.2 In Section 5 of his report the Inspector reaches his overall conclusions and determines that, with the incorporation of the amendments he recommends, the Core Strategy satisfies all of the relevant legal requirements and is therefore sound.

4. ADOPTION OF THE CORE STRATEGY

- 4.1 The approved Core Strategy is a vitally important piece of the planning jigsaw for Huntingdonshire as it sets out the Council's strategic planning framework for the further growth, development and conservation of the district for the period up to 2026.
- 4.2 The approved Core Strategy now supersedes the strategic policies contained within the adopted Local Plan and Local Plan Alteration and therefore it now needs to be formally adopted by Council as an essential component of the Development Plan for Huntingdonshire.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Therefore it is recommended that Council:

- (a) **Formally adopts the Core Strategy as part of the Development Plan for the district.**

Contact Officer: Steve Ingram, Head of Planning Services
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Submitted Huntingdonshire Core Strategy 2008
 The Inspectors Report on the Examination into the Submitted Core Strategy – July 2009



The Planning Inspectorate

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 Pathfinder House
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Your Ref: CS2008/Reg28

Our Ref: PINS/H0520/429/5

Date: 08 July 2009

Dear David

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT CORE STRATEGY 2008 DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

1. As you know, I was appointed by the Secretary of State to carry out an independent examination of the above development plan document, which was submitted to the Secretary of State in July 2008, pursuant to section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. I held a pre-examination meeting on 16 December 2008, and conducted the examination by way of written exchange and by a series of hearings. The hearing sessions were held at The Methodist Church, 17 High Street, Huntingdon between 17 March and 2 April 2009.
3. The purpose of the examination is set out in section 20(5) of the 2004 Act. By the time I started making an assessment of soundness, Planning Policy Statement 12 had been revised in June 2008 (and re-titled Local Spatial Planning) and I have assessed the submitted document against the legal requirements and soundness as set out in paragraphs 4.50-4.52 of the new PPS12.
4. With this letter is a copy of my report on the submitted Core Strategy. This contains my recommendations and the reasons for them as required by section 20(7) of the 2004 Act.

5. After considering all the representations made during the 6 week period following submission as well as all the matters and issues, I have written the accompanying report, which contains my recommendations and the reasons for them. My overall conclusion is that, with the amendments recommended in my report, the Huntingdon Core Strategy satisfies the legal requirements and is sound.

6. Gloria Alexander acted as my Programme Officer. Because of the demolition work on the Pathfinder House site she had to work in less than ideal conditions and I am grateful for her valuable assistance in ensuring that the examination process, and particularly the hearing sessions, ran smoothly. All the core documents which constituted the evidence base for the plan are available in the examination library together with representations made and statements prepared during the examination

7. I wish to express my thanks to the Council's officers and advisors and all those attending the hearing sessions for the helpful, positive and professional manner they adopted throughout the examination. I hope that my conclusions and recommendations will help to facilitate the regeneration of the Huntingdonshire district in an effective manner which is beneficial to both the towns, and those sustainable rural areas.

Yours sincerely

Eric T Searle

INSPECTOR



Report to Huntingdonshire District Council

by Eric T Searle Dip TP FRTPI FB
Eng MCMI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State
for Communities and Local Government

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Date 29 July 2009

PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

SECTION 20

**REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION INTO THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE
DISTRICT**

DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT – CORE STRATEGY 2008

Document submitted for examination July 2008

Examination hearings held between 17 March and 1 April 2009

File Ref(s): LDF000955

1 Introduction and Overall Conclusion

- 1.1 Under the terms of Section 20(5) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the purpose of the independent examination of a development plan document (DPD) is to determine:
 - (a) whether it satisfies the requirements of s19 and s24(1) of the 2004 Act, the regulations under s17(7), and any regulations under s36 relating to the preparation of the document.
 - (b) whether it is sound.
- 1.2 This report contains my assessment of the Core Strategy in terms of the above matters, along with my recommendations and the reasons for them, as required by s20(7) of the 2004 Act.
- 1.3 I am satisfied that the Core Strategy meets the requirements of the Act and Regulations. My role is also to consider the soundness of the submitted DPD in terms of it being “justified, effective and consistent with national policy” as set out in Planning Policy Statement 12 (2008). In line with national policy, the starting point for the examination is the assumption that the local authority has submitted what it considers to be a sound plan. The changes I have specified in this binding report are made only where there is a clear need to amend the document in the light of soundness. None of these changes should materially alter the substance of the overall plan and its policies, or undermine the sustainability appraisal and participatory processes already undertaken.
- 1.4 My report firstly considers the procedural tests, and then deals with the relevant matters and issues considered during the examination in terms of the tests of conformity, coherence, consistency and effectiveness. My overall conclusion is that the Core Strategy is sound, provided it is changed in the ways specified.
- 1.5 The report sets out all the detailed changes required, including those suggested by the Council, to ensure that the plan is sound. The Annexe contains the changes proposed by the Council including those minor changes which improve or clarify wording. In some cases I have further amended the wording of the proposed changes suggested by the Council. Although I consider that a number of changes are necessary to ensure the document is sound, none of these affect the fundamental approach taken by the Council towards development in the district contained in the Core Strategy. There are, therefore, no “main” changes which I need to make specific reference to here.
- 1.6 The references to Regulations 31 and 33 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 in the Council’s submissions are because the Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State before 1 September 2008. This has triggered the transitional provisions of Regulation 3(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 which means that the 2008 regulation

amendments removing Regulations 31 and 33 do not apply to this Core Strategy.

2 Legal Requirements

2.1 The Core Strategy is contained within the Council’s Local Development Scheme, which was approved in March 2007. There, it is shown as having a submission date during the spring of 2008. The timescale and content of the Core Strategy accord with the Local Development Scheme as required by paragraph 4.50 of Planning Policy Statement 12.

2.2 The Huntingdonshire Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been found sound by the Secretary of State and was formally adopted by the Council in 2006. The Council has also had due regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire. It is evident from the documents submitted by the Council, including the Regulation 28 and 31 Statements and its Self Assessment Paper, that the Council has met the requirements as set out in the Regulations.

2.3 Alongside the preparation of the Core Strategy it is evident that the Council has carried out a parallel process of sustainability appraisal. The key sustainability issues were identified in the Scoping Report as land, water and resources; biodiversity; landscape, townscape and archaeology; climate change and pollution; healthy and inclusive communities; and economic activity. The sustainability appraisal identified the need to retain the district’s historic and architectural heritage, the particular pressures for growth on greenfield land, and a high incidence of outward commuting which affects the local economy.

2.4 In accordance with the Habitats Directive, I am satisfied that an Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken by specialist external consultants and with full assessment where necessary so that there would be no significant harm to the conservation of European sites as a result of the policies and proposals within this Core Strategy.

2.5 Accordingly, I am satisfied that the legal requirements listed under paragraph 4.50 of Planning Policy Statement 12 have all been satisfied. In addition, the Regional Assembly has indicated that the Core Strategy is in general conformity with the approved Regional Spatial Strategy. It also accords with national policy.

3 Justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

3.1 As the district is within a growth area the main issues are housing and employment, their location and quantity.

3.2 Issue 1 – Whether the strategic vision and objectives are appropriate for the district

3.3 The District lies in the East of England Region within London/Stansted/Cambridge/Peterborough Growth Area. In East of England Plan, Policy CSR1- the Vision for the Cambridge sub-region – includes the statement; “to continue to develop as a centre of excellence and world leader in the fields of higher education and research, fostering the dynamism, prosperity and further expansion of the knowledge based economy spreading outwards from Cambridge.” The southern part of the district, including the towns of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives falls within the Cambridge Sub Region. The northern part is influenced by its relationship with Peterborough.

3.4 The Core Strategy should emphasise that its policies are overarching and will apply to all subsequent Local Development Documents. This is inferred but the wording requires clarification for soundness. The importance of employment land suitable for high quality business and employment opportunities is not referred to in the Core Strategy and the Council accepts that this needs to be emphasised. However, hi-tech jobs account for only 9.5% of all employment within Huntingdonshire and these are established and concentrated in the three market towns of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives. Because of this I see no need to specifically mention hi-tech firms in Policy CS7. The supporting text which explains the influence of the Cambridge Sub-Region needs further clarity for soundness.

3.5 To ensure that the Spatial Vision is up to date and the objectives and policies that follow are clearly related to that Spatial Vision amended wording of the text is necessary for soundness. These are listed below.

3.6 A section on climate change should be introduced because of new responsibilities contained in the Planning Act 2008.

3.7 The addition of a section is required to cover more fully the future needs and sustainability issues of the villages and countryside.

3.8 The approach to development in villages and the countryside, where strategic growth is not proposed should be set out. With government support for the rural economy, under Objective 6 exceptionally business development on a limited scale will be permitted in rural areas.

3.9 Clarification is required regarding the status of Key Service centres where strategic growth is to be directed.

3.10 Having the regard to the Council’s approach to growth within the district it is important for soundness to state that it is the Spatial Planning Areas as a whole which are considered to be sustainable for growth, not just the market towns.

3.11 It is also necessary to amend the text under the heading *Increased Capacity of the Transport Network* to incorporate the latest advice from the Highways Agency on the impact of individual developments on traffic flows within the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area on the A14. I have dealt with this under Infrastructure at Issue 4 below.

3.12 I am of the view that a mechanism for specialist housing does not need to be part of Policy CS4. I agree with the Council that it has no direct spatial dimension and is a local issue which can be better dealt with in a subsequent Local Development Document. However, specialist housing should be mentioned in the supporting text

3.13 Tourism in Huntingdonshire is of a modest scale and is spread widely across the district. Apart from adding reference to the importance of the Great Fen and water features in the Core Strategy, any further policies and guidance should be provided through subsequent Local Development Documents.

3.14 With the changes below I consider there would be consistency between the Spatial Vision and other policies of the Core Strategy, and regional and national policy.

3.15 Therefore, subject to the changes below I find the Spatial Vision and Objectives justified, effective and in accordance with national policy.

3.16 **The following changes are necessary to make the document sound:**

i) Amend paragraph 1.4

~~It will not include detailed development control policies or identify specific development sites.~~ **The Core Strategy is a strategic document. The vision and objectives are overarching and form the basis for the whole Local Development Framework; they will therefore be used for subsequent Local Development Documents. Because of the strategic nature of the Core Strategy the Council has chosen not to include detailed development control policies or identify specific development sites.** These will be dealt with separately by the Development Control Management DPD, the Planning Proposals DPD and the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan. **as appropriate.** (PC/1/00200 as amended)

ii) Insert in the Spatial Vision after Protection of Character

Villages and Countryside

To promote the sustainability of our villages and countryside appropriate investment in the rural economy will be encouraged, including complementary diversification of agricultural holdings. Provision of affordable housing on rural exceptions sites will be encouraged to help people remain in, or return to, their local communities. Transport services, communication links and access to key services and facilities

will be protected and improved where possible to help people living in, working in or visiting villages and the countryside pursue sustainable lifestyles. Huntingdonshire’s villages and countryside offer abundant habitats for plants and wildlife; opportunities will be maximised to maintain and enhance the quality and diversity of habitats supported. (PC/3/00400)

iii) Insert new statement in The Spatial Vision

Sustainable Development and Responding to Climate Change

Delivering the required growth sustainably and in a way that mitigates against and responds to our changing climate will be the most significant challenge for the Development Plan. Development will therefore respond to the need to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by ensuring that energy is used efficiently both in the construction and use of buildings and more of the energy used comes from zero or low carbon sources. The location of development will minimise the need to travel especially by car, make sustainable forms of travel more convenient and so reduce the impact of transport on climate change. Global warming is likely to enhance extremes of weather and the potential of increased risk of flooding that comes from the likelihood of wetter and milder winters could affect much of Huntingdonshire. Also the East of England is already one of the driest areas in the country for much of the year and this is likely to get worse with climate change and will have implications for the use of water in new and existing development. (PC/3/00300 as amended)

iv) ...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~~ **other villages**, schemes that sustain and enhance the vitality of established communities, **through the appropriate development of homes and businesses**, will be supported **where they are compatible with environmental designations and constraints**. ~~With the housing growth the~~ **In conjunction with the proposed housing growth** appropriate provision of health, education, training, and community, leisure and open space facilities will be secured. (PC/3/00500)

v) Future **strategic** 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 Council will promote the** provision of a wider range of local employment opportunities, particularly in **high quality sites for** 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. (PC/3/00800 and PC/3/00900)

vi) (Paragraph 3.3) ... continuing in the 1980's and 1990's. **As a result of their location within the Cambridge Sub Region pressures for development will continue to be felt within St Neots and Huntingdon as well as St Ives. Other settlements, within the east and south of the District, will also feel increased pressure for development resulting from the District’s location within the London/ Stansted/ Cambridge/Peterborough growth area.** 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. ~~It but~~ also has a buoyant local economy which now ~~contains~~ **includes** the **Cambridgeshire’s** largest cluster of high-technology firms **outside the immediate area of Cambridge in the market towns of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives.** ~~in Cambridgeshire outside the immediate area of Cambridge~~ **However, it has to be noted that this is not the most dominant part of the local economy.** (PC/3/00200)

vii) amend paragraph with heading

Sustainable Patterns of Growth and Sufficient Housing to Meet Needs

During this time Huntingdonshire will play a proactive role in accommodating housing growth, including **any appropriate specialist housing and** 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. (PC/3/00650 and PC/3/00700)

viii) (Additional Objective) **To support the District’s tourism sector, particularly opportunities relating to the Great Fen and water based activities.** (PC/3/01700)

ix) Amendment to Objective 1

Start Objective 1 **To facilitate required growth in locations.....**

x) Objective 6: To ~~enable~~ **support** business development in ~~rural areas~~ **the District’s villages and countryside**, in locations and on a scale which helps to provide local jobs, limits commuting and minimises or mitigates against adverse environmental impacts (PC/3/01200)

- xi)** Objective 9: Delete “identify opportunities to” and add **infrastructure while improving the natural habitat and biodiversity** (PC/3/01400 and PC/3/01500)
- xii)** Objective 16: Insert after “energy used,” **encouraging the uptake of sustainable travel modes** (PC/3/01600)
- xiii)** Additional Objective 18: **To support the District’s tourism sector, particularly opportunities relating to the Great Fen and water based activities.** (PC/3/01700)

3.17 Issue 2 – Whether the overall policies of the Core Strategy will lead to development that meets the needs of the district in a sustainable way

3.18 The major part of the housing and employment development is directed to the two major Spatial Planning Areas of Huntingdon and St Neots, 1800 homes in Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area and 2650 in St Neots Spatial Planning Area. In St Ives Spatial Planning Area at least 500 homes would be provided and in Ramsey Spatial Planning Area at least 300 homes are proposed. In addition certain Key Service Centres outside of the Spatial Planning Areas will accommodate about 250 homes.

3.19 Key Service Centres have been identified consistent with the broad criteria set out in the East of England Plan (REG10). Outside of the Spatial Planning Areas only the two villages of Yaxley and Sawtry meet all 5 criteria. Fenstanton misses 1 criterion, access to secondary education, but in my view has rightly been included as a Key Service Centre because of its sustainable location within the Cambridge Sub-Region and the sequential approach in the East of England Plan.

3.20 Concern was expressed by some representors about the lack of flexibility for development in the Key Service Centres and other villages. It was argued that there should be a range of categories for the villages, instead of lumping them all into one category below Key Service Centres. However, I found the range of settlements overall identified in Policies CS2 and CS3 to be wider than is first apparent. There are the market towns and Spatial Planning Areas to which development is directed. There are the Key Service Centres within the Spatial Planning Areas within which strategic development will occur. Those Key Service Centres which have been included within the Spatial Planning Areas have higher levels of sustainability as they are closely related and accessible to their market town.

3.21 Outside the Spatial Planning Areas only 3 Key Service Centres have been identified for limited strategic growth. Fenstanton, within the Cambridge Sub-Region. Sawtry to serve the centre of the district and Yaxley which is closely related to Peterborough and Hampton to the north of the district. In addition there are smaller Key Service Centres

identified which will take a limited amount of development commensurate with their character and scale.

3.22 Under these are the remainder of the villages which, although from my visit I found to be of different size and varied character, I support the Council’s cautious approach and strict control over development in these mainly more remote settlements. In my view even in these smaller villages Policy CS3 provides reasonable flexibility by stating that development proposals of a larger scale may be allowed where site specific circumstances demonstrate that this secures the most sustainable option for the site.

3.23 In the past there was a policy of dispersal and some villages I saw have accommodated high levels of development over the years and have reached a reasonable size. This may well have helped these villages to become more balanced settlements but I consider it sound to strictly control future development in the rural villages by directing growth to more sustainable locations. In the East of England Plan it is stated that it is difficult to identify a correlation between the number of houses, and the range of facilities provided in villages and development has been unable to halt closure of local services. Substantial housing in non sustainable locations would be needed to ensure the maintenance and retention of some village facilities

3.24 I do not agree with the arguments that on the grounds of flexibility more strategic development should be directed towards the Key Service Centres, as I share the view of the Council that some will always be at the margins of sustainability. The smaller Key Service Centres will have opportunities for varying degrees of limited growth. Development in the smaller villages below Key Service Centre level will be strictly controlled.

3.25 I consider that the dispersed option to the Key Service Centres and villages in the Preferred Options Report is the least sustainable option and that the 250 figure for dwellings to be spread across the 3 most sustainable Key Service Centres should not be increased to encourage further dispersal.

3.26 I see no reason on grounds of strategy that directions of growth should be indicated for all Key Service Centres, neither do Key Local Services need to be identified in the Core Strategy. It is only necessary to show directions of growth that are strategic and village services and facilities are normally not. Such services and facilities, if they need to be identified at all, should be dealt with in a later Local Development Document.

3.27 Policy CS3 promotes a sustainable and modest scale of development and identifies those circumstances where such development will be permitted. It also sets out circumstances where different scales of development may be appropriate. This is complemented by Policy CS5 which provides for affordable housing as an exception in rural areas.

3.28 However, the settlement hierarchy needs clarification as a framework for housing development on unallocated sites. It should be stated that Policy CS3 will manage other development on non allocated sites whereas Policy CS2 is intended to guide strategic growth.

3.29 The Core Strategy has a criteria based policy to control development in the villages instead of the former village boundaries approach which some representors, including some parish councils, preferred because they consider it is more definite. To my mind both approaches are acceptable and I do not find a criteria approach unsound. I would expect the criteria to be further defined in the forthcoming Development Management Local Development Document. This should be made clear by a change to paragraph 5.15 and the Glossary. Otherwise I do not find it inappropriate to establish the basic definition of the “built up area” of a village in the Core Strategy at paragraph 5.15, as amended by a proposed change.

3.30 For soundness, sustainable drainage systems should be specifically mentioned in paragraph 4.10 and sites of nature conservation value in paragraph 4.14.

Affordable Housing

3.31 Turning to the sustainability of the Affordable Housing policy CS4, on the 19 February 2009 there were 3139 applicants on the housing register awaiting affordable housing in Huntingdonshire. When compared to the Regional Spatial Strategy target for housing growth, Huntingdonshire has the greatest level of housing need in Cambridgeshire. There is therefore, a sound case for the high target figure in Huntingdonshire.

3.32 Following the publication of Planning Policy Statement 3 and the requirements of paragraph 19, site viability appraisals were carried out across the district. These were assessed both on the basis of a buoyant and a depressed market. If a site is found to be unviable the Council will apply a cascade mechanism which is set out in the Council’s Supplementary Planning Document. However, for soundness it should be made clear that the 40% affordable housing requirement is a target “to be aimed for” not necessarily achieved. Also “may” should be substituted by “will” in the third paragraph of Policy CS4 to ensure that site specific circumstances are taken into account. Otherwise Policy CS4 is flexible enough to deal with market variations by taking into account “other material considerations”.

3.33 Even in the cheapest areas, the lowest quartile house price is 4.5 times local incomes. As Planning Policy Statement 3 requires separate targets to be set for social rented housing and intermediate housing I do not find it inappropriate in principle to include them within the policy, but the tenure figures need to be clarified. Policy CS4 allows for the percentages of social rented housing and intermediate housing to be varied where this is justified.

3.34 Although concern was expressed about the availability of funds to support a 40% target the Council has a grant programme of £1m per year and has already been successful in attracting Growth Area funding.

3.35 Paragraph 29 in Planning Policy Statement 3 requires Councils “to set out the approach to seeking developer contributions.” Although the transfer of free serviced plots is a long established practice it does not occur in every case. It is, therefore not sound to require it and the criterion should be deleted from the policy.

3.36 Although there are differences between the 2006 survey and the later survey, to accord with current government guidance the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008 (Document HOU4) supersedes the 2006 survey.

3.37 I have considered gypsy policy CS6 – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople - in the light of national policy in Circular 01/2006. The second criterion would be unattainable as there is always likely to be an adverse impact of some kind. The issue is whether that any adverse impact would be substantial or significant having regard to the location of the site. The criterion should be reworded to reflect this.

3.38 I consider that subject to the proposed changes below, the proposals in the Core Strategy are sustainable, justified, effective and in compliance with national policy.

3.39 **The following changes are required to make the document sound:**

i) Proposed Changes to Policy CS4

In order to address the need for affordable housing in the ~~the~~ District, ~~40% of~~ all housing proposed in developments in the following categories should ~~be provided as~~ **seek to achieve a target of 40%** 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. (PC/5/01100 as amended)

ii) ..The affordable housing provision should ~~comprise at least~~ **seek to achieve a target of 70%** social rented accommodation with the balance being provided as intermediate housing. (PC/5/01200 as amended)

iii) ... In determining the amount **and mix** 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~~ **will** be taken into account. (PC/5/01300)

iv) Delete from policy CS4 the words **Provision shall be made in the form of free serviced land** (PC/5/01150)

v) Policy CS3 Settlement Hierarchy

The settlement hierarchy provides a framework to manage the scale of housing development appropriate on unallocated sites. (PC/5/00900)

vi) Paragraph 5.15

The definition of the built-up area will be set out in more detail in the Development Management DPD but for the purposes of the Core Strategy it ~~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; **and**
- ~~Also excluded~~ are agricultural buildings where they are on the edge of the settlement. (PC/5/00700)

vii) Glossary

.... **The built-up area is the existing built form excluding:**
~~Excludes~~

- 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; **and**
- ~~Also excluded~~ are agricultural buildings where they are on the edge of the settlement (PC/7/00100)

viii) Insert in paragraph 4.10 after “water shortages by” **incorporating sustainable drainage systems into new developments and also....** (PC/4/00200)

ix) Amend the second criterion of Policy CS6 as follows:

The development should not **have a significant adverse** impact on the.....

3.40 *Issue 3 – Whether Policies CS2 and CS3 will produce the required housing to meet the needs of the district during the Plan and provide for development in appropriate locations.*

3.41 The Council extended the Core Strategy period to 2026 to meet the 15 year supply requirement in Planning Policy Statement 3. This brought the total to at least 14,000 homes between 2001 and 2026, with some 11,000 to be delivered between 2006 and 2026. All allocations were assessed as deliverable in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Document HOU7). Non allocated sites with planning permission or agreement in principle are capable of short term delivery. Since the submission of the Core Strategy development of some sites has commenced. These are identified in the Annual Monitoring Report 2008 (Document LOC27). The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment identified potentially suitable sites that have a capacity of 8734, far more than the 5500 identified and required for new allocations. I, therefore, find no need to discount for non delivery.

3.42 Concern has been expressed about the balance of housing/employment between Huntingdon, St Neots, and St Ives. The East of England Plan urges concentration of development in settlements, particularly market towns, in the Cambridge Sub-Region. In the Huntingdon and St Neots Spatial Planning Areas 4500 of the 5500 homes are proposed. Huntingdon is the largest market town in the district with a good balance of housing and employment. Looking at the town of Huntingdon in isolation from its Spatial Planning Area it does not appear to be getting its fair share of housing. However, it is important to recognise at the outset that the Council are not starting with a blank sheet. The Council cannot ignore the history of planning and existing development in the area, including outstanding commitments, and the recognition of RAF stations which will become available for development during the plan period. These have influenced the definition of the Spatial Planning Areas by including settlements around the market towns.

3.43 In the case of Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area this includes Godmanchester and Brampton. Godmanchester is virtually contiguous to Huntingdon and relies on the market town for most of its needs, and at RAF Brampton there is an extensive area of previously developed land which can be used for large scale mixed development, avoiding the need to take further greenfield land around Huntingdon. I find this to be a sound and realistic approach which would recognise the close relationship between the Market Town and the Key Service Centres nearby. These developments with their improved public transport will be served by Huntingdon railway station and extensive bus services, including the new

priority bus and guided bus route linking Huntingdon/St Ives with Cambridge.

3.44 St Ives is also a sustainable location for development and will become more so with the introduction of the Cambridge Guided Bus route. However, it has less opportunity for growth other than to the west where it can link with existing allocations and commitments. From my visits I agree with the Council that separation between St Ives and Houghton should be retained. There are also flood risks constraints to the south and south east making land unsuitable for housing development, and land to the north and north-west is remote from the town centre. Nevertheless 500 homes are proposed during the plan period and 17ha is available for employment generating uses. If there is any imbalance relating to inward and outward commuting advantage can be taken of the guided bus provision between Cambridge and St. Ives.

3.45 Ramsey is remote and the least sustainable of the market towns, but there may be some opportunities for employment led regeneration as attempts at housing led regeneration have not been successful in the past. RAF Upwood, which is within the Ramsey Spatial Planning Area, presents an opportunity for employment generation. Although there is local support to regenerate Ramsey by encouraging employment led development I do have some concern about the likely success of employment led regeneration in this most remote of the Spatial Planning Areas, where in the past housing led generation failed. Nevertheless, there is some flexibility in Policy CS7 in that the area identified for growth at Ramsey to the north west of the town is for mixed use development, not employment led, and with the two areas available for development there will be the opportunity for both housing led and employment led development to come forward in the Ramsey area.

3.46 With its grouping of settlements within the Spatial Planning Area Huntingdon has ample opportunity for sustainable growth. There is previously developed land at Huntingdon West which is the subject of a forthcoming Area Action Plan. Brampton and Godmanchester are closely linked to Huntingdon and RAF Brampton, a previously developed site, has potential for mixed use after 2012. Although the Godmanchester and Fenstanton developments may have to wait for road improvements, the development at Huntingdon West and RAF Brampton is not similarly constrained.

3.47 For soundness it should be made clear in paragraph 5.4 the realignment of the A14 and removal of the viaduct will help facilitate further development in Huntingdon West.

3.48 St Neots is the largest of the market towns and there is opportunity for relatively unconstrained development to the east with a limited number of landowners. Although there is concern that there might be too much housing in one place in terms of marketability, I consider that it is because of its scale that a highly sustainable urban extension could be provided, with homes, employment, a district centre and other infrastructure advantages. It also has potential for further future growth.

3.49 I conclude that with the changes made below the Core Strategy will be sound in terms of overall housing policy

3.50 **The following change is required to make the document sound:**

- i) Amend paragraph 5.4 to include the words **in Huntingdon West** (PC/5/00250)

3.51 ***Issue 4 – Whether the policies of the Core Strategy satisfactorily provide for delivery of development and its implementation and there is appropriate monitoring of their effectiveness***

3.52 Because of the highway’s strategic importance the A14 improvements have been identified as high priority schemes throughout its length in the government white paper Britain’s Transport Infrastructure: Motorways and Trunk Roads. The A14 improvements are fundamental to the growth strategy of the Cambridge Sub-Region.

3.53 Early delivery of around 800 homes and 6 ha of employment land is potentially limited by A14 improvements. However, in the housing trajectory there is estimated to be an oversupply of housing between 2007/8 and 2018/19 and with the current slow down in house building I share the view of the Council that a potential short term delay in the delivery of the A14 improvements (the A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton Scheme) would not undermine the soundness of the Core Strategy as other development around Huntingdon and St Ives could proceed without restriction. However, since the Core Strategy was submitted for examination various changes have been agreed to the wording with the Highways Agency and phasing of strategic Greenfield sites close to the A14 will now be required to demonstrate “nil detriment” on traffic flows on the A14 with development that takes place prior to the A14 improvements.

3.54 Turning to the A428 the Highways Agency is satisfied that with the major housing and employment growth planned to the east of the St Neots that localised improvements will provide sufficient capacity up to 2026. This will be complemented by a High Quality Public Transport bus route along the A428 corridor between St Neots and Cambridge. The text needs to be clarified and updated for soundness.

3.55 The extract from the recently completed phase 1 Watercycle Study (INF2) confirms the measures proposed to ensure the growth of St Neots can be accommodated. An increase in the discharge limit is proposed to accommodate up to 2000 additional homes between 2009 and 2016 with a later possible tertiary treatment works funded by Anglian Water Services

during 2016-2020. The present estimate is that there will be capacity up to 2018. Following the results of the recent study the wording in the Core Strategy needs amending to alleviate any fears about the St Neots development being delayed.

3.56 Although Policy CS10 requires contributions to infrastructure from stakeholders, the nature and scale of any planning obligation sought will be related to the form of development and its potential impact. Infrastructure requirements for each site will be subject to negotiation as required by national guidance. I have assessed the sites chosen for housing and employment elsewhere in this report and conclude there are no insurmountable barriers to delivery during the plan period.

3.57 I conclude that with the inclusion of the changes below, in terms of implementation, infrastructure and monitoring the Core Strategy has been justified, is effective and in accordance with national policy.

3.58 **The following changes are required to make the document sound:**

i) Changes to The Spatial Vision:

The proposed A14 improvements will **assist** much of the development in the Huntingdon area to take place and will improve access to and around the town centre, **but individual developments within the Huntingdon SPA may take place subject to demonstrating either ‘minimal impact’ or ‘nil detriment’ on traffic flows on the A14.** ~~while the dualling of the A428 in the St Neots area will be promoted to facilitate development there~~ **In the longer term an enhanced A428 in the St Neots area will facilitate the continuing development of a sustainable community beyond the plan period.**

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, **enabling more convenient sustainable travel to and from Cambridge.** The provision of high quality public transport along the A428 corridor **will enable similar convenience between St Neots and Cambridge.** (PC/3/01000, PC/3/00950, PC/3/01000A, PC/3/01100)

ii) Paragraph 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.~~ (PC/5/00200)

iii) Paragraph 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.~~ **Improvements will be needed to the three roundabouts on the A428 to mitigate the impact of development related traffic arising from the Core Strategy proposals.** 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. (PC/5/03900)

iv) Paragraph 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~~ **will** 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~~ **The timing of growth however will not be affected as an increase in the discharge consent has been granted allowing development to proceed up to 2018 by which time any expansion of the treatment works can be delivered.** 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. (PC/5/03800A)

3.59 Issue 5 – Whether the Core Strategy justifies and deals flexibly and effectively with employment issues and town centre policy.

3.60 Although some housing is proposed in the town centre I concentrate here mainly on employment provision.

3.61 Forecasts predict there will be around 13,000 jobs created in Huntingdonshire. The Employment Land Review considered that a “low carbon future” approach would be the most appropriate model and the strategy aspires to this approach, but has factored in flexibility to ensure an adequate supply of deliverable land in locations where significant housing growth will be delivered. The Employment Land Review model indicated that with a “low carbon future” approach at least 66ha of land for employment uses should be identified.

3.62 There were diverse views from representors during examination on employment land provision some considered the total provision too little, others considered it to be too much and others thought it about right, but not necessarily in the right place.

3.63 Employment projections are notoriously difficult to assess with a significant degree of accuracy. As far as total provision is concerned I consider Policy CS7 to be flexible. The figure of 85ha is in excess of the 66ha “low carbon figure” and Policy CS7 requires *at least* 85ha of employment land to be provided before 2026. Inserting “about” instead of *at least* would add to the soundness of the plan, but the policy does not preclude more land coming forward during the plan period if required. The amount of employment land in St Neots has been increased to reflect the housing growth and small scale employment opportunities are also identified at RAF Upwood in the Ramsey Spatial Planning Area. Also potential sites in Huntingdon West can make up for loss of employment land through regeneration. I am satisfied that in respect of total provision Policy CS7 will meet the requirement of the East of England Plan and provide sufficient flexibility of choice.

3.64 It is part of the overall strategy to concentrate the major part of the employment growth in Huntingdon and St Neots Spatial Planning Areas. Most of the job growth in recent years has been in Huntingdon and I would expect this to continue. Some 51ha of employment land will be provided in the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area. At least 13ha of this will be on previously developed land.

3.65 Some 25ha of employment land are proposed for development in the St Neots Spatial Planning Area on Greenfield land in a mixed use urban extension for B1, B2 and B8 uses to the east of the town. The figure of 25ha is higher than that identified in the Employment Land Review but I consider this will help to ensure a balanced community with less out commuting, particularly as the employment development would be part of an integrated mixed use scheme in the form of a Sustainable Urban Extension.

3.66 In January 2009 in the St Ives Spatial Planning Area existing commitments amounted to 16.85ha. There is planning permission for 32,899m² of mainly offices on 15.25ha of this land. The average take up of employment land over the last seven years was less than 1ha. There is potential for additional supply from redevelopment and intensification of uses within the 33ha Somersham Road Industrial Estate. Taking into account employment development which may come forward during the plan period and relating this to the expected rate of housing completions, I consider this to be sufficient to match growth and market pressure for a settlement of this size.

3.67 In Ramsey Spatial Planning Area at least 9ha of employment land will be provided with at least 2ha on previously developed land. The previous approach to provide a large scale allocation was not successful and was deleted under the 2002 LPA (LOC4). In 2004 informal planning guidance was adopted by the Council. This retained 7.24ha of employment land, 3.9ha re allocated for a food store, 1.6ha for predominantly residential and 5.43ha for potential redevelopment. This development is now coming forward. Some new employment has been generated at the former RAF Upwood. A new Tesco store has been permitted and there is no evidence to indicate this will not be delivered in the short term. Whether employment led growth will rectify the imbalance will need to be monitored but I share the view of the Council that an alternative strategy which involves substantial housing growth would fuel unsustainable out commuting.

3.68 Yaxley and Sawtry are Key Service Centres outside the Spatial Planning Areas, which have existing employment commitments. Little Paxton and RAF Brampton lie within the St Neots and Huntingdon Spatial Planning Areas respectively. From my visits and the representation submitted on sustainability and service provision I consider these Key Service Centres are only suitable for limited development which would not be strategic in scale and, if thought to be necessary, could come forward through a later Development Plan Document. I do not consider Hemingford Abbots, Hemingford Grey and Conington are sustainable locations for strategic employment development.

3.69 It should be made clear in the Core Strategy that all employment contributes to the 13000 target, not just B1 uses.

3.70 Policy CS8 sets a minimum target of 20,000sq.m for comparison sector growth and 4,000sq.m for convenience sector growth. No upper limits are set. The retention rate for convenience goods is 75.6% and it is not expected this is likely to be increased because of large modern food stores just outside the district boundary. Only 38% of comparison sector expenditure is retained in the Huntingdonshire catchment area as it suffers from high leakage to Cambridge, Peterborough and Bedford. To improve this retention rate it is important to seek an increase in the existing comparison retention rate. Additional comparison floor space within a range 11,319 and 21,662 sq.m was suggested. All figures are net floor space and this should be clarified in the text. They do not include non strategic retail development and other uses in the Sustainable

Urban Extensions or town centres. These should be identified in the future Development Management DPD. Also the text should better reflect the diversity of town centre uses and their importance to the local economy.

3.71 Huntingdon is at present failing to fulfil its potential as the principal town centre of the district and there is a clear need for an enhancement of the town centre comparison retail offer.

3.72 Chequers Court is an important integral part of the town centre and its regeneration should be given priority. The Council accepts this and has proposed a change to the wording of Policy CS 8. I consider the policy now not only recognises the importance of Chequers Court but also has the flexibility to bring forward the Huntingdon West at the appropriate time, which will secure an improved road network for the future. This was not clear in the previous wording of the policy. The retail element of the Huntingdon West scheme is so close to the centre that I do not consider it would fall foul of advice in PPS6 paragraph 2.46. However, it is necessary for soundness to ensure that the complementary nature of Huntingdon West be clearly identified, as that development will be required at some stage to deliver the improvements to shopping required by the plan.

3.73 It will be necessary to serve the proposed development at Godmanchester with convenience shopping, and the developers acknowledge that about 500 to 600 square metres net retail floorspace could be supported by the urban extension. With the close proximity of Godmanchester to Huntingdon, I consider it unlikely that such convenience shopping would need to be strategic in scale, as it would then become a competitive attraction for convenience shopping, rather than serve the locality. I do not consider it appropriate to mention non strategic shopping in Policy CS8.

3.74 I find the employment policies flexible but sound and the retail floor space targets to be flexible and sufficient to encourage investment.

3.75 I conclude that subject to the changes below, in terms of sustainability the Core Strategy is justified, effective and in accordance with national policy.

3.76 **The following changes are required to make the document sound:**

i) Policy CS7

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 addition to this, an existing commitment at Little Paxton, which might come forward during the plan period.

.....

Outside 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. (PC/5/01700 as amended)

ii) About 85ha of new land for employment will be provided before 2026 in order to support contribute to the creation of at least 13,000 jobs, assist the diversification of local job opportunities and reduce the significant level of out-commuting. (PC/5/01650 - as amended). The reuse of previously developed land will be promoted within the Market Towns and other sustainable locations, with the result that..... (PC/5/01500)

iii) In the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area about 51ha ...

In the St Neots Spatial Planning Area where **about 25ha...**
(PC/5/01600 - as amended)

iv) Paragraph 5.49

The Council’s *Economic Strategy* is promoting jobs that will feed off the growth in the high-tech economy around the Cambridge area and is seeking higher quality, more sustainable locations to achieve this. **These locations will also provide for competition, between developers and choice, between occupiers.** These will tend to be closer to the town centres and built at higher densities and often ~~They will be~~ on previously developed industrial sites **land and on new allocations; closer to the town centres and built at higher densities; in mixed use developments on previously developed and greenfield sites and edge of town sites for larger scale general industry and warehousing.** 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 **support the operation of the market.** 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. **This is characterised by long term development pipelines through which developers bring land forward through site identification, planning and advance**

infrastructure investment for take up by business users over many years.

Additional local employment opportunities have been identified in the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area as this area is the main focus of market activity and this presents an opportunity to maintain the good balance between homes and jobs. In addition the town offers a range of general locations which could provide high quality development in sustainable locations (adjoining the town centre, on previously developed land and within mixed use development) and for larger scale general industry and warehousing (to the north west of the town with good links to residential areas and the highway network). (PC/5/01800)

v) Policy CS8

Add the following footnote to policy CS8:

Note: all floorspace figures given are net sales area. (PC/5/02300)

vi) Paragraph 5.59

Huntingdon is the higher order centre within the District and market demand for further retail development is greatest. **The Council is looking to facilitate developments that benefit the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole.** The implementation of the **further development and improvement of retail facilities at 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. **This will be supplemented by limited, complementary retail and leisure provision on previously developed land on the edge of the existing town centre on land within the area covered by the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan. Schemes in this area will be carefully controlled to ensure they are complementary to the existing town centre, rather than competing directly with it, and contribute to the provision of retail and town centre uses within Huntingdon.** ~~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. (PC/5/02800)~~

vii) Paragraphs 5.54 and 5.55

Huntingdonshire’s **market towns** faces a number of many challenges over the plan period in terms of retailing and the District’s town centres **as they compete with larger centres nearby to attract investment and maintain their vitality and viability.** These have been identified as **include the need to:**

- the need to retain more of the retail **a higher proportion of residents’ expenditure by improving the retail and leisure facilities** to the benefit of the town centres and the wider economy of the District
- to continue to improve **safeguard** the environment and public realm in town centres and **unique character of each historic town as places to visit**
- to provide opportunities for residents to access town centre services sustainably
- **boost the diversity of uses including retail, leisure, housing, parking, tourism and cultural facilities**

paragraph 5.55 National planning policy for town centres requires local authorities to identify where new retail facilities will be focused **as they are a key driver of the local economy.** Huntingdon and St Neots, being the main **locations** for growth will take the larger proportion of retail development **of retail and other town centre uses.** Retail development in the other key settlements **market towns and key service centres** is important for maintaining services, providing sustainable options for residents and retaining retail expenditure **locally.** (PC/5/02200)

viii) Change to heading after paragraph 5.55

Retail **and Town Centre Uses** (PC/5/02100)

ix) Amend Policy CS8:

Retail and **Town Centre Uses**

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 **it is proposed to locate retail development in the following areas whilst observing environmental designations and constraints:**

At least 9,000m² of comparison floorspace will be located in Huntingdon, concentrated in the town centre **with priority given to the further development and improvement of retail facilities at Chequers Court. and e** Complementary and appropriate development, **that does not jeopardise the delivery of further redevelopment of Chequers Court,** will be located in

a 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, **with priority given to proposals** concentrated in the town centre. ~~and~~ Complementary and appropriate development **will be located** as part of a 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 **primarily** in town centres across the District. (PC/5/02400 and PC/5/02500)

x) Add to paragraph 5.86 after “Caxton to St Neots” **and the possible future improvements to the A428 from Caxton to the A1 bypassing St Neots** (PC/5/03700)

xi) Add to the fifth line paragraph 5.93 after “spring 2009” **The release of development sites within the Huntingdon SPA will be required to demonstrate ‘minimal impact’ or ‘nil detriment’ on traffic flows on the A14 prior to the A14 improvements taking place.** Delete the next two sentences and add **Improvements will be needed to the three roundabouts on the A428 and other traffic management measures to mitigate the impact of development related traffic arising from the Core Strategy proposals.** (PC/5/03850A and B and PC/5/03900)

xii) Add to third item in the contributions list after “strategic green infrastructure” **and biodiversity enhancement mitigation;** (PC/5/04000)

xiii) Add to monitoring paragraph 6.5

...particularly the Huntingdon **Spatial Planning Area.** The next phase will see the start of strategic Greenfield development **that** will be dependent on the provision of a significant amount of infrastructure, **and in the case of sites close to the A14 in Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area demonstrate ‘nil detriment’ to the A14 if they wish to be developed prior to the A14 improvements.** Delete remainder of last two sentences. (PC/6/00050)

4 Other changes

4.01 The Council wishes to make several changes to the submitted Core Strategy in order to clarify, correct and update various parts of the text. They are often words of explanation which makes the Core Strategy easier to read and understand. Although these changes do not address key aspects of soundness, I endorse them on a general basis in the interests of clarity and accuracy. These changes are listed for convenience in the Annexe. The Annexe is a comprehensive list of all changes proposed by the Council, some of which have been further amended by me in this report.

5 Overall Conclusions

5.01 I conclude that, with the amendments I recommend, the Core Strategy satisfies the requirements of s20(5) of the 2004 Act and the associated Regulations, is sound in terms of s20(5)(b) of the 2004 Act, and meets the soundness requirements in Planning Policy Statement 12.

Eric T Searle

INSPECTOR

Annexe

Schedule *of changes put forward by the Council*

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Representation of Political Groups on District Council Panels, etc

Report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and associated Regulations describe arrangements for achieving a balance on Panels etc, to reflect the representation of political groups and independent Members on the District Council. The Act requires the District Council to review the representation of different political groups at the time when the Authority holds its Annual Meeting.

2. PRINCIPLES OF PROPORTIONALITY

- 2.1 In performing the duty to review representation, the Council must, so far as reasonably practicable, only determine the allocation of seats having regard to the following principles -

- ◆ that not all the seats are allocated to the same political group;
- ◆ that the majority of seats are allocated to the political group which forms a majority of the Council's membership; and
- ◆ that the number of seats allocated is in the same proportion as is borne by the number of Members of a political group to the membership of the Council.

- 2.2 Currently it is open to the Council to approve alternative arrangements otherwise than in accordance with the principles of proportionality providing that the alternative arrangements are approved without any Member voting against them.

3. CONSTITUTION OF POLITICAL GROUPS

- 3.1 Following the by-election in the Ramsey Ward on 23rd July 2009 and the resignation of former Councillor Ms S L Kemp, the constitution of political groups on the District Council has varied as follows:-

Name of Group	No. of Members
Conservative	38
Liberal Democrat	10
Independents	2

There is one Member of the Council who is not aligned to a political group and one vacancy.

3.2 The membership of groups in proportion to the total membership of the Council is therefore as follows:-

	%
Conservative	74.50
Liberal Democrat	19.60
Independent Members	3.92
Other	1.96

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000

4.1 Members are reminded that under the Local Government Act 2000, the proportionality requirements do not apply to the Cabinet and the Standards Committee nor to any Sub-Groups or Sub-Committees, etc which either of them may appoint. It is therefore open to the Council to determine the membership of those bodies, irrespective of the composition of political groups and their membership. However, the Standards Board for England believes that Standards Committees should include appropriate political representation which has the support of all political parties.

4.2 The following requirements of the Act also need to be adhered to by the Council in determining the membership of Panels, etc -

- ◆ the Cabinet may not include either the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Council;
- ◆ Overview and Scrutiny Panels may not comprise any Member of the Cabinet;
- ◆ the Standards Committee may not include the Leader, although it must include one Cabinet Member within its membership but that person may not Chair the Committee; and
- ◆ the Leader, Deputy Leader and any Member of the Cabinet shall not be elected as Chairman of any Committee or Panel other than any that may be appointed by the Cabinet.

4.3 The Constitution also provides for the Development Management Panel, Licensing and Protection Panel, the Employment Panel and the Licensing Committee to include the relevant Executive Councillor within their respective membership. Following the recent review of the democratic structure, the membership of the Corporate Governance Panel shall include the Executive Councillors whose portfolios include finance and corporate governance in an ex-officio capacity. **Every Member of the Council shall be appointed to serve on a minimum of one Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Committee or Panel of the Council or the Cabinet.**

5. PROPORTIONALITY

5.1 Excluding the Cabinet and Standards Committee the aggregate number of seats on Panels remains at 80, notwithstanding the change in the number of Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Using the

proportionality percentage referred to in paragraph 3.2 and rounding up or down as appropriate, produces the following entitlement -

	Seats	
Conservative Group	59.60	60
Liberal Democrat Group	15.68	16
Independent Members	3.13	3
Other	1.56	1

5.2 Applying the principles of the Act and, similarly, rounding the figures as necessary, gives the distribution as set out in the Annex.

5.3 The principles of proportionality apply similarly to advisory/sub-groups appointed or nominated by panels and regard must be given to the following examples of entitlements to seats:-

No. of Members on Sub-Group, etc	Proportion of Members from Political Groups		
	Cons	Lib Dem	Indep
3	2	1	0
4	3	1	0
5	4	1	0
6	4	2	0
7	5	2	0
8	6	2	0
9	7	2	0
10	7	2	1

5.4 However, the Cabinet may not delegate any of its functions to non-Cabinet Members. Therefore any Sub-Group of the Cabinet that is exercising any decision-making powers delegated to it by the Cabinet must include only Cabinet Members. This does not prevent any Advisory Group appointed by the Cabinet that has no decision-making powers and whose terms of reference are merely advisory from including non-Cabinet Members. However, if a Member of an Overview and Scrutiny Panel is appointed to an Advisory Group by the Cabinet, that person will have a prejudicial interest and will be required to leave the room in the event of the Scrutiny Panel of which he or she is a member scrutinising any decisions or recommendations of that Advisory Group.

5.5 It should be noted that the 2000 Act requires the appointment of a minimum of one Cabinet Member to a Joint Committee exercising executive functions. Other Members may be appointed to a Joint Committee and the political balance requirements do not apply although circumstances will vary as to whether those Members can vote on executive decisions.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The Council is invited to determine the allocation of seats on District Council Panels to political groups and to the non-aligned Members in accordance with the distribution in paragraph 5.2 above and to note the requirements for appointments to advisory/sub groups etc, in

paragraph 5.3. As the proportionality requirements do not apply to the Cabinet and Standards Committee it is for the Council to determine their membership.

- 6.2 The opportunity otherwise is available currently to allocate seats in accordance with an alternative arrangement, provided this arrangement is approved by the Council with no Member voting against.

Contact Officer: Christine Deller, Democratic Services Manager
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Government and Housing Act 1989
Local Government Act 2000
District Council Constitution

ANNEX

	No. of Seats*	No. of Ex-officio	Title of Ex-officio	Cons	Lib Dem	Indep	Other	Cons	Lib Dem	Indep	Other
Corporate Governance Panel	7	2 max	Executive Cllrs for finance and governance	5.21	1.37	0.27	0.13	6/5	1/2	0	0
Development Management Panel	16	1	Not defined	11.92	3.13	0.62	0.31	11/12	3	1	1
Elections Panel	7	0		5.21	1.37	0.27	0.13	6/5	1/2	0	0
Employment Panel	8**	1	Not defined	5.96	1.56	0.31	0.15	6	2	0	0
Licensing & Protection Panel/Committee	12	1	Not defined	8.94	2.35	0.47	0.23	9	2	1	0
Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being)	10	0		7.45	1.96	0.39	0.19	7/8	2	1/0	0
Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being)	10	0		7.45	1.96	0.39	0.19	7/8	2	1/0	0
Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)	10	0		7.45	1.96	0.39	0.19	7/8	2	1/0	0
Total	80			59.59	15.66	3.11	1.52	60	16	3	1
Standards	7	0		5.21	1.37	0.27	0.13	5	2	0	0

* *the allocation of these seats must be balanced so that the total entitlement to seats on each group is not exceeded.*

** *pending further review*

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Cabinet

Report of the meeting held on 23rd July 2009

Matters for Information

23. FINANCIAL MONITORING – REVENUE BUDGET

The Cabinet has noted the expected revenue budget variations already identified in the current year. Whilst welcoming a VAT refund amounting to £780k, the Cabinet has expressed some concern over the increasing cost to the Council of concessionary fares and recycling gate fees which are forecast to increase by £255,000 and £196,000 respectively.

24. MONITORING OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009/10

The Cabinet has been acquainted with variations in the capital programme in the current year.

25. FORMER FIRE STATION AND WASTE RECYCLING SITE, HUNTINGDON STREET, ST. NEOTS

The Cabinet has agreed to the preparation of a development brief and a subsequent marketing exercise for the disposal of the leasehold of an area of land at the former fire station site and waste recycling centre, Huntingdon Street, St. Neots. The Cabinet has been apprised of the background to the proposal and has been advised that the domestic waste recycling centre will be relocated by Cambridgeshire County Council at the end of the year.

In order to ensure that the site is marketed fully and in recognition of the need to provide a scheme that will benefit the community, a detailed development brief will be prepared and a comprehensive marketing exercise undertaken. Executive Members were assured that applicants will be invited to submit details of their proposals including drawings showing the layout, size and external appearance and that the applications will then be assessed to ensure compliance with the development brief.

26. GREAT FEN COLLABORATION AGREEMENT

Further to Item 56 of their Report to the Council held on 3rd December 2008, the Cabinet has approved in principle arrangements to enter into a Collaboration Agreement in respect of the Great Fen Project for a renewable five-year fixed term. In so doing, Executive Councillors were advised that the Agreement will strengthen the

existing arrangements by defining the relationship between the partners, setting out the project's aims and objectives and summarising certain managerial/financial matters. The Cabinet considered issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-being) regarding certain aspects of the Agreement (Item No 7 of their Report refers) and in particular whether the agreement covered explicitly all potential staffing costs such as severance and personal injury claims. The Panel also raised a concern that the confidentiality clause might impede scrutiny and transparency. The Cabinet has requested therefore that the Agreement be redrafted to reflect these sentiments. With this proviso, the Cabinet has authorised the Director of Environmental and Community Services, after consultation with the relevant Executive Councillor, to sign the resulting revised Collaboration Agreement.

27. EUROBIN MANUAL HANDLING ARRANGEMENTS

In receiving and noting a report of the Safety Advisory Group held on 10th June 2009, the Cabinet's attention has been drawn to the findings of a report by Her Majesty's Ergonomic Specialist Inspector into the eurobin manual handling arrangements. Executive Councillors were advised that the Inspector's report had concluded that the task of emptying 1100 and 1280 litre glass recycling eurobins should be undertaken by two employees rather than the current one person arrangement. Having requested further information on the health and safety aspects of the Inspector's findings, the Cabinet has agreed to defer consideration of the item to a future meeting.

28. NEW HEADQUARTERS DELIVERY AND OPERATIONAL REVIEW

(The following item was considered as a confidential item under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.)

Further to Item No. 77 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 18th February 2009, the Cabinet has been apprised with progress made to date on the delivery of the new accommodation for the Council's headquarters. In considering issues associated with the future use of Castle Hill House, the Cabinet has agreed that the accommodation of all Headquarters based staff in future years be contained in Buildings B C D and E. At the same time, the Cabinet has endorsed suspension of the marketing of the Council owned land fronting St. Mary's Street, Huntingdon, which had been earmarked for "Building A", to enable the Chief Executive to investigate options available for the disposal of Castle Hill House. In so doing, the Cabinet has agreed the reservation of sums to meet contractual claims and to fund any variations. It will be necessary to revise the Medium Term Plan provision for the project accordingly at its next review.

I C Bates
Chairman

Cabinet

Report of the meeting held on 17th September 2009

Matter for Decision

29. FINANCIAL FORECAST

By way of a report by the Head of Financial Services, reproduced as an Annex, the Cabinet has been acquainted with the present position in relation to the Council's financial forecast for the period up to 2018/19.

The Council has continued to spend carefully which has resulted in last year's outturn being £400k less than budgeted. The Cabinet has been informed of potential variations in a number of sources of income and other factors that could affect the Council's financial position which are detailed in the attached report. In noting the uncertainty created by the current economic climate and possible changes to Government funding in the next comprehensive spending review, the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

that the Council approve the Financial Strategy as set out in the report now submitted.

Matters for Information

30. THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT CORE STRATEGY 2008 - DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT – THE INSPECTOR'S BINDING REPORT/ADOPTION PROCEDURES

The Cabinet has considered the Inspector's considerations and conclusions regarding the soundness of the DPD, following his examination of the submitted Core Strategy.

Having noted that the majority of the changes to the strategy had been proposed by the Council and that any changes imposed by the Inspector himself were negligible, the Cabinet has recommended to the Council that the document be adopted as part of the Local Development Framework for the District. The Inspector's report and recommendations themselves are dealt with by way of a separate item on the agenda for the Council meeting, where the report can be found in full.

31. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Cabinet has reviewed the Council's performance against targets within the Corporate Plan - "Growing Success", together with a summary of achievements, service performance, progress against the Council's improvement plan and the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Social Well-Being, Environmental Well-Being and Economic Well-Being) on the matter.

32. GREAT FEN MASTERPLAN

The Cabinet has approved for public consultation a Masterplan for the Great Fen Project. The document is a spatial plan which sets out where new physical features can be created and illustrates where existing features will be retained. It will form the basis of a new action plan with the partners which will be developed next year to guide the ongoing development of the project. In considering the document, Executive Councillors took into account the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) expressed at its meeting on 8th September 2009 (Item No. 14 of their Report refers).

The Cabinet also has welcomed initial discussions held with Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council regarding the project. In that respect, the Cabinet has requested that they both be formally consulted on the Masterplan with a view to them eventually becoming full partners alongside the District Council, Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners, English Nature and the Wildlife Trust for Cambridgeshire.

33. NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS

The Cabinet has approved draft terms of reference for the new neighbourhood forums and panels approved by the Council at its meeting on 22nd April 2009. The forums are intended to improve community engagement and inform, consult and involve local people in the exercise of the functions of the Council and its partners.

In discussing representation, Executive Councillors have been advised that it was envisaged that each Panel will comprise of up to 10 representatives of local authorities and other public and voluntary bodies in each forum area. Whilst the District Council's representation will be limited to one ward member, all councillors within each neighbourhood are encouraged to attend the meetings. Having noted that initially the position of Chairman will be held by a district councillor with subsequent chairmanships being a matter for each Panel, the Cabinet has made the following appointments:-

Huntingdon	– Councillor T D Sanderson;
North-West Huntingdonshire	– Councillor E R Butler;
Ramsey	– Councillor A Monk;
St. Ives	– Councillor Mrs J Dew; and
St. Neots	– Councillor A N Gilbert.

The forums will replace the Police Safer Neighbourhood Panel meetings already programmed after the beginning of the new calendar year. In the interim an initial forum meeting will be held for the southern neighbourhood at St Neots Town Football Club on 28th September 2009 commencing at 7.00pm.

34. NEW HEADQUARTERS MEMORABILIA AND ENDOWMENTS

The Cabinet has considered the future inclusion/display of memorabilia in the Council's new headquarters. In so doing, Executive Councillors have been advised that given the function of the various spaces in the new building display space will be limited which will result in the display of chairmen's portraits and group photographs of the Council being restricted to those that are the most recent. With regard to future endowments, the Cabinet has agreed a protocol for use by the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council. The framework will include:-

- ◆ the relationship of the donor to the Council;
- ◆ the relationship of the person being commemorated by the Council;
- ◆ the availability of a suitable location for the installation/display of the item;
- ◆ control of the size and wording of any inscription;
- ◆ the appropriateness of the endowment to the council's civic values and strategic vision;
- ◆ future maintenance and liabilities and cost, including insurance;
- ◆ restrictions such as the placing of wreaths at the time of an anniversary; and
- ◆ the Council's right to relocate or remove the item at a future date.

In discussing the proposed display of the Council's Rolls of Honour in the new Civic Suite, it has been suggested that these should continue to be on view to the general public. In that respect, the Cabinet has requested the New Accommodation Project Co-ordinator and the Deputy Leader, after consultation with Members, to investigate alternative locations, together with new opportunities to display a board listing serving Leaders of the Council.

35. ADOPTION OF ROADS AND SEWERS

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the findings of a study by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) regarding the processes and procedures involved in the adoption of roads and sewers. The report highlights the problems that can be encountered by house buyers in ensuring that the infrastructure will be maintained at the public's expense and the difficulties faced by the highways and water authorities in ensuring that roads and sewers are completed by developers to adoptable standards. Having recognised the importance of raising awareness of these issues among residents, particularly during the conveyancing process, the Cabinet has:-

- ◆ agreed to the implementation of a communications plan, subject to consultation with Anglian Water on the proposed approach;
- ◆ requested the Scrutiny and Review Manager to formally write to the local branch of the Law Society to draw to their attention the issues identified by the Panel;
- ◆ requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) revisits the study once the extent is known of the sewers not under the responsibility of Anglian Water and following the transfer of responsibility for around 200,000 kilometres of privately owned sewers and drains in England to the water companies; and
- ◆ requested the Scrutiny and Review Manager to lobby the Local Government Association to seek the strengthening of the powers of the Highways Authority with regard to the road adoption process.

36. SOUTH STREET PUBLIC CONVENIENCE: ST. NEOTS

The following item was considered as a confidential item under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Cabinet has considered a report on the South Street public conveniences, St Neots. Having regard to the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) (Item No. 16 of their Report refers) the Cabinet has supported the view that no further expenditure should be incurred in improving the facility and that St Neots Town Council be offered the option of improving and maintaining the public conveniences before any final decision is made as to their future.

I C Bates
Chairman

FINANCIAL FORECAST
(Report by the Head of Financial Services)

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report considers the Council's financial position for the next 14 years. It highlights any significant changes from the plan approved in February and outlines a number of areas where there remains major uncertainty.
- 1.2 These uncertainties include the impact and length of the recession, Government funding in the next Comprehensive Spending Review (April 2011 to March 2014), changes to the grant allocation formula and the next pension fund revaluation. The forecast is therefore less certain than normal and the report highlights the potential for information emerging within the next 18 months which might make the position worse.
- 1.3 This report will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) on 10 September and Cabinet will then be able to consider their comments on 17 September prior to making their own recommendations to Council (23 September).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 For a number of years, financial forecasts have highlighted the extra costs the Council faces from inflation, government grant being withheld, pressures for more and better services and low grant increases. The impact is increased because Government capping prevents the current low level of Council Tax from being significantly increased towards the average level. Therefore plans have been based on using revenue reserves over a number of years to provide time for efficiency savings to be maximised, extra grants to be sought, charges to be raised and, if all else fails, for any service reductions to be focussed on the services seen to be of lower priority (generally referred to as spending adjustments).
- 2.2 The table below shows the approved Budget/MTP which is the starting point of this year's review:

APPROVED BUDGET / MTP	09/10 £M	10/11 £M	11/12 £M	12/13 £M	13/14 £M	14/15 £M	15/16 £M	16/17 £M	17/18 £M	18/19 £M
Net Spending	23.4	25.8	27.2	28.5	29.6	30.8	32.4	33.7	35.0	36.5
Less unidentified reductions		-0.5	-1.5	-3.2	-6.5	-6.8	-7.5	-7.9	-8.2	-8.7
Net Funding required	23.4	25.3	25.7	25.3	23.1	24.0	24.9	25.8	26.8	27.8
Funding										
Government support	-12.6	-12.9	-13.5	-14.0	-14.4	-14.7	-15.1	-15.5	-15.9	-16.3
Council Tax	-7.0	-7.4	-7.8	-8.3	-8.8	-9.3	-9.8	-10.3	-10.9	-11.5
Deficit met from Reserves	-3.8	-5.0	-4.4	-3.0						

- 2.3 The Council managed to keep its spending £400k below budget last year but still needed to fund a deficit of £1.2M from reserves. Conversely net capital expenditure was £1.4M higher than budgeted due to some contributions from other bodies being delayed resulting in the Council

having to fund the spending in the meantime. The result is that Revenue reserves stood at £19.6M in April and Capital Reserves were effectively all used.

- 2.4 The Council continues to face a number of years with significant deficits funded from reserves before balanced budgets can be achieved. Reaching this equilibrium will be challenging.

3. THE NEW FORECAST – SUMMARY

Section 4 - Government Grant

Government General Grant is expected to be as previously indicated for 2010/11 but the new Comprehensive Spending Review will be affected by the expected shortage of Government funds giving lower levels from 2011/12 onwards when a cash increase of just 1% is assumed for 3 years.

Section 5 - Council Tax and Capping

The Government are expected to continue to cap what they regard as excessive increases in Council Tax and their view on excessive will be conditioned by the state of the economy. Capping is assumed at 2.5%.

Section 6 – Revenue Reserves

Revenue Reserves are finite and need to be spread to give a phased target for achieving the necessary reductions in net spending. They have been rephased to reflect the net expenditure reductions (see below) and so there will still be some available in 2014/15.

Section 7 – Summary of Total Funding

Total funding reduces by £1.7m per year by 2014/15, the end of the new MTP period.

Section 8 – Net Expenditure

Optimising the calculation of the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) together with changes in the assumptions for inflation, particularly pay and utilities, result in future net spending levels falling.

Section 9 - Spending Adjustments and Overall Position

Spending adjustments for the next three years only altering marginally but a reduced increase in 2013/14 makes it more achievable.

Section 10 – Sensitivity and Risks

There are a greater number and scale of unknowns than in previous plans and the number concentrated in the next year raise the importance of achieving targeted spending adjustments.

4 GOVERNMENT GENERAL GRANT

- 4.1 In December 2007 the Government, for the first time, announced three year grant settlements and it was pleasing to see that they kept to their plan in the second year (2009/10). It is expected that they will continue to do so in 2010/11.
- 4.2 Whilst this gives councils a much better basis on which to make their shorter term plans it has the potential to concentrate significant changes into each of the three-yearly reviews. There are two types of change:

- ◆ Change in the total amount the Government is prepared to distribute to local government.
- ◆ Changes to the formula by which this total sum is allocated to individual councils.

- 4.3 It is expected that the amount to be distributed will be a real terms cut for District Councils because of the economic situation and the perceived priorities of Education and Social Services. The forecast assumes just a 1% cash increase per year over the next review period (2011/12 to 2013/14) and that this will then increase to a 2½% cash increase per year.
- 4.4 There are likely to be two particular changes to the formula. One of these relates to the Area Cost Adjustment which attempts to compensate those authorities nearer London for higher costs. Previous exemplifications which were not subsequently actioned showed the Council losing by various amounts.
- 4.5 The second aspect relates to Concessionary fares which may be transferred to County Councils or central government in April 2011. Council's and the LGA argue that the scheme is underfunded nationally and it remains to be seen whether a transfer would result in some or all Districts losing more grant than they are currently spending on the scheme.
- 4.6 The formula changes are too complex and uncertain to model so no assumed change has been made but the risk is most certainly on the downside.
- 4.7 The Government has a system of protections still in place for those authorities which they have calculated should be receiving less grant. Unfortunately this is funded by those authorities that are due to receive increases in grant like Huntingdonshire and so this Council has now lost over £6M, including interest. The table below shows the change in assumptions on the level of grant:

GRANT* FUNDING	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Current Approved Plan										
True grant forecast	13.2	13.4	13.7	14.0	14.4	14.7	15.1	15.5	15.9	16.3
Less withheld to protect others	-0.6	-0.4	-0.2							
Total	12.6	12.9	13.5	14.0	14.4	14.7	15.1	15.5	15.9	16.3
Proposed Plan										
True grant forecast	13.2	13.4	13.5	13.6	13.8	14.1	14.5	14.8	15.2	15.6
Less withheld to protect others	-0.6	-0.4	-0.2							
Total	12.6	13.0	13.3	13.6	13.8	14.1	14.5	14.8	15.2	15.6
LOSS (-)		+0.1	-0.2	-0.4	-0.6	-0.6	-0.6	-0.7	-0.7	-0.7

* Grant includes Revenue Support Grant and NNDR which are *in aggregate* distributed in line with the grant formula.

5 COUNCIL TAX

Tax Base

5.1 The current forecast is based on the tax base rising as follows:

TAX BASE	09/10 £	10/11 £	11/12 £	12/13 £	13/14 £	14/15 £	15/16 £	16/17 £	17/18 £	18/19 £
Band D Properties										
Number	57,960	58,134	58,483	59,009	59,540	59,897	60,257	60,618	60,982	61,348
% increase		0.3%	0.6%	0.9%	0.9%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%

5.2 Current data suggests a 0.3% increase will be achieved for next year and so it is proposed to retain these assumptions which are based on significant house building as soon as the economic outlook becomes more positive with 2012/13 and 2013/14 reflecting “catch-up” on the significant sites that already have planning permission.

Council Tax Level

5.3 The Council’s policy is to keep the Council Tax increase under 5% and the total level below that of the average District Council.

5.4 On 26 March the Government designated 2 authorities for capping, giving them 21 days to explain why their increase was necessary. Subsequently, on 13 May the Local Government Minister, John Healey, made the decisions shown in the table below:

CAPPING	% increases:		Subsequent Government action
	council tax	budget requirement	
Surrey Police	7.07%	4.82%	Capped
Derbyshire Police	8.68%	4.99%	Not capped BUT the calculation of their increase next year will be as if they had been, thus allowing them only a very low increase or even a reduction next year
<i>Government criteria</i>	<i>Over 5%</i>	<i>Over 4%</i>	<i>Both increases must be over the limits for designation</i>
Huntingdonshire	4.99%	4.37%	

5.5 Two things are worthy of note. Firstly, the capping decision was made some 6 weeks earlier than the previous year thus demonstrating it could be made before a June election date. Secondly the criteria have again been tightened as shown below:

	Increase in budget requirement of	AND	Increase in Council Tax of
2005/06	6%		5.5%
2006/07	6%		5%
2007/08	No Authorities capped		
2008/09	5%		5%
2009/10	4%		5%

5.6 It is very difficult to forecast what impact a 2010 general election and the recession, particularly the key Council inflation element of pay, will have on capping levels. There is significant likelihood that the level will fall and, potentially, significantly. The forecast has therefore been based on only raising Council Tax levels by 2.49% per year. This will be reviewed in the light of the latest information when the tax is formally set next February for 2009/10.

5.7 The impact on the Council's income is shown below:

COUNCIL TAX	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Current Approved Plan										
Council Tax level	£121.1	£127.2	£133.5	£140.2	£147.2	£154.5	£162.2	£170.3	£178.8	£187.7
	5	0	5	1	1	5	6	6	6	9
Council Tax Income	£7.0M	£7.4M	£7.8M	£8.3M	£8.8M	£9.3M	£9.8M	£10.3M	£10.9M	£11.5M
Proposed Plan										
Council Tax level	£121.1	£124.1	£127.2	£130.4	£133.6	£137.0	£140.4	£143.9	£147.5	£151.1
	5	7	6	3	8	1	2	2	0	7
Council Tax Income	£7.0M	£7.2M	£7.4M	£7.7M	£8.0M	£8.2M	£8.5M	£8.7M	£9.0M	£9.3M
Reduction in income		-£0.2M	-£0.4M	-£0.6M	-£0.8M	-£1.1M	-£1.3M	-£1.6M	-£1.9M	-£2.2M

5.8 In 2009/10, despite its 4.99% increase, the Council's £121 tax level was still the 19th lowest with the average being £165 and the highest £307.

6. USE OF REVENUE RESERVES

6.1 Revenue Reserves in April 2009 were £19.6M and it is considered that £3M is the minimum that needs to be retained for an authority of this size to cover unexpected impacts until the following year's Council Tax can be set or other action taken to resolve the problem. Last year's plan also made allowance for the £3m to gradually increase to £4M as net spending rose above £25M.

6.2 Thus £16.6M is available to cover the current and forecast funding deficits on a temporary basis and thus give the Council time to phase in the necessary spending adjustments over the next few years. Taking account of the following paragraphs that discuss the level of inherent spending and thus the adjustments required to achieve a balanced budget results in the proposed changes shown in the table below.

RESERVES	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M
Current Approved Plan	3.8	5.0	4.4	3.0		
Proposed Plan	3.0	4.3	3.7	2.5	1.9	1.2
Change	-0.8	-0.7	-0.7	-0.5	+1.9	+1.2

7. OVERALL FUNDING POSTION

7.1 The chart below combines the results from the previous sections on funding to show the change in total funding available:

OVERALL FUNDING	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M
Current Approved Plan										
Government Grant	12.6	12.9	13.5	14.0	14.4	14.7	15.1	15.5	15.9	16.3
Council Tax Income	7.0	7.4	7.8	8.3	8.8	9.3	9.8	10.3	10.9	11.5
Revenue Reserves	3.8	5.0	4.4	3.0						
Total	23.4	25.3	25.7	25.3	23.1	24.0	24.9	25.8	26.8	27.8
Proposed Plan										
Government Grant	12.6	13.0	13.3	13.6	13.8	14.1	14.5	14.8	15.2	15.6
Council Tax Income	7.0	7.2	7.4	7.7	8.0	8.2	8.5	8.7	9.0	9.3
Revenue Reserves	3.0	4.3	3.7	2.5	1.9	1.2				
Total	22.6	24.4	24.5	23.9	23.6	23.5	22.9	23.5	24.2	24.8
Reduction in income	-0.8	-0.9	-1.2	-1.4	+0.5	-0.5	-2.0	-2.3	-2.6	-3.0

8. NET EXPENDITURE

8.1 At this stage of the annual budget process the Forecast does not attempt to include all of the detailed variations that will emerge later in the process. It does however attempt to identify the significant items within the following categories:-

- ◆ 2008/09 outturn
- ◆ Inflation: General inflation, pay inflation, pension contributions and assumed increases in fees and charges
- ◆ Interest Rates – Investment and Borrowing
- ◆ Unavoidable significant Service Changes

8.2 2008/09 Outturn

This Forecast takes account of the final position for 2008/09 as reported to Cabinet in July.

8.3 Inflation

In the current year there is a saving from the annual pay award being agreed at 2.2% (budget allowance 3%). The provision for very large increases in electricity and gas prices will not now be required for that purpose but will be needed for unexpected increases in diesel costs, insurance and external audit fees.

8.4 The biggest item will always be pay inflation and this forecast is based on 1% for April 2010, 2% for 2011 and 2.5% thereafter. This should not be taken as an assumption that the actual award will be at or even around these levels but simply a current estimation that general pay rises may be at these sorts of level. This change has a significant impact on spending levels.

8.5 Inflation on some other areas has also been adjusted and the table below highlights the differences over the next three years:

	From To	09/10 10/11	010/11 011/12	11/12 12/13
pay prices		1% from 3%	2% from 3%	2.5% from 3%
expenditure		2% from 3%	2% from 2.5%	2% from 2.5%
fees & charges		2% from 3%	2% from 2.5%	2% from 2.5%
electricity		5% from 38%	5% no change	5% no change
gas		5% from 40%	10.0% no change	10.0% no change
fuel		5% from 10%	7.5% from 10%	10% no change
pension rate		20.4% no change	20.4% no change	20.4% no change

8.6 Employer's pension contributions are based on the valuation made by the independent actuary. The next valuation is due in late 2010 and will give us the new rates for 2011/12 onwards. It will be significantly affected by the market value of equities when the valuation is carried out. It is thus impossible to estimate what the figure might be but it is very likely to result in further increases.

8.7 Interest Rates

The Council has been largely protected from the fall in interest rates through having a number of investments locked into higher rates. As these come to an end over the coming year our returns will fall but will initially be offset, in part, by low borrowing rates. It has been assumed for the purpose of the forecast that borrowing will be for a mix of periods and current long period borrowing rates are significantly higher than short ones as the market is assuming generally higher rates within the next two years. In practice, there will be some opportunity to achieve lower investment rates by borrowing short until long term rates dip.

The table below shows the assumed interest rates used in the forecast:

Average Rates	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Investment	3.8%	2.0%	4.5%	4.5%
Borrowing	0.7%	1.7%	4.2%	4.6%

8.8 Service Variations

Previously approved changes in budgets (MTP schemes) have been reflected in the financial forecast together with the following list of revenue items:

SPENDING VARIATIONS	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Concessionary fares	255	255	255	255	255
Change in accounting rules for recharging to capital	240	240	240	240	240
St Ives Guided Bus	20	75	75	75	75
Additional insurance costs	33	44	44	44	44
Central Services staff savings	-80	-55	-55	-55	-55
CCTV reorganisation	-32	-72	-72	-72	-72
Pay award (2009/10)	-170	-170	-170	-170	-170
Other Inflation adjustments	-45	-45	-45	-45	-45
Lower Income due to the recession	250	165	85		
Higher costs due to the recession	115	76	38		
Recycling gate fees	131				
Car parking general expenditure	-30				
Lower refuse freighter maintenance	-60				
Recharge of salaries to capital	-97				
VAT reclaim with interest	-780				
Other variations	12				
Total	-238	513	395	272	272

8.9 No provision has been made for any further revenue service enhancements or additional costs (other than inflation) but capital sums have been included from 2014/15 onwards at the rate of £5.3M per year (cash prices).

8.10 Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

The MRP is a charge to revenue to enable borrowing to fund capital expenditure to be repaid in a prudent fashion. This is the first year that such a payment is required and the Council is required to have a policy on its calculation which is attached at Annex C. The Council's financial plans have always made provision for such a payment commencing based on equal annual instalments with an average life of assets of 25 years. However, in reviewing the DCLG guidance in detail and modelling the options it became clear that the initial payment can be delayed until the year after the borrowing is used for financing capital and that the annuity basis is the most equitable. The net impact is that borrowing costs can be significantly reduced as shown below:

BORROWING COSTS	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Current Approved Plan	0.6	1.4	1.8	2.2	2.6	3.0
Proposed Plan	0.0	0.6	1.3	1.7	2.1	2.6
Variation*	-0.6	-0.8	-0.5	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4

* Part of the variation is due to any revisions in interest rates and the phasing of capital expenditure.

9 SPENDING ADJUSTMENTS AND OVERALL POSITION

9.1 All the variations in funding and spending covered by this report will result in a net change to the level of spending adjustments required to

produce a balanced budget each year after using the Council's remaining revenue reserves. The net effect is shown below:

CHANGES IN NET SPENDING AND SPENDING ADJUSTMENTS	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Net Spending Variations						
Service spending (Para 8.8)	-0.2	+0.5	+0.4	+0.3	+0.3	+0.3
Inflation provision (Para 8.5)		-0.8	-1.0	-1.2	-1.1	-1.4
Borrowing costs (Para 8.10)	-0.6	-0.8	-0.5	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4
Interest variations (Para 8.7)	+0.1	+0.3	-0.2	-0.3	-0.3	-0.2
Total	-0.8	-0.9	-1.2	-1.6	-1.5	-1.7
Less Change in Funding (Para 7.1)	-0.8	-0.9	-1.2	-1.4	+0.5	-0.5
Change in Spending Adjustments Required	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.2	-2.0	-1.2

Spending Adjustments						
Included in approved plan	0.0	0.5	1.5	3.2	6.5	6.8
Proposed in Forecast	0.0	0.5	1.5	3.0	4.5	5.6

9.2 There has been marked success in identifying spending adjustments over a number of years and detailed discussions have been taking place between Cabinet Members, Chief Officers and Heads of Service on the suggestions made by the Overview and Scrutiny Working Group and a range of other possibilities. A number of these are now being developed in more detail and it is envisaged that a list of proposals will be ready for approval when the draft budget is presented in November. Any variations to the phasing shown above will be made at that time.

9.3 Annex A summarises the overall forecast for the period up to 2024/25.

10 SENSITIVITY AND RISKS

10.1 The Financial Forecast, by its very nature, takes a longer-term view and, within that time frame, many of its assumptions will turn out to be imprecise but it is a critical exercise for the Council as it allows the annual review of the required spending adjustments to ensure they are identified and available when required.

10.2 There are certain matters that it has not been possible to include at this stage and it is important for members to be aware of these issues and whether the net likelihood is expected to be good, bad or unknown (???). Examples include:

- Interest rates or inflation may turn out to be significantly different to the assumptions in this report. (???)
- The possibility of further one-off VAT refunds and receiving compound rather than simple interest on these and the refunds already agreed. (good)
- The potential for costs relating to “orphan” contaminated land sites. (bad)
- Increases in employer’s pension contributions from April 2011.(bad)

- Change in Revenue Support Grant Formula from April 2011. (probably bad)
- Financial impact of concessionary fares responsibility transferring to the County Council or centre government in April 2011. (potentially bad)
- The recession becoming more severe and prolonged. (bad)
- Difficulty delivering the savings already identified or the spending targets inherent in this plan. (bad)
- High priority service developments not already in the MTP and any unavoidable spending requirements not referred to in this report emerging. (bad)

10.3 A sensitivity analysis has therefore been undertaken to identify the potential impact if any of the key assumptions change. This is attached at Annex B.

11 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 There are a greater number and scale of unknowns than in previous plans and a number are concentrated on next year as shown below:

Risks and Unknowns	Timescale
Impact of St Ives Guided Bus	By Spring '10
Government capping decision	May each year
Length and depth of recession – impact on interest rates, pay inflation, house building, Council income and expenditure.	ongoing
Government grant totals for 2011/12 to 2013/14 (may be delayed by election)	November '10
Grant formula changes (may be delayed by election)	November '10
Changes regarding responsibility for Concessionary Fares	November '10
Pension Scheme revaluation	December '10

11.2 There will also be unavoidable areas of spending emerging during the budget/MTP process which will result in reserves having to be used more quickly and thus increase the level of spending adjustments required.

11.3 The next 18 months are therefore critical for the Council's future spending plans.

11.4 If the Government only allow Council Tax rises of 2.49% per year, the Council will never be able to get its tax level up to the average to help to protect services. Actual Council Tax levels are considered each January in the light of the latest information.

11.5 **In the meantime**, Spending Adjustment targets can be maintained at the current planned levels for the next 2 years.

11.6 Officers have been working with Cabinet Members to identify a range of measures to deliver the spending adjustments already identified as necessary. Clearly, in the circumstances, it would be best to identify a programme to cover a number of years to provide additional flexibility and this is being considered.

12 RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 Cabinet is requested to:

Approve the annuity basis for the calculation of Minimum Revenue Provision as outlined in Annex C.

Recommend this report to Council and highlight the particular level of uncertainty leading up to April 2011.

Contact Officer: Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services
☎ 01480 388103

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Source Documents:

1. Working papers in Financial Services
2. Financial Forecast (September 2008), 2008/09 Outturn, 2009/10 Revenue Budget and the 2010/2014 MTP

FINANCIAL SUMMARY	FORECAST		MTP										FORECAST																									
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25						
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000					
2009/10 BUDGET/MTP	23,378	25,286	25,687	25,306	23,149	24,001	24,890	25,817	26,785	27,796	28,650	29,752	30,901	32,103	33,358	34,869																						
Variations:																																						
Spending	-238	513	395	272	272	272	272	272	272	272	272	272	272	272	272	272																						
Interest	57	266	-157	-290	-316	-241	-202	-203	-204	-205	-206	-206	-205	-205	-205	-205																						
Cost of Borrowing	-572	-819	-484	-445	-442	-378	-366	-351	-330	-301	-266	-223	-172	-114	-46	31																						
Inflation	0	-803	-964	-1,218	-1,084	-1,355	-1,891	-2,246	-2,517	-2,980	-3,343	-3,751	-4,238	-4,647	-5,058	-5,736																						
Spending Adjustments (+ = reduction)	0	0	0	238	2,001	1,194	217	256	180	263	214	173	174	57	-99	-32																						
NEW FORECAST	22,625	24,443	24,477	23,863	23,580	23,493	22,920	23,545	24,186	24,845	25,321	26,017	26,732	27,467	28,223	29,198																						
FUNDING																																						
Use of revenue reserves	-3,004	-4,267	-3,744	-2,540	-1,858	-1,180	0	0	0	0	200	200	200	200	200	0																						
Carrying revenue reserves EOY	16,589	12,322	8,578	6,038	4,180	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,200	3,400	3,600	3,800	4,000	4,000																						
Government Support	-12,572	-12,958	-13,291	-13,626	-13,762	-14,106	-14,459	-14,820	-15,191	-15,571	-15,960	-16,359	-16,768	-17,187	-17,617	-18,057																						
Collection Fund Deficit	-27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0																						
Council Tax income	-7,022	-7,218	-7,443	-7,697	-7,959	-8,207	-8,461	-8,724	-8,995	-9,274	-9,562	-9,859	-10,165	-10,480	-10,805	-11,141																						
COUNCIL TAX LEVEL	£121.15	£124.17	£127.2	£130.4	£133.6	£137.0	£140.4	£143.9	£147.5	£151.1	£154.9	£158.7	£162.7	£166.7	£170.9	£175.2																						
£ increase																																						
Forecast Capital Spending	15,921	4,678	4,717	6,851	6,776	5,023	5,156	5,292	5,431	5,572	5,717	5,866	6,018	6,175	6,335	6,500																						
Accumulated net** Borrowing EOY	15,936	19,929	23,860	29,818	35,544	39,356	43,164	46,962	50,741	54,493	58,209	61,882	65,500	69,054	72,532	75,924																						
Net Interest and Borrowing Costs																																						
- total	-1,050	120	452	902	1,437	1,986	2,364	2,707	3,060	3,422	3,793	4,166	4,550	4,944	5,350	5,770																						
- as % of total net spending	-5%	0%	2%	4%	6%	8%	10%	11%	13%	14%	15%	16%	17%	18%	19%	20%																						
Unidentified Spending Adjustments still required	0	-500	-1,500	-3,000	-4,500	-5,621	-7,270	-7,679	-8,031	-8,466	-9,226	-9,406	-9,862	-10,421	-10,841	-11,021																						

** Borrowing is net of repayment reserve generated by MRP contributions only

FINANCIAL PLAN -SENSITIVITY AND RISKS

The financial forecast model has been used to demonstrate the impact that the following variations would result in. The values indicate the annual amount that would need to be added or deducted from the spending adjustments target.

Cumulative from 2010/11 unless otherwise indicated	Extra cost in:	
	2014/15 £M	2023/24 £M
0.5% extra pay award (every year)	0.7	2.8
0.5% extra increase in staff efficiency assuming this can be translated into reduced staffing levels.	-0.7	-2.8
0.5% higher interest rates	+0.0	+0.2
0.5% extra increase in level of Council Tax increase	-0.2	-0.8
1.0% extra reduction in Government Grant per year from 2011/12	+0.5	+2.1
Impact if the mix of new assets leads to a 5 year fall in their average life.	+0.3	+0.8
5% loss in Leisure Centre fees and charges	+0.3	+0.3
Increase in Pension Fund contributions of 1% in 2011/12, 2% in 2012/13 and 3% in 2013/14 onwards.	+0.5	+0.8

Inflation, other than pay, is fairly neutral as long as fees and charges are increased in line with it.

The impact of interest rates is significantly diminished by 2014/15 as the Council will no longer be a net investor as reserves will have been significantly reduced to meet revenue deficits and borrowing will be increasing each year.

Other Risks

The position on Concessionary Fares is still not clear in the short term and it may become a County function from April 2011 though whether this will be financially beneficial cannot be assessed.

Changes in the Government's allocation formula will take place from April 2011. Last time that the Area Cost Adjustment formula was considered all the options reduced the Council's grant.

Inflation on Capital Schemes of 2.5% per year has been included in total within the plan. There have been examples of high tender prices on specific schemes but there is little objective data on which to base a higher inflation allocation or even to estimate a suitable contingency sum so no additional provision has been included. The Customer Service Centre and Pathfinder House figures are predominantly fixed prices.

There is no provision for any demographic growth in services. Pressures will emerge due to additional housing and increased longevity over the plan period.

Most budgets are based on 97.5% of salary due to the expectation of savings from staff turnover. If turnover falls financial pressures will emerge and vice versa.

Leisure Centre income is close to £5M per year (excluding cost sharing from the County Council and Schools) and certain facilities are in direct competition with the private sector. If the recession continues or becomes more severe there may be some loss of income.

Spending Adjustments of £5.6M by 2014/15 and £10.8M by 2024/25 are included in the financial plan and achievement of these will require detailed identification and delivery plans.

ANNUAL MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY FOR 2009/10

When a Council finances capital expenditure from borrowing, the resulting costs are charged to the Council Taxpayers over the whole life of the asset so that those who benefit from the asset share the cost. There are two elements to the cost – the interest on the borrowing is charged in the year it is payable, whilst the money to repay the sum borrowed is charged as a “minimum revenue provision” (MRP) to the revenue account each year, starting with the year after the borrowing takes place. Once money is in the MRP it can only be used for repaying borrowing.

Until recently, the calculation of the MRP was determined by regulation but this was replaced by the *Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2008* which came into force on 31st March 2008. It simply says that ***A local authority shall determine for the current financial year an amount of minimum revenue provision which it considers to be prudent.***

However, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has issued guidance on what constitutes prudent provision and this requires the Council to determine an approach and publish this each year.

The first year in which the Council used borrowing to finance Capital Expenditure was 2008/09 so the first requirement for an MRP is this year.

There are three options for the calculation of the MRP:

Equal annual instalments

This is the easiest and simplest approach but the combination of the equal instalments of principal and the reducing interest makes the cost high to start with but then reducing year by year.

Depreciation basis

The Depreciation basis is the most complex. It starts by mirroring the equal annual instalments method but also requires adjustments every time the life of an asset is varied.

Annuity basis

By setting the rate for the annuity equal to the expected long term borrowing rate the cost is the same for each year like a conventional mortgage. It is only marginally more work than the equal instalments approach.

The Annuity basis is, by far, the most equitable approach and it is therefore proposed that it be the Council's MRP policy for 2009/10.

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Local Development Framework

Core Strategy

Adopted September 2009

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

Local Development Framework

Core Strategy

Adopted September 2009

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

This document can be viewed and downloaded from www.huntsdc.gov.uk.

Further copies of this document can be obtained from:

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If you require this document in another format or translated into another language please contact a member of the Development Plans section on 01480 388388 or ldf@huntsdc.gov.uk.

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	Foreword	i
1	Introduction	1
2	Links with Other Documents	4
3	The Spatial Vision	6
	A Spatial Portrait of Huntingdonshire	6
	The Planning Context	9
	A Spatial Vision for Huntingdonshire	11
	Objectives of the Core Strategy	13
4	The Cornerstone of Sustainable Development	15
5	The Spatial Strategy	19
	Key Diagram	19
	Strategic Housing Development	21
	Settlement Hierarchy	24
	Addressing Housing Need	26
	Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	29
	Economic Development	30
	Retail and Town Centre Uses	33
	Areas of Strategic Green Infrastructure Enhancement	35
	Infrastructure and Implementation	39
6	Monitoring	45
■	Appendices	
1	Glossary	52
2	Evidence Base & Supporting Documents	58
3	Saved Policies to be Superseded	63

Contents

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

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 addresses 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.



Councillor Douglas Dew
Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy
and Transport

Foreword

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

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 Management 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 The Core Strategy DPD is a strategic document. The vision and objectives are overarching and form the basis for the whole LDF; they will therefore be used for subsequent Local Development Documents. Because of the strategic nature of the Core Strategy the Council has chosen not to include detailed development control policies or identify specific development sites. These will be dealt with separately by the Development Management DPD, the Planning Proposals DPD and the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan as appropriate.

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 Management 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 Submission Core Strategy was accompanied by a 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.

1 Introduction

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

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 influenced the content of the Submission Core Strategy.

1.10 The Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State in July 2008 and was examined by an independent Planning Inspector. The Inspector's Final Report was received in July 2009 and the Inspector's changes amalgamated into the document.

Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment

1.11 *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.

1.12 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.

1.13 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.

1.14 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* was completed to accompany the submission version of the Core Strategy to demonstrate the sustainability implications of this plan.

1.15 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 was carried out by specialist external consultants Scott Wilson Ltd and was published alongside the Submission Core Strategy.

1 section 19 para (5)(a)

The Development Plan

1.16 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*.

2 Links with Other Documents

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

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 was used to inform the Core Strategy during Preferred Options and 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

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 & Supporting Documents':

- *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)*

3 The Spatial Vision

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

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 to which many residents look for employment and higher order services. St Neots also looks towards Bedford as a higher order centre given its proximity. 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.

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 1980s and 1990s. As a result of their location within the Cambridge Sub Region pressures for development will continue to be felt within St Neots and Huntingdon as well as St Ives. Other settlements, within the east and south of the District, will also feel increased pressure for development resulting from the District's location within the London/ Stansted/ Cambridge/ Peterborough growth area. 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. It also has a buoyant local economy which now includes Cambridgeshire's largest cluster of high-technology firms outside the immediate area of Cambridge in the market towns of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives. However, it has to be noted that this is not the most dominant part of the local economy.

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

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

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.

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

3 The Spatial Vision

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

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* was published in May 2008 and guides development through to 2021. To reflect new national guidance a single issue review was carried out to address the needs for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, and was completed in 2009. A review of the *East of England Plan* commenced September 2009 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 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 has been 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

3 The Spatial Vision

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

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, and 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.

Sustainable Development and Responding to Climate Change

Delivering the required growth sustainably and in a way that mitigates against and responds to our changing climate will be the most significant challenge for the Development Plan. Development will therefore respond to the need to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by ensuring that energy is used efficiently both in the construction and use of buildings and more of the energy used comes from zero or low carbon sources. The location of development will minimise the need to travel especially by car, make sustainable forms of travel more convenient and so reduce the impact of transport on climate change. Global warming is likely to enhance extremes of weather and the potential of increased risk of flooding that comes from the likelihood of wetter and milder winters could affect much of Huntingdonshire. Also the East of England is already one of the driest areas in the country for much of the year and this is likely to get worse with climate change and will have implications for the use of water in new and existing development.

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.

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.

3 The Spatial Vision

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

Villages and Countryside

To promote the sustainability of our villages and countryside appropriate investment in the rural economy will be encouraged, including complementary diversification of agricultural holdings. Provision of affordable housing on rural exceptions sites will be encouraged to help people remain in, or return to, their local communities. Transport services, communication links and access to key services and facilities will be protected and improved where possible to help people living in, working in or visiting villages and the countryside pursue sustainable lifestyles. Huntingdonshire's villages and countryside offer abundant habitats for plants and wildlife; opportunities will be maximised to maintain and enhance the quality and diversity of habitats supported.

Sustainable Patterns of Growth and Sufficient Housing to Meet Needs

During this time Huntingdonshire will play a proactive role in accommodating housing growth, including any appropriate specialist housing and 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. More limited development will be supported in larger villages to help sustain their existing facilities and amenities, without damaging their character. In other villages schemes that sustain and enhance the vitality of established communities, through the appropriate development of homes and businesses, will be supported where they are compatible with environmental designations and constraints. In conjunction with the proposed housing growth appropriate provision of health, education, training, community, leisure and open space facilities will be secured.

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

Future strategic employment development will be located in the most sustainable locations. 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 Council will promote the provision of a wider range of local employment opportunities, particularly high quality sites for 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 assist much of the development in the Huntingdon area to take place and will improve access to and around the town centre, but individual developments within the Huntingdon SPA may take place subject to demonstrating either 'minimal impact' or 'nil detriment' on traffic flows on the A14. In the longer term an enhanced A428 in the St Neots area will facilitate the continuing development of

a sustainable community beyond the plan period. 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, enabling more convenient sustainable travel to and from Cambridge. The provision of high quality public transport along the A428 corridor will enable similar convenience between St Neots and Cambridge.

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 of the Core Strategy

1. To facilitate 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

3 The Spatial Vision

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

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 support business development in the District's villages and countryside, 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 environment
9. To increase and enhance major strategic green infrastructure while improving the natural habitat and biodiversity
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, encouraging the uptake of sustainable travel modes, 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
18. To support the District's tourism sector, particularly opportunities relating to the Great Fen and water based activities

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;

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

5 World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987

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

4 The Cornerstone of Sustainable Development

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

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 and Environment Strategy: Meeting the challenges in Cambridgeshire (2008)* 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 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.

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)*

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 Management 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.

4.10 Water resources also have significant ecological value providing habitats and food supplies for a variety of species. The effects of climate change will mean that we have to manage surface water flood risk and water shortages by incorporating sustainable drainage systems into new developments and also 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 The Cornerstone of Sustainable Development

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

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 Management 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, sites of nature conservation value 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 Management 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 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.

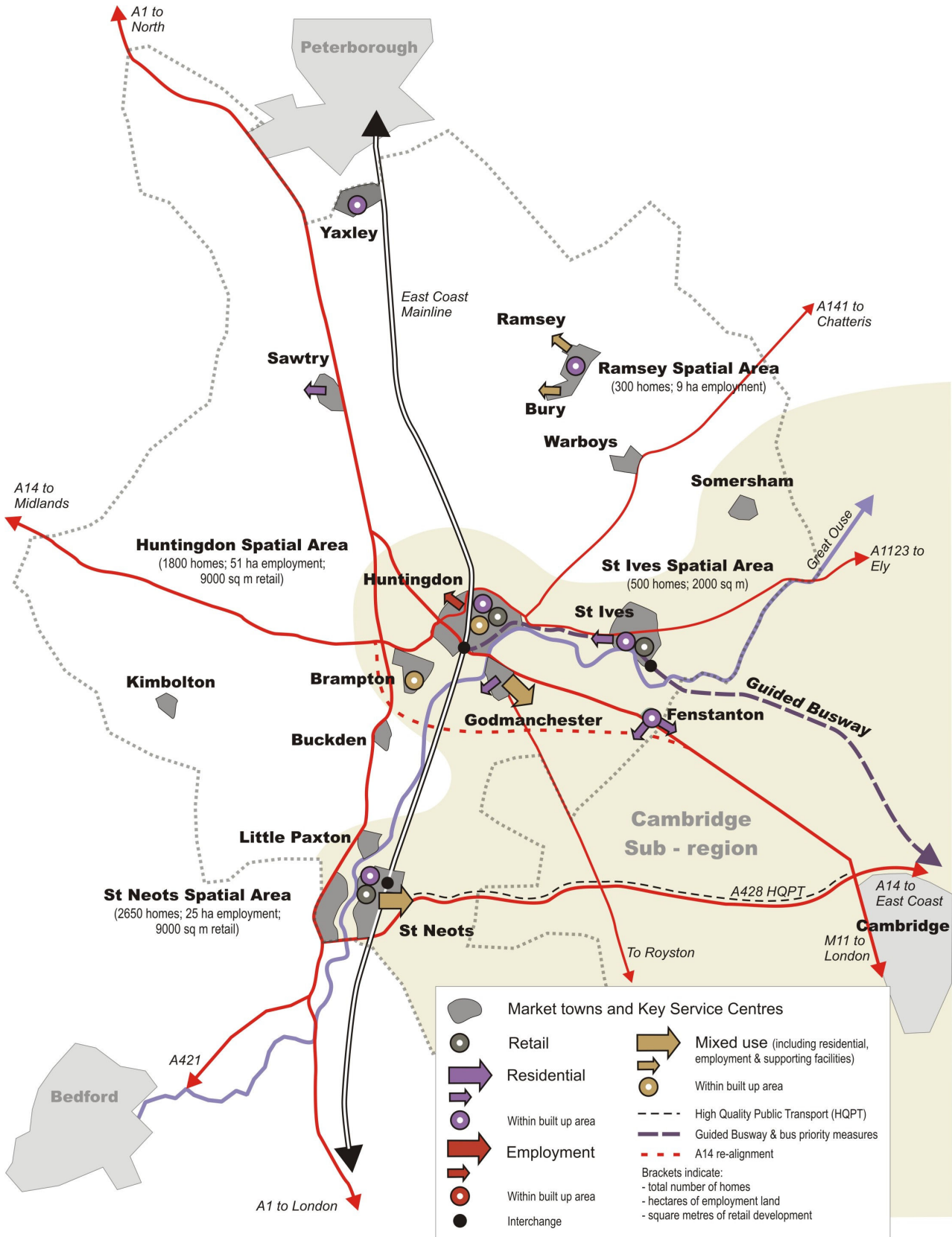
Key Diagram

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.

5 The Spatial Strategy

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

Huntingdonshire Core Strategy Key Diagram



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 in Huntingdon West 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.

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.

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

9 Cambridgeshire County Council 2005

5 The Spatial Strategy

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

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 agreement in principle ⁽²⁾
	5500	That will be provided in the locations identified below
Total	14000	

1. For more information please refer to the Housing Trajectory in the Monitoring Section
2. Sites that have agreement in principle are specific unallocated brownfield sites that have the potential to make a significant contribution to housing delivery in the next five years.

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 following 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;

In Godmanchester as part of a significant mixed use development on greenfield land to the south east/east 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 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 a plan period to 2021, in accordance with the *East of England Plan* 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 5500 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

5 The Spatial Strategy

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

town centre. All the options considered were evaluated to ascertain their potential highway impacts whilst also creating sustainable links across the railway to the existing town centre. 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 prioritise the development of sustainable brownfield land. 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 In addition 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 definition of the built-up area will be set out in more detail in the Development Management DPD but for the purposes of the Core Strategy it 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, where these relate more to the surrounding countryside than they do to the built-up parts of the village; and
- agricultural buildings where they are on the edge of the settlement.

Settlement Hierarchy

5.16 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.

Policy CS 3

The Settlement Hierarchy

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

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 Management 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
- Residential infilling: up to 3 dwellings

Reasoned Justification

5.17 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.

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)

5 The Spatial Strategy

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

5.18 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.

5.19 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.

5.20 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.

5.21 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.

5.22 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.

5.23 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.

5.24 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.

5.25 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

5.26 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.

5.27 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.

5.28 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, housing proposed in developments in the following categories should seek to achieve a target of 40% 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.

The affordable housing provision should seek to achieve a target of 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 and mix of affordable housing to be delivered, specific site conditions and other material considerations including viability, redevelopment of previously developed land or mitigation of contamination will 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

5.29 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 The Spatial Strategy

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

5.30 The *SHMA* identifies need for Huntingdonshire of 1205 affordable homes per year for the first five years. Given the income distribution of the households in need, social rented housing is required for at least 70% of these people with the remaining 30% being on incomes that are insufficient to afford owner occupation but who can afford intermediate housing. 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.

5.31 *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

5.32 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.

5.33 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:

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

5.34 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.

5.35 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

5.36 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.

5.37 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.

5.38 The East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) has carried out a single issue review of the *East of England Plan* which addresses the needs of Gypsies and Travellers across the region. EERA published a revised policy in July 2009 setting the number of additional permanent residential pitches to be provided in Huntingdonshire at 25 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.

5.39 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.

5.40 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 East of England Plan 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.

5 The Spatial Strategy

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

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 have a significant adverse 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

5.41 *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.

5.42 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.

Economic Development

5.43 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.

5.44 Employment is generated through a wide range of activities and locations. It is anticipated around 6,500 – 7,000 jobs will be created on land put forward in Policy CS7 in the more traditional employment sectors of manufacturing, warehousing and offices including research and development businesses. Many other jobs will also arise through retailing, leisure, health, education, home working and other services. These will be in diverse locations with town centres being a particular concentration of employment uses.

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

About 85ha of new land for employment will be provided before 2026 in order to contribute to the creation of at least 13,000 jobs, assist the diversification of local job opportunities and reduce the significant level of out-commuting. The reuse of previously developed land will be promoted, especially within the Market Towns and other sustainable locations, with the result that 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 about 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.

In the St Neots Spatial Planning Area where about 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.

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

5 The Spatial Strategy

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

In addition to this, an existing commitment at Little Paxton, which might come forward during the plan period.

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 the Spatial Planning Areas, in the Key Service Centres of 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 locations will also provide for competition between developers and choice, between occupiers. They will be on previously developed industrial land and on new allocations; closer to the town centres and built at higher densities; in mixed use developments on previously developed and greenfield sites and edge of town sites for larger scale general industry and warehousing. 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 been increased to support the operation of the market. This is characterised by long term development pipelines through which developers bring land forward through site identification, planning and advance infrastructure investment for take up by business users over many years.

5.50 Additional local employment opportunities have been identified in the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area as this area is the main focus of market activity and this presents an opportunity to maintain the good balance between homes and jobs. In addition the town offers a range of general locations which could provide high quality development in sustainable locations (adjoining the town centre, on previously developed land and within mixed use development) and for larger scale general industry and warehousing (to the north west of the town with good links to residential areas and the highway network).

5.51 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.

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

5.53 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.

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

5.55 In the remaining Key Service Centres and Smaller Settlements, detailed policies to support balanced growth will be identified in the Development Management DPD.

Retail and Town Centre Uses

5.56 Huntingdonshire's market towns face many challenges over the plan period as they compete with larger centres nearby to attract investment and maintain their vitality and viability. These include the need to:

- retain a higher proportion of residents' expenditure by improving the retail and leisure facilities to the benefit of the town centres and the wider economy of the District;
- continue to safeguard the unique character of each historic town as places to visit;
- provide opportunities for residents to access town centre services sustainably; and
- boost the diversity of uses including retail, leisure, housing, parking, tourism and cultural facilities.

5.57 National planning policy for town centres requires local authorities to identify where new retail facilities will be focused as they are a key driver of the local economy. Huntingdon and St Neots, being the main locations for growth, will take the larger proportion of development of retail and other town centre uses. Retail development in the other market towns and key service centres is important for maintaining services, providing sustainable options for residents and retaining expenditure locally.

Policy CS 8

Retail and Town Centre Uses

At least 20,000m² ⁽¹⁵⁾ 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 it is proposed to locate retail development in the following areas whilst observing environmental designations and constraints:

At least 9,000m² of comparison floorspace will be located in Huntingdon, concentrated in the town centre with priority given to the further development and improvement of retail facilities at Chequers Court. Complementary and appropriate development, that does not jeopardise the delivery of further redevelopment of Chequers Court, will be located in a 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, with priority given to proposals in the town centre. Complementary and appropriate development will be located as part of a 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 primarily in town centres across the District.

15 Note: all floorspace figures given are net sales area

5 The Spatial Strategy

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

Reasoned Justification

5.58 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.

5.59 The scale of convenience retail floorspace requirements identified was modest at around 3,900m², (net) which was to be predominantly generated by expenditure increases after 2011. 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.

5.60 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.

5.61 Huntingdon is the higher order centre within the District and market demand for further retail development is greatest. The Council is looking to facilitate developments that benefit the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole. The implementation of further development and improvement of retail facilities of Chequers Court in Huntingdon town centre is the Council's top retail priority. 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. This will be supplemented by limited, complementary retail and leisure provision on previously developed land on the edge of the existing town centre on land within the area covered by the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan. Schemes in this area will be carefully controlled to ensure they are complementary to the existing town centre, rather than competing directly with it, and contribute to the provision of retail and town centre uses within Huntingdon.

5.62 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.

5.63 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.

5.64 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.

5.65 The Development Management 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.

5.66 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 Green Infrastructure Enhancement

5.67 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 corridors for species and helping to protect against habitat fragmentation.

5.68 Green infrastructure and particularly green space has an important role to play in tackling the effects of climate change. Green infrastructure 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.

5.69 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 Infrastructure Enhancement

Whilst some sites are listed, this is not an exhaustive list and the Council will actively support projects through the Planning System that aim to create new Green Infrastructure, where these projects demonstrate a high degree of public benefit in the form of increased access for quiet recreation and increased provision for biodiversity.

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 Figure 5.1 '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 to increase biodiversity;

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

5 The Spatial Strategy

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

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 the Hanson RSPB Wetland 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

5.70 Huntingdonshire is a predominantly rural area with a variety of green infrastructure including rivers, gardens, parks, farmland and woods which make up a large proportion of the District. This green infrastructure supports a great variety of plants and animals. Focusing countryside enhancement efforts on the areas identified in Policy CS9 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.

5.71 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.

5.72 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 corridors. 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.

5.73 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 CS9 implements these spatial elements of *Growing Success* and the *SCS*.

5.74 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. 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.

5.75 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 Management DPD to promote and control development within the project area and surrounding area to ensure that the restoration is enabled and not prejudiced.

5.76 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.

5.77 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.

5.78 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.

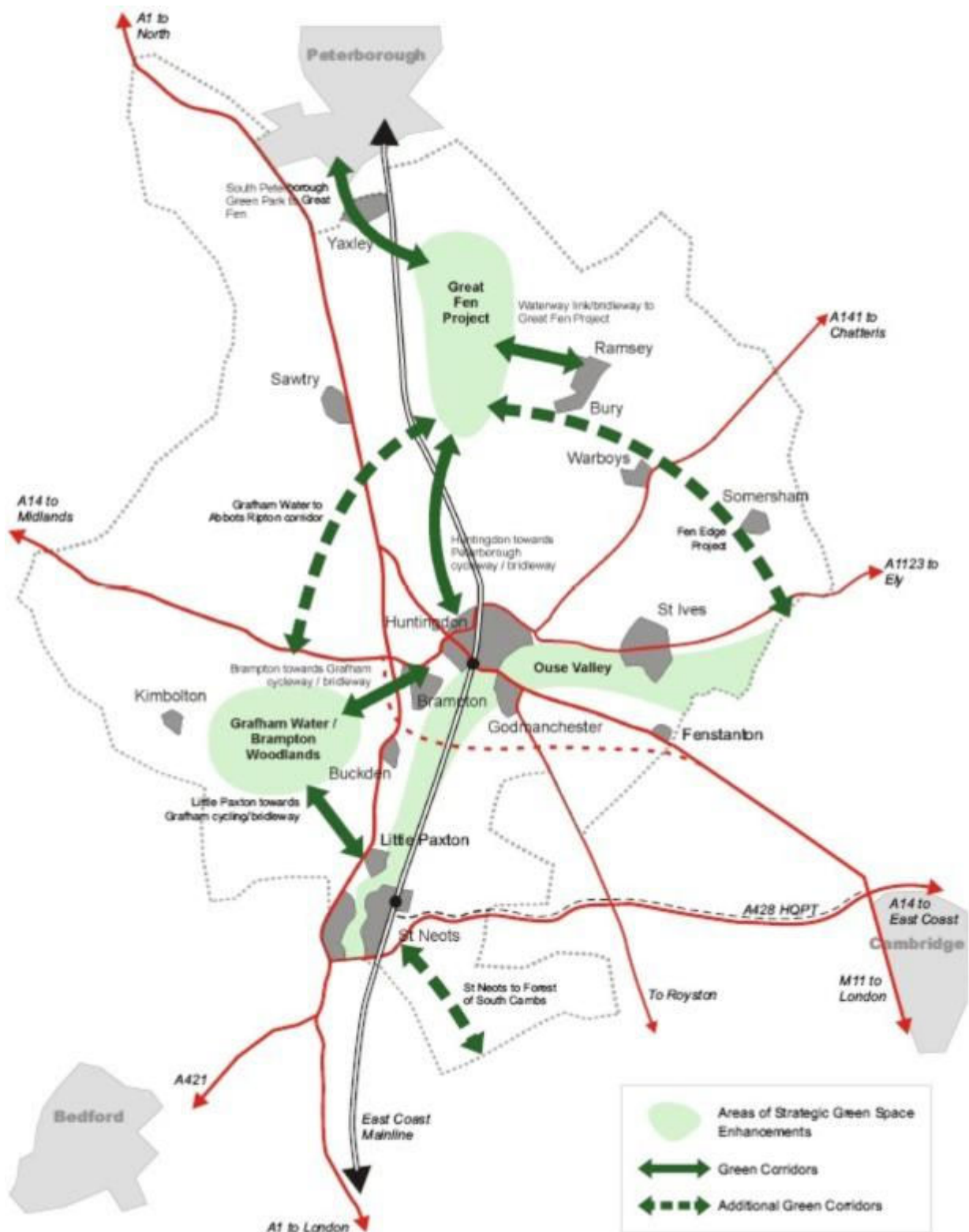
5.79 Other types of green space outside of the identified strategic areas of green space enhancement also make an important contribution to biodiversity and the character and attractiveness of places. Although not identified in the same way as strategic areas of green space enhancement, these additional 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 Management DPD. Standards will be set out in the Development Management DPD regarding the provision of open space required from new development.

5.80 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.

5 The Spatial Strategy

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

Figure 5.1 Policy CS9 Strategic Greenspace Enhancement



Infrastructure and Implementation

5.81 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

5.82 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.

5.83 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.

5.84 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.

5.85 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.

5.86 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.

5.87 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:

- Central Government Integrated Transport block
- Developer funding

5 The Spatial Strategy

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

- Growth Areas Fund (GAF)
- Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF)
- Transport Innovation Fund (TIF)
- Kickstart Bus Funding (DfT)

5.88 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 and the possible future improvements to the A428 from Caxton to the A1 bypassing St Neots.

Infrastructure Requirements

5.89 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.

5.90 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

5.91 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.

5.92 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.

5.93 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.

5.94 Research for the Council's 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 will be required. The timing of growth however will not be affected as an increase in the discharge consent has been granted allowing development to proceed up to 2018 by which time any expansion of the treatment works can be delivered. 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.

5.95 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. The release of development sites within the Huntingdon SPA will be required to demonstrate 'minimal impact' or 'nil detriment' on traffic flows on the A14 prior to A14 improvements taking place. Improvements will be needed to the three roundabouts on the A428 and other traffic management measures to mitigate the impact of development related traffic arising from the Core Strategy proposals. 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.

5.96 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.

5.97 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.

5.98 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 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 The Spatial Strategy

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

5.99 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.

5.100 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

5.101 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. 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.

5.102 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.

5.103 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.

5.104 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 and biodiversity enhancement/ mitigation;
- 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;
- environmental improvements;
- drainage / flood prevention and protection;
- waste recycling facilities; and
- public art, heritage and archaeology.

Contributions will be calculated taking into account provisions of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Reasoned Justification

5.105 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

5 The Spatial Strategy

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

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.

5.106 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.

5.107 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 the Huntingdon SPA. The next phase will see the start of strategic greenfield development, that will be dependent on provision of a significant amount of infrastructure, and in the case of sites close to the A14 in Huntingdon SPA demonstrate 'nil detriment' to the A14 if they wish to be developed prior to the A14 improvements.

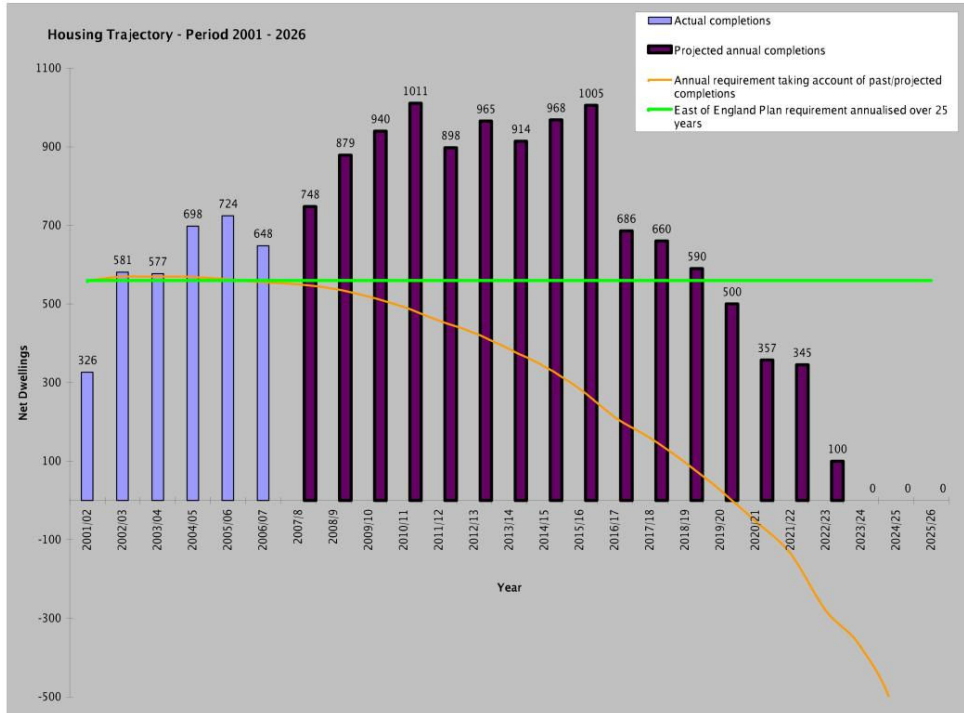
6 Monitoring

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

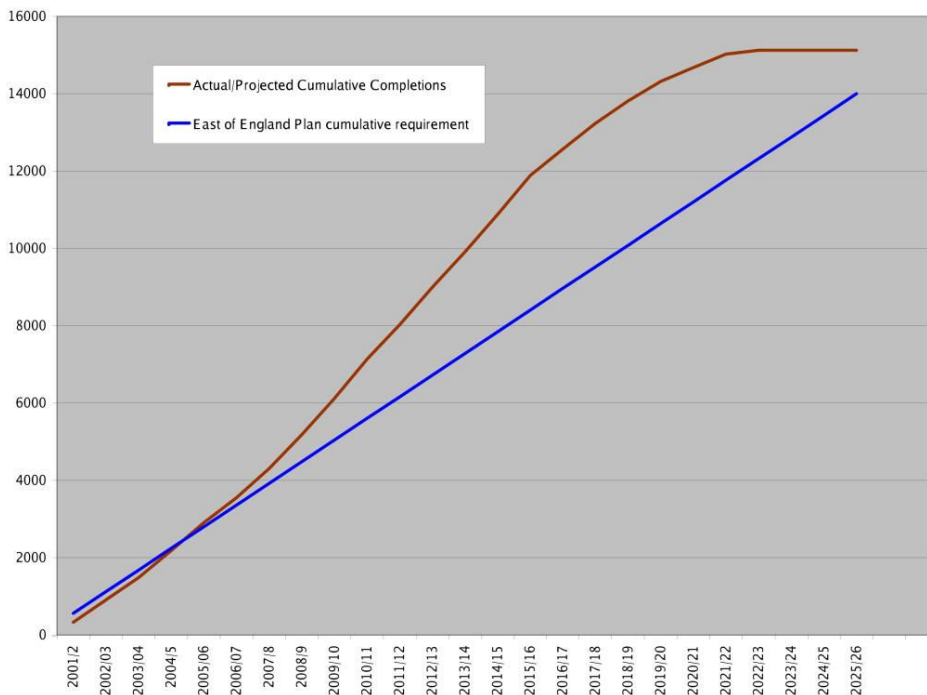
Table 6.1 Annual Completions and Projections Data as at 31 March 2007

Period 2001 - 2026	COMPLETIONS							PROJECTIONS																		
	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/8	08/9	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	
Year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
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



6 Monitoring

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

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.

Table 6.2 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							
Net additional dwellings	Core output indicator H2(b), 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
Gross new dwellings on previously developed land (PDL)	Core output H3, 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 flooding or water quality grounds	Core output E1, 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							
Losses to biodiversity habitat	Core output E2, Significant effects	8, 9	1, 3, 12	CS1 & CS9	Maintain areas of biodiversity importance	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
Additions to biodiversity habitat							
Total change in biodiversity habitat							
Landscape, Townscape and Archaeology							
Number and % of housing sites (10+ dwellings) with a Building for Life assessment of 16 or more	Core output H6, Significant effects	10, 11, 12, 13	4, 5, 10, 13	CS1	All sites to achieve a minimum score of 10	District Council, Private Sector	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs, Conservation initiatives
Number and % of housing sites (10+ dwellings) with a Building for Life assessment of 14 to 15							

6 Monitoring

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

Indicator	Indicator Type	Related Spatial Objective(s)	Related SA Objective(s)	Related Policy	Target	Responsible Agencies	Implementation
Number and % of housing sites (10+ dwellings) with a Building for Life assessment of 10 to 13							
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							
Affordable housing completions (gross)	Core output H5, Significant effects	2, 3	15, 16	CS4 & CS5	40% on qualifying sites	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector, Registered Social Landlords	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions
Social rent homes provided							
Intermediate homes provided							
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	Local 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 Gypsy and Traveller pitches delivered	Core output H4, significant effects	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
Permanent pitches							
Transit pitches							
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 BD2, 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 and type of employment land available	Core output BD3, Significant effects	4, 6, 15	17, 18	CS7	Ensure sufficient provision of employment land	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

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

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

The built-up area is 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, where these relate more to the surrounding countryside than they do to the built-up parts of the village; and
- agricultural buildings where they are on the edge 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.

Greenfield

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

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.

Green corridors

Linear wildlife and public access corridors that link areas of green infrastructure and green spaces with each other and to settlements, and which also link into the wider countryside.

Green spaces

Appendix 1 Glossary

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

Publicly accessible spaces, including local parks, sports grounds, cemeteries, school grounds, allotments, commons and historic parks and gardens.

Habitat

The natural home or environment of a plant or animal.

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 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.

Spatial Planning

Appendix 1 Glossary

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

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.

Appendix 2 Evidence Base & Supporting Documents

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

Appendix 2 Evidence Base & Supporting Documents

Regional Planning

Table 2.1

Code	Title
REG1	The East of England Plan (GO-East, 2008)
REG2	EERA response to conformity consultation (EERA, 2008)

Local Planning

Table 2.2

Code	Title
LOC1	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (Cambs CC, 2003)
LOC2	Huntingdonshire Local Plan Part One (HDC, 1995)
LOC3	Huntingdonshire Local Plan Part Two (Proposals Map) (1995)
LOC4	Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration (2002)
LOC5	Core Strategy Issues and Options (HDC, 2007)
LOC6	Towards a Spatial Strategy for Huntingdonshire, (HDC, 2007)
LOC7	Core Strategy 2007 - Preferred Options - Volume One (HDC, 2007)
LOC8	Core Strategy 2007 - Preferred Options - Volume Two (HDC, 2007)
LOC9	Sustainability Appraisal - Scoping Report (HDC, 2005)
LOC10	Sustainability Appraisal - Scoping Report (HDC, 2007)
LOC11	Initial Sustainability Appraisal on the Core Strategy Issues and Options (HDC, 2007)
LOC12	Initial Sustainability Appraisal on Towards a Spatial Strategy for Huntingdonshire, (HDC, 2007)
LOC13	Draft Final Sustainability Report on the Core Strategy Preferred Options (HDC, 2007)
LOC14	Final Sustainability Appraisal on the submission Core Strategy 2008 (HDC, 2008)
LOC15	Statement of Consultation for the submission Core Strategy 2008 (HDC, 2008)
LOC16	Annex 1 to the Statement of Consultation: Audit Trail (HDC, 2008)
LOC17	Annual Monitoring Report (HDC, 2007)
LOC18	Annex 2 to the Statement of Consultation: Soundness Self Assessment (HDC, 2008)
LOC19	Local Development Scheme (HDC, 2007)
LOC20	Development Management DPD: Development of Options 2009 (HDC, 2009)

Evidence Base & Supporting Documents Appendix 2

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

Code	Title
LOC21	Draft Final Sustainability Appraisal for Development Management DPD: Development of Options (HDC, 2009)
LOC22	Developer Contributions Towards Affordable Housing SPD (HDC, 2007)
LOC23	Ramsey Gateway Urban Design Framework (HDC, 2004)
LOC24	A Vision for St Ives (Civic Trust, 2003)
LOC25	A Vision for St Neots (Civic Trust, 2004)
LOC26	A Vision for Huntingdon (Civic Trust, 2006)
LOC27	Annual Monitoring Report (HDC, 2008)
LOC28	Submission Core Strategy Site Allocation Representations (HDC, 2008)
LOC29	Submission Core Strategy 2008 (HDC, 2008)
LOC30	Huntingdonshire Local Plan Proposals Map Inset Plans Saved Policies (HDC, 2008)
LOC31	Core Strategy Submission DPD & Supporting Documents on CD (HDC, 2008)
LOC32	Local Plan Alteration Public Local Inquiry: Report of the Inspector (HDC, 2002)
LOC33	Core Strategy DPD Independent Examination Draft Schedule of Proposed Changes
LOC34	Core Strategy: Draft Incorporating Proposed Changes

Sustainable Development

Table 2.3

Code	Title
SUS1	Huntingdonshire Community Strategy (HDC, 2004)
SUS2	Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy(draft) (HDC, forthcoming 2008)
SUS3	Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD (HDC 2007)
SUS4	Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (HDC, 2007)
SUS5	Environment Strategy (HDC, 2008)
SUS6	Statement of Community Involvement (HDC, 2006)
SUS7	Sustainable Construction in Cambridgeshire - A Good Practice Guide (Cambridgeshire Horizons and Cambs CC, 2006)
SUS8	Climate Change & Environment Strategy (Cambs CC, 2005)
SUS9	Statement on behalf of MOD with regard to RAF Brampton (Defence Estates, 2009)
SUS10	Economic Impact of Tourism Huntingdonshire District 2007 (East of England Tourism, 2007)
SUS11	Economic Impact of Tourism Cambridge City 2007 (Est of England Tourism, 2007)

Appendix 2 Evidence Base & Supporting Documents

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

Code	Title
SUS12	Growing Success (HDC, 2008)
SUS13	Local Area Agreement 2008-2011 (Cambridgeshire Together, 2007)
SUS14	Cambridgeshire's Vision 2007-2021 Countywide Sustainable Community Strategy (Cambridgeshire Together, 2008)

Housing

Table 2.4

Code	Title
HOU1	Huntingdonshire Housing Needs Survey (HDC, 2002)
HOU2	Huntingdonshire Housing Needs Assessment Update (HDC, 2006)
HOU3	Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy 2006 - 2011 (HDC, 2006)
HOU4	Cambridge Housing Sub Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Cambridgeshire Horizons, 2008)
HOU5	Peterborough Sub-Regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Peterborough CC, 2008)
HOU6	Huntingdonshire Housing Land Availability Study (HDC, 2007)
HOU7	Huntingdonshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (HDC, 2008)
HOU8	Huntingdonshire Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper Update (HDC, 2007)
HOU9	Homes for the Future - More Sustainable, More Affordable (DCLG, 2007)
HOU10	Cambridge Sub Region Traveller Needs Assessment (Cambs CC, 2006)
HOU11	Peterborough Core Strategy Preferred Options (Peterborough City Council, 2008)
HOU12	HDC Affordable Housing Viability Testing (Drivers Jonas on behalf of HDC, 2009)

Employment

Table 2.5

Code	Title
EMP1	Employment Land Review (Warwick Business Management Ltd on behalf of HDC, 2007)
EMP2	Huntingdonshire Local Economy Strategy 2008 - 2015 (HDC, 2008)
EMP3	Employment in the Hi-tech "Community" Cambridgeshire and Peterborough 2006 (CCC, 2006)
EMP4	The Development of Policy E2: A Report Commenting on the Development Format and Content of Policy E (EEDA, 2005)
EMP5	Employment Densities: a simple guide (English Partnerships, 2001)

Evidence Base & Supporting Documents Appendix 2

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

Retail

Table 2.6

Code	Title
RET1	Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study (Roger Tym and Partners on behalf of HDC, 2005)
RET2	Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study Update (Roger Tym and Partners on behalf of HDC, 2007)
RET3	Huntingdonshire Retail Study Report (CB Hillier Parker on behalf of HDC, 2001)

Strategic Green space

Table 2.7

Code	Title
SGS1	50 Year Wildlife Vision for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (Cambs CC, 2002)
SGS2	Green Infrastructure Strategy (Cambridgeshire Green Vision) (Cambridgeshire Horizons, 2006)
SGS3	Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment (PNP on behalf of HDC, 2006)
SGS4	Great Fen project brochure (Great Fen Partnership, 2006)
SGS5	Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Huntingdonshire LDF Core Strategy (Scott Wilson Ltd on behalf of HDC, 2008)

Infrastructure

Table 2.8

Code	Title
INF1	Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Mott MacDonald on behalf of HDC, 2004)
INF2	Extract from draft Huntingdonshire Outline Water Cycle Strategy - Waste Water Treatment Summary (Faber Maunsell on behalf of HDC, 2009)
INF3	Huntingdonshire Spatial Strategy Options Assessment (Atkins on behalf of HDC, 2009)
INF4	Local Investment Framework (EDAW on behalf of HDC, forthcoming 2008)
INF5	Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 (Cambs CC, 2006)
INF6	Draft Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009 Update (Mott McDonald on behalf of HDC, 2009)
INF7	Highways Agency A14 Position Statement (Highways Agency, 2009)
INF8	Highways Agency Executive Summary of the A428 St Neots Bypass Review (Highways Agency, 2009)
INF9	Environment Agency Statement (EA, 2009)

Appendix 2 Evidence Base & Supporting Documents

Huntingdonshire LDF | Core Strategy: Adopted 2009

Code	Title
INF10	A428 Upgrade Caxton Common - A1/ Black Cat Roundabout Economic Impact Report (Mott McDonald on behalf of Cambridgeshire Horizons, 2008)

Appendix 3 Saved Policies to be Superseded

Table 3.1 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

Table 3.2 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

Standards Committee

**Report of the meetings held on 9th July and
3rd September 2009**

Matters for Information

1. SUB-COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The Committee has appointed the Sub-Committees required under the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 to undertake the initial assessment of allegations, to respond to any review of decisions requested by complainants and to hear cases referred for investigation. Each Sub-Committee is chaired by an Independent Member.

In the light of experience and to ensure maximum flexibility in appointing Members to the various Sub-Committees, the Committee has authorised the Head of Law, Property and Governance and Monitoring Officer after consultation with the relevant Chairman to convene meetings of the Referrals (Assessment), Review and Standards (Consideration and Hearing) Sub-Committees as necessary and to appoint Members as appropriate in accordance with the 2008 Regulations.

2. ETHICAL STANDARDS AND THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Standards for England consider it good practice periodically for the leadership of Councils to give guidance and direction to their authority's Standards Committee. In accordance with this advice, Councillor I C Bates, Leader of the Council has addressed the Committee on various issues associated with ethical standards and the code of conduct. His participation in the meeting followed that of the Leader of the Opposition in March 2009.

Councillor Bates has thanked the Independent Members and Parish Council representatives for their valuable contribution to standards work having observed himself the improvement it has made to the administration of parish council meetings and understanding of the Code of Conduct on the part of parish councillors. However, Councillor Bates expressed reservations at the cost and accountability of the standards regime and the perceived effect this might have had in attracting and retaining parish councillors.

3. THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE (FURTHER PROVISIONS) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS

The Standards Committee (Further Provisions) (England) Regulations 2009 came into force on 15th June. These Regulations make provision for Standards for England to suspend the functions of a local Standards Committee where the Committee is failing to perform its functions satisfactorily, either to discharge the functions itself or to arrange for another authority's Standards Committee to discharge them instead. The Regulations also give authorities the power to establish joint standards committees and extend the power of standards committees to give Members dispensations when they would otherwise be prohibited from participating on a matter because of a prejudicial interest.

4. STANDARDS STATISTICS

The Committee has received and noted statistical information on performance of local authorities since the introduction of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 and the outcome of three independent surveys which have measured support for the Code of Conduct, the impact and effectiveness of the ethical framework in local government" and the public perception of ethics.

The research findings have prompted the Committee to request the Monitoring Officer to consider whether it would be possible to vary the Constitution to make code of conduct training for district councillors mandatory, to set up further refresher training sessions on the Code of Conduct for town and parish councils over the Autumn and to review the content of the standards and conduct pages on the District Council's website.

5. ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES

The Committee has nominated Messrs J Alexander, D L Hall and G Watkins to attend the 2009 Annual Assembly of Standards Committees at the International Convention Centre, Birmingham on 12th and 13th October 2009.

6. LOG OF CODE OF CONDUCT ENQUIRIES

The Committee has noted the nature of the Code of Conduct enquiries recently recorded by the Monitoring Officer and has been reminded that the areas of the Code which appear to cause the most concern form the basis for the Monitoring Officer's approach to training for parish councils.

7. CODE OF CONDUCT TRAINING

For training purposes, the Committee has discussed the content of a fact sheet issued by the Standards for England on personal and prejudicial interests and noted the outcome of three cases recently determined by the Adjudication Panel for England.

8. GENERAL ISSUES

(a) New Name

The Committee has noted that with effect from 1st July 2009 the Standards Board for England has changed its name to Standards for England with the following responsibilities -

- ◆ giving Standards Committees and Councillors support and guidance on understanding the code of conduct and on how to deal with complaints about the conduct of Members of their authority;
- ◆ monitoring the performance of authorities in the local assessment of complaints;
- ◆ publishing information about how Councils and other authorities are dealing with complaints about their Members;
- ◆ working with Standards Committees to help them improve if they do not deal with complaints about their Members properly;
- ◆ removing the power of a Standards Committee to receive complaints about its Members, if necessary; and
- ◆ investigating the most serious cases where the local Standards Committee believes it is not best placed to deal with them.

(b) Indemnification Arrangements

The Committee has been assured that the District Council's indemnification arrangements adequately cover the Independent Members of the Standards Committee.

(c) District-Wide Article

To highlight the Members' Code of Conduct and the requirements of ethical standards, the Committee has noted the content of an article entitled 'Cracking the Code' which was published in the name of the Chairman of the Committee in the May 2009 edition of District-Wide.

9. REGISTRATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007, newly elected Councillors are required to register their financial and other interests with the District Council's Monitoring Officer within 28 days of their election or appointment to office. Under Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000, the Monitoring Officer has a duty to establish and maintain a register of the interests of the Members and co-opted Members of the District Council and those other authorities within its area. The Committee has noted the up to date position in terms of the return of registration forms from the 73 town and parish councils in Huntingdonshire and has been advised

that 18 registration forms are still outstanding from town and parish councillors. There are also a number of no changes forms outstanding from Parish Councils. In terms of individual councillors and providing their 28 day period for registration of interest has not expired, the Committee has agreed that, where forms are still outstanding by 30th September, the Monitoring Officer should contact the Councillor concerned to suggest that further action may be taken against them as non-return of registration forms is itself a potential breach of the code of conduct.

10. REPORTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES

The Chairmen of the Referrals (Assessment), Review and Consideration & Hearing Sub Committees have updated the Committee on the business they have considered in general terms and reported on the outcome in each case.

Overall, nine allegations of misconduct have been considered by the Assessment Sub Committee of which one has been referred to the Monitoring Officer for investigation and one to Standards For England. Five cases have been referred to the Monitoring Officer for other action which has included training, presenting an apology either to a complainant or to a parish council by the Member concerned and drawing the attention of all town & parish councils to the content of the Code of Recommended Publicity in their election year. One decision made by the Assessment Sub Committee has also been upheld by the Review Sub Committee.

Mr D L Hall
Chairman

Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being)

**Report of the meeting held on 16th July and
10th September 2009**

Matters for Information

7. LAND ADJACENT TO THE GRAND CINEMA, RAMSEY

The Panel has been acquainted with proposals for the sale of land adjacent to the Grand Cinema, Ramsey. The Council has previously been approached by Luminus regarding a scheme to redevelop the area. Members have been informed that negotiations are taking place and that the Council is seeking to include the relocation of the District Council's Community Information Centre alongside the redevelopment which will comprise a library, flats and new public conveniences. As the land in question includes a car parking area, which is owned by the District Council, the Panel has expressed concerns over the resulting decrease in the overall level car parking in the Town. A report on terms for the sale of the land will be submitted to Cabinet when the negotiations have been concluded.

8. TOURISM

The Panel has discussed the possible scope of a study on tourism. However, in current circumstances there is limited scope for the development of tourism initiatives. It has, therefore, been decided to explore whether an investigation might be undertaken into tourism in its wider context, possibly in relation to the vibrancy of the town centres.

9. SCRUTINY OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The Panel has received details of the areas for scrutiny that fall within its responsibility, particularly those in relation to Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership and its Thematic Groups for Economic Prosperity and Skills and for Equality and Inclusion, the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Cambridgeshire Vision.

Members have been acquainted with plans to hold a joint event involving representatives of Overview and Scrutiny and the Strategic Partnership and with a County-wide conference on the scrutiny of partnerships.

10. GRANT AID STUDY

The Panel has been acquainted with the Cabinet's response to the final report following completion of an extensive study on grant aid carried out by a Working Group of the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery). The Panel is pleased to note that the Cabinet has concurred with the view that the current process is working well, though some areas relating to service level agreements and external funding schemes might benefit from further attention. Having thanked the Working Group for the work carried out, the Panel has requested an annual report on organisations supported by grant through service level agreements.

11. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – REMIT AND STUDIES

The Panel, in reviewing its future programme of studies suggested it might be prudent to request sight of any financial reports prepared on behalf of the District Council Leisure Centres prior to their submission to Cabinet. A report would also be requested on the new HQ and accommodation project once completed, in order to learn from the experience.

It was also agreed that Councillor Shellens should be appointed to the Local Procurement Working Group.

12. FORMER FIRE STATION SITE AND WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE, HUNTINGDON STREET, ST NEOTS

The Panel has reviewed the Cabinet's decision to approve the preparation of a development brief for the site of the former fire station and waste recycling centre on Huntingdon Street, St Neots and to commence a marketing exercise for the disposal of the leasehold of the site. Having stressed that the Council will retain ownership of the site, the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy has informed Members of the matters that the development brief will contain.

Members have discussed requirements placed on potential developers to provide the Council with details of their plans, but it has been concluded that such requirements will demonstrate developers' commitment and will, in any case, be required as part of any necessary planning submission. Discussion also has been held on the impact of the proposals on car parking generally in St Neots. In conclusion, Members have concurred with a suggestion that the Council should seek leisure or retail uses for the site.

13. FINANCIAL FORECAST

In conjunction with Item No. 28 of the Report of the Cabinet, the Panel has been acquainted with the present position in relation to the Council's financial forecast for the period to 2018/19. Members have been informed of potential variations in a number of sources of income and other factors that could affect the Council's financial position.

The Panel has acknowledged the uncertainty created by current economic and political conditions and Members have discussed the potential effects for the Council of a range of trends in these respects. The basis for the Council's planned future levels of reserves has been interrogated, as have projections for inflation, employer contributions to pensions and council tax levels. While there is a high level of uncertainty involved, Members have stressed the importance for the Council of undertaking this work and of monitoring changes in these and other factors.

14. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

In conjunction with the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Environmental Well-Being and for Social Well-Being, the Panel for Economic Well-Being has reviewed the Council's performance against its priority objectives, which are contained in "Growing Success" - the Corporate Plan. Having endorsed the views of the Corporate Plan Working Group, Members have noted the responses by Officers to requests for clarification of a number of matters.

15. EXTENSION OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY POWERS

The Panel has received details of new powers designed to extend the scope of overview and scrutiny which have recently been introduced. Regulations enable the District Council to widen the role of their overview and scrutiny committees through scrutiny of local area agreements (LAA) and give overview and scrutiny committees the power to obtain information from LAA partners.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panels now have the power to make reports and recommendations to the District Council's Cabinet, the County Council or a partner authority on LAA matters. These bodies are required to have regard to such reports and recommendations.

Crime and disorder and health are specifically excluded from these provisions.

Other Matters of Interest

16. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS

The Panel has reviewed its ongoing studies at each of its meetings. In order to avoid duplication of effort and given that the external representatives who attend the Local Procurement Meeting are also on the Thematic Group, Members have decided to request the Economic Prosperity and Skills Thematic Group to assume responsibility for any further follow-up work on local procurement.

17. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel has reviewed its work plan and received details of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels. A number of potential study areas have been included in the plan.

18. FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions, which has been prepared by the Leader of the Council.

19. SCRUTINY

The Panel has considered the latest edition of the Decision Digest and discussed matters contained therein.

J D Ablewhite
Chairman

Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being)

**Report of the meetings held on 14th July and
8th September 2009**

Matters for Information

7. GREAT FEN

Following the earlier consideration of issues relating to the Great Fen Project by the Overview and Scrutiny (Service Support) Panel, the Panel has been informed of a proposal for the Council to enter with other organisations into a Collaboration Agreement for the project. (Members of the Social and Economic Well-Being Panels were also invited to attend the meeting for consideration of this item).

The Panel accepts that the Collaboration Agreement offers the most appropriate governance arrangement between the various partners at the present stage of development of the Great Fen Project and has been advised that the agreement will be reviewed once the venture moves into a trading position. The Panel has expressed its ongoing support for the Council's involvement to enable the views of the local community to be represented and provide a democratic focus for the project.

A number of issues were raised by the Panel in relation to the detailed content of the agreement itself to avoid future ambiguity. The Panel also raised a concern that the confidentiality provisions in the agreement might impede future scrutiny and transparency in the management of the project. The Panel has been advised that this is not the intention and that the precise wording will be re-visited with partners.

The Panel has suggested that an annual report be presented to partners on progress towards the achievement of the project's aims and objectives.

The Panel has also been acquainted with the details of the Great Fen Master Plan. (Members of the Social and Economic Well-Being Panels were invited to attend the meeting for consideration of this Item.)

The Panel has welcomed the production of the Masterplan as the next stage in the planning process for the Great Fen Project and reiterated its support for the Council's involvement in the venture.

While Members recognise that further detailed work will be undertaken to produce an action plan, the Panel has however questioned the absence of reference to business planning and long term financial forecast in the document.

The Panel also has questioned the financial viability of the visitor centre and, having regard to its location, concerns have been raised over the condition of the B660 access road which the Panel felt will need to be improved in light of the anticipated visitor numbers.

The Panel is anxious to ensure that there will be no long-term financial implications for the Council arising from the cessation of grants awarded to the project. Members also were mindful of the danger of creating aspirations through the consultation process that it might not be possible to fund in the future. The Panel has been encouraged to learn that some local land owners who initially were not in favour of the project were beginning to approach partners to discuss the possibility of changing their farming methods in line with the project's vision.

The views of the Panel have been passed to Cabinet for its consideration.

8. SCRUTINY OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The Panel has considered a report which provides background information on the areas that fall within its responsibility with regard to scrutiny of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership (HSP). These include scrutiny of the Environment and Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Groups established under the HSP.

9. ADOPTION OF ROADS AND SEWERS

The Panel has received the final report of its working group which was established to investigate the processes and procedures involved in the adoption of roads and sewers process. The report highlights the problems that can be encountered by house buyers in ensuring that the infrastructure will be maintained at public expense and the difficulties faced by the highways and water bodies in ensuring that roads and sewers are completed to adoptable standard.

The working group's report and recommendations have been endorsed by the Panel for submission to the Cabinet.

10. THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE CORE STRATEGY 2008 – THE INSPECTOR'S BINDING REPORT/ADOPTION PROCESS

The Panel has considered a report which provides information on the Inspector's considerations and conclusions regarding the soundness of the DPD, following his examination of the submitted core strategy. The Panel has been pleased to note that the majority of changes to the Core Strategy had been proposed by the Council and any changes imposed by the Inspector were negligible.

11. SOUTH STREET PUBLIC CONVENIENCE, ST. NEOTS

The Panel has considered a report on the South Street public conveniences, St. Neots. Notwithstanding the poor condition of the public conveniences, it was the view of a local Member that the facility is well used by shoppers. The Panel supports the view that no further expenditure should be incurred in improving the facility but has suggested that St. Neots Town Council be offered the option of improving and maintaining this public convenience before any final decision is made as to their future by the Cabinet.

The views of the Panel have been passed to Cabinet for its consideration.

12. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Council's performance against the environmental well-being targets within the corporate plan "Growing Success" has been reviewed by the Panel. The Panel has been pleased to note that all but one of the indicators where statistics are available were positive.

13. WORKPLAN STUDIES

The Panel has appointed Councillors M G Baker, P Godley, M F Newman and J S Watt to a working group to investigate the development management process.

14. FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the Forward Plan of forthcoming decisions prepared by the Leader of the Council.

15. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS

The Panel has been advised of progress on issues that had been previously discussed, arising from which the Panel has requested an update on the issue of heavy commercial vehicles parking in the District.

The Vice-Chairman of the Panel has undertaken to write to Anglian Water with regard to the sewerage problems encountered in the St. Audrey Lane Area of St. Ives to expedite a reply. The Panel also has requested updates on the status of the car park constructed at the railway station in Huntingdon and with regard to cycling in Huntingdonshire. Furthermore, the Panel has requested the receipt of the minutes of future Joint Accountability Committee meetings. The Panel has also requested further information about the cycle way planned alongside the St. Ives guided bus way.

16. SCRUTINY

The Panel has considered the latest editions of the Decision Digest and discussed the matters contained therein.

P M D Godfrey
Chairman

Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)

**Report of the meetings held on 7th July and
1st September 2009**

Matters for Information

9. LEISURE CENTRES – PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Panel has reviewed the Huntingdonshire Leisure Centres Annual Report 2008/09 which contains a summary of the activities of the Leisure Centres in Huntingdonshire during the preceding twelve months. Attention has been drawn to a number of financial and service achievements at the Centres during the previous year. Total admissions to the Centres have exceeded 1.74 million for the first time, which represents an increase of 4.8% on the previous year. At the same time savings of £569,000 have been achieved across the Centres as a whole.

The Panel has discussed the level of expenditure on employees, which has increased as a proportion of the total budget. This is the result of savings being achieved elsewhere and of an increase in the overall number of employees in accordance with the requirements of the services provided. Details of expenditure per full-time equivalent employee will be included in future reports.

Discussion also has been held on the efforts being made to contact “non-live” users and the decline in hospitality income. Regarding the latter, a suggestion has been made that increased marketing of the café facilities should be undertaken. In the case of St Ivo, consideration currently is being given to developing the site so that the café facility is in a more visible and central location within the Centre. These development proposals will be considered by the Panel at a future meeting.

Having referred to the potential benefits of promoting the high needs facility located at Sawtry Leisure Centre, the Panel has been advised that the implementation of a Marketing Plan and Business Plan should enable the Centres to achieve their £1 million savings target by the end of the current financial year.

10. SCRUTINY OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Members have been acquainted with the areas that fall within their responsibility when scrutinising the Huntingdonshire Strategic

Partnership. These relate to the work of the Children and Young People, Health and Well-Being and Inclusive, Safe and Cohesive Communities Thematic Groups.

Members have been informed of a County-wide conference on the scrutiny of partnerships. It is also planned to hold a joint event involving representatives of Overview and Scrutiny and the Strategic Partnership.

11. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

In conjunction with the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Environmental Well-Being and for Economic Well-Being, the Panel for Social Well-Being has reviewed the Council's performance against its priority objectives, which are contained in "Growing Success" - the Corporate Plan. The Panel has endorsed the views of the Corporate Plan Working Group, particularly with regard to the red actions identified within the report and noted that work in respect of the budgets associated with each of the priority objectives currently is being undertaken by the Working Group.

In light of the forthcoming introduction of the scrutiny of partnerships, the Panel has discussed the Council's approach to partnership working. The view has been expressed that the Council should take every opportunity to engage with partners and that Overview and Scrutiny should encourage other organisations to participate in greater levels of partnership working.

12. CARE QUALITY COMMISSION

The Panel has endorsed for submission to the Care Quality Commission a letter requesting responses to a number of issues previously raised by the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) on the content of the Commission's Enforcement Policy. The questions relate to the regulation of care services, the planned imposition of financial penalties on failing services and the Commission's relationship to the Local Involvement Network (LiNK). Consideration also has been given to the Commission's publication entitled "About the Care Quality Commission". As a result, clarification has also been sought on the Commission's procedures for assessing health services and facilities.

13. NHS CONSTITUTION

The Panel has been acquainted with the contents of the NHS Constitution, which sets out the principles and values that guide how the NHS should act and make decisions in the future. The Constitution also specifies the rights and responsibilities of staff, patients and the public. Comment has been made on particular principles and pledges contained within the Constitution, particularly with regard to the means by which they will be achieved and how they will be monitored. Further comment has been made on the Constitution's lack of flexibility and an apparent absence of receptiveness to change. The discussion concluded with a

suggestion that patients should be able to pay for their own treatment without compromising their right to receive treatment through the NHS.

The Panel has decided that, in advance of the Constitution gaining Parliamentary approval, the concerns raised should be drawn to the attention of the Secretary of State for Health and that the representations made should be drawn to the attention of local Members of Parliament.

14. DISABILITY ACCESS STUDY – FOLLOW UP

The Panel has discussed the work it will undertake to follow up on a previous study into disability access. From the actions identified for implementation in the study's final report, Members have requested updates from the County Council and Police on matters that were referred to them together with details of progress on a number of actions referred to the Growth and Infrastructure and Health and Well-Being Thematic Groups of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership. The views of the Town and Parish Councils on whether improvements have been made to footpaths and parking enforcement will be sought following the receipt of information from the Police and County Council.

The Panel has noted that a joint commissioning agreement with Cambridgeshire County Council and Disability Information Services Huntingdonshire has been introduced. Joint targets have been agreed by partners and the first bi-annual monitoring report will be presented to Members at their meeting in November. In addition, the Panel has decided to lobby the government by expressing support for a campaign being led by Sense, a charitable organisation for deaf people, for carers of those with disabilities to be provided with free bus travel.

15. STUDY – PARKING AT HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL

The Panel has commenced a study into car parking at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. The need for the study emerged from public representations received by Members on the level of charges levied for parking, the restrictions placed on parking at the Hospital and the impact that the parking arrangements has had upon the surrounding area.

Members have received background information relating to current parking provision on the Hinchingsbrooke site, the scope to increase the level of provision, other potential charging options, parking enforcement, the availability of public transport and the impact of parking on the surrounding area. Having also received information on the Hospital's Green Transport Plan, the Panel has requested details of progress with the Plan's implementation. Other potential areas for investigation include the terms of the car parking management contract. Public views will be sought by the Panel at a later date and a representative of the Hospital will be invited to a future Panel meeting.

Details of a consultation currently being undertaken by the British Parking Association on a draft Hospital Parking Charter have been received and a response has been submitted by the Panel.

Other Matters of Interest

16. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies at each of its meetings. Members have been informed that Councillor S J Criswell has been appointed as the District Council representative on the Stakeholder Panel established by NHS East of England (formerly the East of England Strategic Health Authority) whose purpose is to brief, involve and consult interested groups and parties on the future governance of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

17. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel has reviewed its work plan and received details of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

18. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 – FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions. Items entitled Older Persons Housing Strategy Update and St Ivo Leisure Centre – Proposals for Development will be considered at the Panel's meetings in November and December respectively.

19. SCRUTINY

The Panel considered the latest editions of the Decision Digest and discussed matters contained therein.

S J Criswell
Chairman

Development Management Panel

**Report of the meetings held on 20th July, 17th August
and 14th September 2009**

Matters for Information

8. HARTFORD MARINA

In Item No. 21 of the Report of its meeting to the Council held on 18th February 2009, the former Development Control Panel reported that it had agreed to establish a Member Working Group to consider existing relevant policies, the preparation of supplementary planning guidance on marinas and a way to resolve the question of possible unauthorised occupation of the various types of accommodation at Hartford Marina.

Having received the detailed report from the Working Group and been apprised of various representations made by the owner/manager of the marina, the Hartford Marina Community Association, Residential Boat Owners Association and Marina Residents and to ensure consistency with action taken previously at Buckden Marina, the Panel has -

- ◆ requested that a policy on the permanent occupation of marinas and river frontages be prepared as part of the forthcoming Development Management DPD on the basis that this would be subject to public consultation and scrutiny and form part of the Local Development Framework;
- ◆ invited the owner/manager and/or occupiers of the floating lodges, house boats and boats at Hartford Marina to apply for planning permission as soon as sufficient weight can be given to an emerging planning policy on marinas and river frontages to rationalise the current situation at Hartford;
- ◆ decided that no action should be taken against current residents living in the floating lodges, house boats and boats in the interim on the understanding that they provide reasonable information on the status of their occupancy in the period prior to formalisation of the policy sufficient to enable council tax to be recovered from those who form part of the settled community;
- ◆ decided that there should be no further expansion of the marina without planning consent;
- ◆ requested the Head of Planning Services to develop an action plan for progressing the Working Group's recommendations to

- include an appropriate timescale for action and the designation of Officers to be responsible for progressing such action; and
- ◆ authorised the Heads of Law, Property and Governance and Planning Services to take appropriate enforcement action, as sensitively as possible, to secure the cessation of any unauthorised permanent occupation of the flats at Hartford Marina.

**9. PERFORMANCE MONITORING:
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT - 1ST APRIL - 30TH JUNE 2009**

The Panel has received a statistical report on the performance of the Development Management Section of the Planning Division over the period 1st April - 30th June 2009 and noted an increase of approximately £91,000 in fee income in comparison with that anticipated in the revised budget due principally to the receipt of applications for a major strategic site in the District.

10. DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Over three meetings, the Panel has considered a total of thirty one applications of which seventeen were approved, eight refused, four deferred and one delegated to the Head of Planning Services for determination.

As a consultee, the Panel has advised Cambridgeshire County Council that they strongly object to an application to undertake engineering operations to extend the landfill void for various purposes at Warboys Landfill Site, Puddock Hill, Warboys but that they remain committed to supporting appropriate proposals for the finite restoration of the site.

P K Ursell
Vice-Chairman

Employment Panel

Report of the meeting held on 15th September 2009

Matters for Information

6. HR STRATEGY - PROGRESS

The Panel has been advised of progress in the preparation of a HR Strategy for the organisation. So far this has involved a series of workshops over the summer with subject matters including 'modernisation and service excellence', 'maximising workforce skills and capacity' and 'developing a safe and healthy working environment'. The outcome of these sessions, which have been attended by Heads of Service, Activity Managers and representatives of the Employees Side will form the basis of the draft strategy which will be subject to consultation with the Employees Side prior to its submission to the next Panel meeting.

7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING

The Panel has received and noted the outcomes of equal opportunities monitoring of employees over the period 1st April 2008 - 30th March 2009.

In reviewing the statistics, the Panel has observed several issues which reflect well on the organisation and suggest that the Council is considered to be a good employer by potential and existing employees.

In particular, it was noted that there were 22 applicants for each post advertised, 46 internal promotions during the period and that 77% of the number of employees taking maternity leave chose to return to work.

8. EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY

The responses to an opinion survey undertaken during May 2009 to measure how employees feel about working for the Council have been presented to the Panel. Where possible, the findings have been used as benchmarks for comparisons with survey results in previous years.

Most pleasing is that 63% of employees feel fulfilled in their job compared to 54% in previous years and 79% have said that they are satisfied with the Council as an employer. Whilst considerable effort has been directed towards communications with employees, the survey still has revealed that 64% of respondees are not aware of the Council's planning/strategy processes. These findings will contribute

towards the preparation of the HR Strategy and help to target areas which still need to be addressed.

9. REQUESTS TO FILL VACANT POSTS

Having been satisfied that it was essential to recruit to vacancies in the Democratic and Central Services and Planning Services Divisions, the Panel has authorised the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships to commence recruitment to the posts identified and to any consequential vacancies that may arise as a result of the recruitment process. Both vacancies have been discussed and agreed with the relevant Executive Councillor.

10. RETIREMENT OF EMPLOYEES - 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
Ms K Rees	Environmental and Community Services	18 years
Mr S James	Environmental and Community Services	9 years
Mr R Probyn	Environmental and Community Services	34 years

11. SHARED SERVICES

The details of a conference held in July to discuss issues around shared services were presented to the Panel by the Chairman. This prompted a further discussion on the question of sharing services and it was decided to convene a Members Seminar on the subject to which the external speaker who had addressed the original conference would be invited.

Mrs B E Boddington
Chairman

Licensing Committee

Report of the meeting held on 16th September 2009

Matters for Information

1. LICENSING ACT 2003 REGULATORY REFORM

The Panel has approved delegations to relevant Officers following changes to the Licensing Act 2003 that have been brought about by three new statutory instruments that took effect on 29th July 2009.

The changes include:-

- ◆ a simplified process for minor variations to premises licenses and club premises certificates, the purpose being to enable such licenses and certificates to be varied by a less costly and time consuming process; and
- ◆ the removal of the mandatory condition requiring a designated premises supervisor for community premises licensed for the sale of alcohol, to be replaced by a new condition requiring that every supply of alcohol must be made or authorised by a management committee.

The changes are designed to make the current requirements less onerous for both businesses and community groups.

J M Sadler
Chairman

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Corporate Governance Panel

Report of the meeting held on 23rd June 2009

Matters for Information

1. ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER

In receiving the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter for 2007/08 from the Audit Commission, the Panel has been informed that the Council's rate of improvement in priority areas compares well with that of other District Councils. Attention was also drawn to the fact that the Council had consistently exceeded the Audit Commission's criteria for "performing well". A copy of the letter has been distributed separately to all Members.

2. HOUSING BENEFIT COMPLAINT: AWARD OF COMPENSATION

(The following item was considered as exempt information under paragraphs 4 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.)

The Panel has received and noted details of a complaint made against the Council by a member of the public with regard to a delay in supplying a replacement cheque to a benefit claimant. Following investigation, the complaint was upheld and a compensatory payment of £50 has been made in accordance with the scheme of delegation.

3. AUDIT STRATEGY DOCUMENT

The Panel has received details of the approach to be undertaken by the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton UK LLP, for the audit of the Council's accounts for 2008/09. These will include the former Leisure Centre Management Committees for the last time, following the decision to wind up the individual joint committees.

4. FINAL ACCOUNTS 2008/09

The Panel has approved the draft Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2009.

The Panel expressed some concern at the reported deficit in the pension fund but was informed that whilst the fund assets are currently valued at the market value for investments, a full valuation every three years takes account of a wide variety of factors including liability and potential changes in investment markets. This is used to evaluate changes in the employer's contribution rate. Concern was

also expressed at the risks associated with the Council's approach to long term investments but the Panel was given an assurance that appropriate procedures are in place through the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

5. INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE: INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

The Panel has approved the Internal Audit and Assurance Plan for the twelve months period commencing 1st August 2009.

6. ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION FRAMEWORK

The outcome of a review of the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Framework has been received by the Panel and Members have endorsed the content of a revised Action Plan. The review concluded that the Council has good internal control measures in place which helps to account for the very low level of fraud against the authority.

7. COMPLAINTS

The Panel has received an analysis of the Council's internal complaints and a summary of complaints which have been determined by the Local Government Ombudsman in 2008/09.

Complaints have fallen marginally compared to the previous year with internal complaints totalling 17 in 2008/09 and Ombudsman enquiries also at 17. Of the latter, 7 were judged to be premature and referred to the District Council for preliminary investigation. None of the complaints resulted in maladministration or local settlements.

C J Stephens
Chairman