

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in the **CIVIC SUITE 0.1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 18 JULY 2013** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

APOLOGIES


**Contact
(01480)**

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 20th June 2013.

**Mrs H J Taylor
388008**

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary, non-disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests in relation to any Agenda item. See Notes below.

3. 2012/13 OUTTURN AND 2013/14 BUDGET CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING (Pages 7 - 14)

To receive a report by the Assistant Director, Finance and Resources.

**S Couper
388103**

4. 2012/13 OUTTURN AND 2013/14 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING (Pages 15 - 24)

To consider a report by the Assistant Director, Finance and Resources. (Annex A – to follow)

**S Couper
388103**

5. STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION AND DRAFT REVISED SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT - LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY TO WIND TURBINE DEVELOPMENT (Pages 25 - 174)

To consider a report by the Planning Policy Manager seeking approval for the Council's Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development Supplementary Planning Document

**P Bland
388430**

6. HUNTINGDONSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH PLAN 2013 - 2023 (Pages 175 - 212)

To consider a report by the Economic Development Manager.

**Mrs S Bedlow
387096**

7. CCTV OPERATIONS - SHARED SERVICE PROPOSAL (Pages 213 - 226)

To receive a report from the Head of Operations on the CCTV

E Kendall

service.

388635

8. SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP (Pages 227 - 230)

To receive the report of the Safety Advisory Group held on

Dated this 10 day of July 2013



Head of Paid Service

Notes

A. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

(1) *Members are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and unless you have obtained dispensation, cannot discuss or vote on the matter at the meeting and must also leave the room whilst the matter is being debated or voted on.*

(2) *A Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest if it*

(a) relates to you, or

(b) is an interest of -

(i) your spouse or civil partner; or

(ii) a person with whom you are living as husband and wife; or

(iii) a person with whom you are living as if you were civil partners

and you are aware that the other person has the interest.

(3) *Disclosable pecuniary interests includes -*

(a) any employment or profession carried out for profit or gain;

(b) any financial benefit received by the Member in respect of expenses incurred carrying out his or her duties as a Member (except from the Council);

(c) any current contracts with the Council;

(d) any beneficial interest in land/property within the Council's area;

(e) any licence for a month or longer to occupy land in the Council's area;

(f) any tenancy where the Council is landlord and the Member (or person in (2)(b) above) has a beneficial interest; or

(g) a beneficial interest (above the specified level) in the shares of any body which has a place of business or land in the Council's area.

B. Other Interests

(4) *If a Member has a non-disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest then you are required to declare that interest, but may remain to discuss and vote.*

(5) A Member has a non-disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest where -

- (a) a decision in relation to the business being considered might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing of you or a member of your family or a person with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the council tax payers, rate payers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the authority's administrative area, or
- (b) it relates to or is likely to affect any of the descriptions referred to above, but in respect of a member of your family (other than specified in (2)(b) above) or a person with whom you have a close association

and that interest is not a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Please contact Mrs H Taylor, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Tel No. 01480 388008/e-mail Helen.Taylor@huntingdonshire.gov.uk /e-mail: 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 Cabinet.

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

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

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

Emergency Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 20 June 2013.

PRESENT: Councillor N J Guyatt - Vice-Chairman in the Chair.

Councillors B S Chapman, J A Gray,
R B Howe, T D Sanderson and D M Tysoe.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor J D Ablewhite.

10. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 16th May 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

12. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

With the aid of a report by the Accountancy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the Council's performance of its treasury management activities for the year ending 31st March 2013.

In accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management Code of Practice, Executive Councillors received the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) on the matter.

Having acknowledged that the Council had performed well with regard to the returns it had achieved on its investment in the year, the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

that Council receives the Treasury Management Annual Report 2012/13.

13. MEETING OUR OBJECTIVELY ASSESSED NEED FOR HOUSING MEMORANDUM OF CO-OPERATION - SUPPORTING THE SPATIAL APPROACH 2011-2031

The Cabinet considered a report by the Assistant Director, Environment, Growth and Planning (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a proposed Memorandum of Co-operation setting out the objectively assessed need for additional

housing to 2031. The report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

Members were reminded that Local Planning Authorities have a requirement under the National Planning Policy Framework to have a clear understanding of housing needs in their area. The guidance states that planning authorities should prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities within their strategic housing areas.

Attention was drawn to the methodology employed to determine housing allocations across each local area including housing mix and density. Members were advised that 17,000 homes would be required in Huntingdonshire by 2031 and 21,000 homes by 2036.

In the discussion that ensued, Executive Councillors stressed the need to be mindful of the plans of neighbouring authorities outside the strategic housing area which could have a considerable impact on the district.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the effective partnership working that has taken place between all the planning authorities within the strategic housing areas be noted; and
- (b) that the Memorandum of Co-operation appended to the report now submitted be endorsed.

14. HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY SHARED SERVICE REVIEW AND DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT BUDGET

Further to Minute No.11/20 and by way of a report by the Housing Strategy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the outcome of a review of the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Service with Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils following its first year of operation.

Members were reminded that a major part of the service was the administration of Disabled Facilities Grants, usually following a referral from an Occupational Therapist. Whilst there had been some problems experienced during the first 6 months of operation, the service currently was operating as intended. It was reported that waiting times for Occupational Therapists had reduced from 8 months in March 2012 to 4 months in March 2013. Attempts would now be made to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service further through the introduction of competitive tendering for equipment and the procurement of adaptation works from local businesses.

In terms of the Council's commitment to supporting the delivery of DFGs and the difficulties faced by the authority in forecasting future levels of demand, Members were advised that the 2013/14 budget had been increased and would be able to manage the current

demands placed upon it.

In discussing the contents of the report, Members' attention was drawn to the conclusions reached by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). In that respect and given the pressure on Council's budgets, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted and the additional modelling of current and future demand be undertaken over the summer to feed into the Council's MTP process in September 2013; and
- (b) that Officers be requested to report further to Members after two years of Cambs Housing Improvement Agency operation.

15. HUNTINGDONSHIRE REGULATION 123 AND INFRASTRUCTURE BUSINESS PLAN 2013/14 LIST

Further to Minute No. 12/105, the Cabinet considered a report by the Assistant Director Environment, Growth & Planning (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the consultation responses on the draft Huntingdonshire Community Infrastructure Levy Regulation 123 List. (A copy of the List was tabled at the meeting and is also appended in the Minute Book).

The List, which sets out the infrastructure that will be funded in whole or in part by the levy to ensure that there is no duplication with Section 106 contributions, had been considered also by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

Reference was made to the Infrastructure Business Plan for 2013/14 which contains a broad range of requirements across the District that could be eligible for CIL funding in the period to 2026. In that respect, Members referred to the concerns of Town and Parish Councils that CIL receipts will not be tied to the development area to which they relate and stressed the need to work with them to identify their priorities as part of the next stage of the Business Plan process.

RESOLVED

that the draft Huntingdonshire Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulation 123 List be approved.

16. COMMUNITY RIGHT TO CHALLENGE

Further to Minute No 12/54, consideration was given to a report by the Procurement Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining a timetable for the acceptance of expressions of interests under the new Community Right to Challenge Initiative.

In noting the information contained in the report, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the timetable for the acceptance of expressions of interests appended to the report now submitted be approved.

17. REPRESENTATION ON ORGANISATIONS 2013/14

Consideration was given to a report by Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the Council's representation on a variety of organisations/partnerships.

Having received an update schedule of organisations/partnerships to which the Council appoints representatives, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that nominations be made to the organisations as set out in the schedule now submitted; and
- (b) that, in the event that changes are required by the Council's representative in the course of the year, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, after consultation with the Deputy Executive Leader and Vice-Chairman of the Cabinet be authorised to nominate alternative representatives as necessary.

18. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority that holds that information).

19. LOAN TO HUNTINGDONSHIRE REGIONAL COLLEGE

(The Chairman announced that he proposed to admit the following urgent item in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 given the need for the Council to respond to the College as soon as possible).

With reference to a joint report by the Head of Legal and Democratic and Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a request from Huntingdonshire Regional College for a loan to enable them to fund the expansion of their facilities.

In discussing the risk associated with the request, Members were advised that adequate security would be available to the Council in the form of a charge against land in excess of the value of the outstanding loan.

Having recognised the community benefit the improvements will have for the area, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the principle of a loan to Huntingdonshire Regional College be approved; and
- (b) that the Assistant Director Finance and Resources be authorised, after consultation with the Executive Leader and the Executive Councillor for Resources, to finalise the details of the loan.

Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET

18 JULY 2013

**2012/13 OUTTURN and 2013/14 BUDGET
CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING**

(Report by the Assistant Director, Finance and Resources)

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This report gives the outturn position for 2012/13 and highlights the variations from the original Capital Programme approved in February 2012 adjusted for any member or officer decisions already taken in accordance with the Code of Financial Management. It then adjusts the 2013/14 Capital Programme for the resulting deferrals.

2. OUTTURN 2012/13

2.1 The following tables show the outturn compared with the original Capital Programme (February 2012) and the revised Capital Programme used to produce the current year's budget and MTP.

Capital Programme 2012/13	Gross Budget	External Contributions	Net Budget
Comparison with Original budget (February 2012)	£000	£000	£000
Original 2012/13 Budget	19,447	8,677	10,770
Adjust for actual brought forward from 2011/12	2,349	551	1,798
	21,796	9,228	12,568
Cost Variations (Annex A)	11	-270	281
Revenue to Capital Variations (Annex B)	335	0	335
Timing Changes (Annex C)	-13,855	-7,181	-6,674
Outturn	8,287	1,777	6,510

2.2 The table below shows how the expenditure was financed. Capital Reserves are now depleted and capital spending is funded from borrowing and any in-year Capital Receipts.

Funding	£000
Gross Spending	8,287
External Grants and Contributions	1,777
Net Spending	6,510
FINANCING	
Borrowing	5,942
Capital Receipts	568

2.3 Annexes A, B and C respectively show the cost variations, the revenue to capital variations and the timing changes. The paragraphs below highlight the significant variations and changes since the last report.

2.4 Hunts West Development

The scheme started on site in February 2013. This was later than originally expected as final agreements were delayed. The contribution to the scheme will now be made in 2013/14.

2.5 Huntingdon Multi-Storey Car Park

Delays have occurred due to the Development Agreement not being signed until the current year. The scheme has started and will be completed this year.

2.6 Loves Farm Community Centre

Construction of the building has been delayed as there was insufficient funding for the preferred design. Negotiations are now taking place with the County Council on a joint scheme. The expected start date is now October 2013.

2.7 Environmental Strategy Funding

Delays to two planned schemes, environmental features at Loves Farm Community Centre and rainwater harvesting at Eastfield House have resulted in a slippage of part of the budget to 2013/14.

3. MONITORING OF THE 2013/14 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

3.1 The Budget approved in February 2013 started with £8.9m and forecast schemes brought forward from 2012/13 of £0.5m and £0.5m carried forward to 2014/15. Subsequent adjustments are shown below:-

Capital Programme	2013/14 Capital Expenditure		
	Gross Budget	External Contributions	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Approved Total Budget (February 2012)	17,869	9,006	8,863
Add brought forward from 2012/13	2,900	1,693	1,207
Less Provision	-500	0	-500
Current Forecast	20,269	10,699	9,570

3.2 The revenue impact on the current MTP of the 2012/13 outturn and subsequent variations is shown below.

Revenue Impact	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Timing Changes 2011/12 to 2012/13	-252	0	0	0	0
Cost Variations	31	32	34	34	35
Revenue/Capital Transfers	37	39	40	40	41
TOTAL FORECAST VARIATION	-184	71	74	74	76

N.B. Based on indicative assumptions for asset lives and interest rates.

3.3 The above indicative revenue impacts have in the majority already been approved in the MTP.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet note the contents of this report.

Contact Officer – Steve Couper ☎ 01480 388103

ANNEX A

Cost Variations	2012/13 Capital Expenditure		
	Gross Budget	External Contributions	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Savings			
Additional Disabled Facilities Grant Received	0	143	-143
St Neots Cambridge Street Car Park	-89	0	-89
Multi-Functional Devices	-1	0	-1
Industrial Estates Improvements	-1	0	-1
Ramsey Community Information Centre	-4	0	-4
Ramsey Library Development	-17	0	-17
Noise Mapping Equipment	-12	0	-12
	-124	143	-267
Extra Cost			
Public Conveniences – South St, St Neots	0	-15	15
Castle Hill House Sale	0	-345	345
Council Tax Support Software	65	0	65
Call Centre CRM Replacement	37	0	37
Eastfield House PV Panels	7	0	7
CCTV Camera Replacements	3	0	3
Disabled Facilities Grants	18	0	18
Multi-Functional Devices	2	0	2
Air Quality Monitoring Equipment	6	0	6
e-forms	1	0	1
One Leisure St Ives Outdoor Centre	19	0	19
Yaxley Cycleway	5	0	5
Mill Common Cycleway	6	0	6
Perry Cycleway	2	0	2
Leisure Centre CIC Lines	4	0	4
	175	-360	535
Technical			
Additional Brought Forward item	-40	-53	13
	11	-270	281

New item this time
No change from previous report
Adjusted value this time

ANNEX B

Capital/Revenue Variations	2012/13 Capital Expenditure		
	Gross Budget	External Contributions	Net Budget
CAPITAL/REVENUE VARIATIONS			
Elections Equipment	34	0	34
Pedal Scheme Equipment	11	0	11
One Leisure St Ives - Redevelopment	17	0	17
One Leisure St Ives - Tractor & Mower	21	0	21
One Leisure St Ives – Reception Automation	27	0	27
River Great Ouse Banking	68	0	68
Document Centre Equipment	7	0	7
GIS Corporate	18	0	18
Business Systems General	6	0	6
Uniform Software	14	0	14
Server Virtualisation & Network	10	0	10
ICT Replacement	9	0	9
E-forms	1	0	1
Share Point Systems	1	0	1
Email Archive System	2	0	2
Income Management	10	0	10
ICT Virtualisation	22	0	22
Community Infrastructure Levy	10	0	10
Call Centre Replacement	39	0	39
St Neots Railway Station Enhancement	8	0	8
	335	0	335

New item this time
No change from previous report
Adjusted value this time

ANNEX C

Timing Changes to 2013/14 and beyond	2012/13 Capital Expenditure			2013/14 ##
	Gross Budget	External Contributions	Net Budget	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Building Efficiency Improvements	-42	0	-42	-15
Wheeled Bins	-71	0	-71	-71
Private Sector Grants	-102	0	-102	-102
Disabled Facilities Grants	-563	0	-563	-117
Social Housing Grant	-120	0	-120	-2
Decent Homes Insulation	-47	0	-47	-9
Loves Farm Community Centre	-364	412	48	3
One Leisure St Ives Outdoor Centre	0	53	53	0
One Leisure St Ives Redevelopment	-249	168	-81	166
Play Equipment	-25	0	-25	20
Play Equipment – S106	-31	0	-31	-11
VAT Exempt Capital	-25	0	-25	-25
Business Systems General	-15	0	-15	-15
Server Virtualisation and Network	-201	0	-201	-116
ICT Virtualisation – Desktop	-41	0	-41	-41
Community Infrastructure Levy	-28	0	-28	-4
Huntingdon West Development	-5,799	4,897	-902	0
Huntingdon Town Centre Parking	-4,641	250	-4,391	-418
One Leisure Ramsey Development	-560	0	-560	0
Replacement Fitness Equipment	-55	0	-55	-1
St Neots District Heating	-30	0	-30	-30
CCTV – Camera Replacements	14	0	14	14
Printing Equipment	-70	0	-70	0
Document Centre Equipment	-63	0	-63	-14
Income Management	-20	0	-20	-20
Vehicles and Plant	-138	0	-138	-288
Town Centre Developments	-290	0	-290	0
Rural Renewal	-63	0	-63	0
Heart of Oxmoor	0	1,366	1,366	0
Car Park Improvements	-60	0	-60	0
Perry Cycleway	-10	0	-10	-10
St Neots Rail Station Enhancements	-8	0	-8	-8
Sapley East	0	15	15	15
Council Tax Software	-35	0	-35	-35
Environment Strategy Funding	-53	0	-53	-53
Pedals Scheme Equipment	-31	20	-11	-11
One Leisure Ramsey Fitness Equipment	2	0	2	2
FMS System	-3	0	-3	-3
Housing Benefits Mobile Working	-5	0	-5	-5
Corporate Mobile Working	-15	0	-15	-15
ICT Replacement	-6	0	-6	-6
Call Centre Replacement	17	0	17	17
Huntingdon Town Centre Development	-9	0	-9	1
	-13,855	7,181	-6,674	-1,207

The 2013/14 column shows the additional variations that were not already included in the current approved MTP

New item this time
No change from previous report
Adjusted value this time

Annex D

Revised 2013/14 Capital Programme (to include budget carried forward from 2012/13)	Updated 2013/14 Capital Budgets		
	Gross Budget	External Contributions	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Printing Equipment	70	0	70
Multi-Functional Devices	80	0	80
Document Centre Equipment	60	0	60
Loves Farm Community Centre	403	-346	57
Provision For Bin Replacements	109	0	109
Wheeled Bins For New Properties	143	0	143
Charges For Second Green Bin	20	0	20
CCTV – Camera Replacements	27	0	27
Wireless CCTV	250	0	250
Play Equipment	25	0	25
Play Equipment – s106	11	0	11
Vehicle Fleet Replacements	1,412	0	1,412
In Cab Technology	70	0	70
Community Infrastructure Levy Preparations	28	0	28
Ramsey Rural Renewals	63	0	63
Town Centre Developments	209	0	209
Perry Cycleway	10	0	10
St Neots Railway Station Enhancements	8	0	8
Sapley East	0	-15	-15
Huntingdon West Development	7,469	-6,996	473
Extra Car Parking Huntingdon	4,641	-250	4,391
Disabled Facilities Grants	2,067	-400	1,667
Repairs Assistance	202	0	202
Decent Homes	59	0	59
Social Housing Grants	120	0	120
Godmanchester Flood Alleviation	175	0	175
Environmental Strategy Funding	108	0	108
Sustainable Homes Retrofit	0	-415	-415
Building Efficiency Improvements	92	0	92
St Neots District Heating	30	0	30
Heart Of Oxmoor	0	-1,366	-1,366
Chequers Court Public Realm	250	-250	0
Headquarters	0	-420	-420
ICT Replacements & Server Virtualisation	264	0	264
Helpdesk	75	0	75
Business Systems	240	0	240
FMS System	3	0	3
Housing Benefits Mobile Working	5	0	5
Corporate Mobile Working	15	0	15
Server Virtualisation & Network	116	0	116
Call Centre Replacement	-18	0	-18
Income Management	20	0	20
ICT Virtualisation – Desktop	41	0	41
Council Tax Software	35	0	35
One Leisure St Ives Football Improvements	0	-53	-53
One Leisure St Ives Redevelopment	1002	-168	834
One Leisure Future Maintenance	272	0	272
Replacement Fitness Equipment	331	0	331
One Leisure Ramsey Fitness Equipment	-2	0	-2
Pedal Scheme Equipment	31	-20	11
Revenue Staff Charged To Capital	50	0	50
VAT Partial Exemption	78	0	78
Provision for Carry Forward	-500	0	-500
	20,269	-10,699	9,570

This page is intentionally left blank

**2012/13 OUTTURN AND
2013/14 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING
(Report by the Assistant Director, Finance and Resources)**

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The 2012/13 accounts have now been completed and submitted for audit. This report highlights the significant savings made last year which have allowed a transfer of £1.0m into the Special Reserve whilst still retaining year-end reserves at the level assumed in the Budget/MTP approved in February.

It also considers the initial variations in the current year's budget.

1.2 Finally it reports on new home completions, including the forecast impact on the New Homes Bonus, and the amounts collected and debts written off in the first quarter of 2013/14.

2 REVENUE OUTTURN 2012/13

2.1 The table below compares the final outturn with the original 2012/13 budget.

Variance between Original budget and Outturn	Original Budget	Outturn	Variance Outturn to Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Approved budget	21,722	21,722	0
Variations		(129)	(129)
Delayed Projects (net)		237	237
Net spending	21,722	21,830	108
Funded by:			
Government support	(11,385)	(11,483)	(98)
Council tax	(7,727)	(7,727)	0
Collection fund adjustment	(63)	(98)	(35)
Reserves			
Contribution to delayed projects reserve	0	(750)	(750)
Use of delayed projects reserve	0	513	513
Special reserve	0	(1,000)	(1,000)
Earmarked & Other Reserves	0	(381)	(381)
General reserves	(2,547)	(904)	1,643
Total use of reserves	(2,547)	(2,522)	25
Total	(21,722)	(21,830)	(108)

2.2 The outturn of £21.830m was £0.108m above the original budget. However, this includes a transfer of £1.618m to earmarked reserves:

- delayed projects reserve (£0.237m, net),
- special reserve (£1.0m) to support up-front costs that will generate future savings,
- other Reserves (0.381m).

2.3 To give a true picture of savings in the year these should therefore be excluded resulting in a service saving of £0.904m.

a. The main savings variances are:

	£m
➤ Planning Services: Community Infrastructure Levy	(0.283)
➤ Housing Benefits: Change in Bad Debt Provision	(0.243)
➤ Street Cleansing: Combination of reduced use of agency staff, savings on vehicle maintenance and insurance and additional income from Luminus	(0.182)
➤ Other Housing Services: Change in Bad Debt Provision; Homelessness prevention payments lower than expected	(0.120)
➤ Neighbourhoods, Lifestyles and Community Safety Management; Staff Savings: Staff savings	(0.113)
➤ Operations Management: Efficiency savings on various administrative and transport related budgets and software	(0.110)
➤ Parks & Open Spaces: Savings on Pavilion utility costs and staff	(0.106)
➤ Housing Management: Senior officer saving and recovery of seconded officer costs	(0.099)
➤ Call Centre: Savings on IT related expenditure	(0.081)

b. The main extra cost variances are:

	£m
➤ Domestic Refuse: Fewer bulky waste collections than budgeted, round rescheduling costs and vehicle maintenance	0.149
➤ Corporate Management: Restructuring and recruitment costs	0.130
➤ Property Development & Management: Loss of rent on vacant commercial properties	0.127

2.4 The net saving is particularly welcome given the Council's financial position of needing to make significant savings over the next few years. However there was still a need to use reserves of £1.3m to

subsidise normal service spending and in total the general reserve has fallen from £12.0m to £10.4m during 2012/13.

- 2.5 A significant element of the savings emerged towards the end of the year and it is recognised that, as part of the search for savings, there needs to be further pressure on service managers to identify and confirm the position earlier in the year.
- 2.6 Annex A provides further analysis of the outturn spending against the original budget.

3.0 GENERAL FUND AND EARMARKED RESERVES

- 3.1 After the allocations to the Delayed Projects and Special Earmarked Reserves, the General Fund Balance at the year-end was £10.392m which is similar to the figure assumed in the approved MTP. The table below summarises this position:

Movement in the General Fund Balance	Original Budget	Outturn	Outturn Variation to Budget
	£000	£000	£000
General Fund Balance b/f	12,032	12,914	882
Use of revenue reserves to meet service activity	(2,547)	(1,285)	1,262
Sub Total c/f	9,485	11,629	2,144
Less allocations to:			
• Special Reserve	0	(1,000)	(1,000)
• Other Earmarked Reserves	0	(237)	(237)
General Fund Balance c/f	9,485	10,392	907
Total reserves applied	2,547	2,522	25

- 3.2 The table below shows the position on earmarked reserves:

Earmarked Reserves	B/f	Contributions		C/f
	£000	To £000	From £000	£000
Delayed Projects	749	750	(513)	986
Special Reserve	260	1,000	0	1,260
S. 106	2,739	416	(292)	2,863
Other	1,485	643	(433)	1,695
Total	5,233	2,809	(1,238)	6,804

4. REVENUE MONITORING 2013/14

- 4.1 Only limited budget monitoring takes place in April and May due to the priority to complete the final accounts, the need to wait for adjustments for debtors and creditors to be dealt with in the new

financial year and the difficulty of making assumptions on very limited evidence.

- 4.2** This first monitoring therefore concentrates on the impact of items that occurred last year plus a few significant ones that are already emerging in the current year and these are illustrated in the table below.

REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL 2013/14	Original Budget	Forecast outturn	Variation
	£000	£000	£000
Approved budget	22,764	22,764	0
Delayed spending from previous years	398	986	588
Delayed spending to 2014/15	(398)	(986)	(588)
Variations			
Technical: Bad Debt Provision reduction		(195)	(195)
Savings on running costs for Pathfinder and Eastfield Houses		(35)	(35)
Staff savings within Environmental Management		(14)	(14)
Rural Payments Agency Grant		(11)	(11)
Street Name Plates		(10)	(10)
Planning application fees: volume change		50	50
Green Bins – delay in implementation.		16	16
Hinchingsbroke Country Park Café: reduction in income due to planned visitor numbers being down		15	15
Other variations (each less than £9,000)		(30)	(30)
Total variations		(214)	(214)
Forecast net spending	22,764	22,550	(214)

	£000	£000	£000
Financed from			
Government support	(12,929)	(12,929)	0
Collection fund adjustment	(76)	(76)	0
Council tax	(7,506)	(7,506)	0
General Reserves			
Contribution to delayed projects reserve	(398)	986	588
Use of delayed projects reserve	398	(986)	(588)
General reserves	(2,253)	(2,039)	(214)
Total use of reserves	(2,253)	(2,039)	(214)
Total	(22,764)	(22,550)	(214)

5. New Homes Bonus

- 5.1** The government introduced the new homes bonus scheme (NHB) as a way of rewarding councils for residential development (or redevelopment) within their administrative boundaries. The grant received is based on actual increases in building to the previous September.

5.2 The Council has nine month's new-build information; based on:

- "actual" build, at this point this is down by 19% against the profiled target.
- "band D equivalent", at this point new build is down 5.6% against the profiled target; this would equate to a loss on 2014/15 NHB receipts of £24,000, which is less than the £50,000 included in the risk provision.

Detailed analysis is shown in Annex B.

6.1 Collection of debts

6.1 Annex C reports on sums collected and debts written off in the last quarter.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 As a consequence of savings identified during the year, £1m was able to be added to the Special Reserve whilst retaining the General Fund Balance at the level assumed in the MTP.

7.2 The reduced use of reserves will provide increased flexibility for the speed with which further savings are required or to cushion the Council from any additional risks.

7.3 Some variations to the original budget for 2013/14 have emerged giving a net decrease in the required use of reserves of £0.214m. A more reliable position will emerge as the year progresses.

7.4 Based on 9 months information the New Homes Bonus for 2015/16 may be marginally less than the forecast but within the sum included in the risk provision.

8. RECOMMENDATION

8.1 The Cabinet is requested to note:

- the outturn for 2012/13.
- the variations identified so far for the current year.
- the ongoing performance in respect of new homes bonus.
- the position on debts collected and written-off in the first quarter of this financial year.

Contact Officers:

Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services, ☎ (01480) 388103

Clive Mason, Accountancy Manager, ☎ (01480) 388157

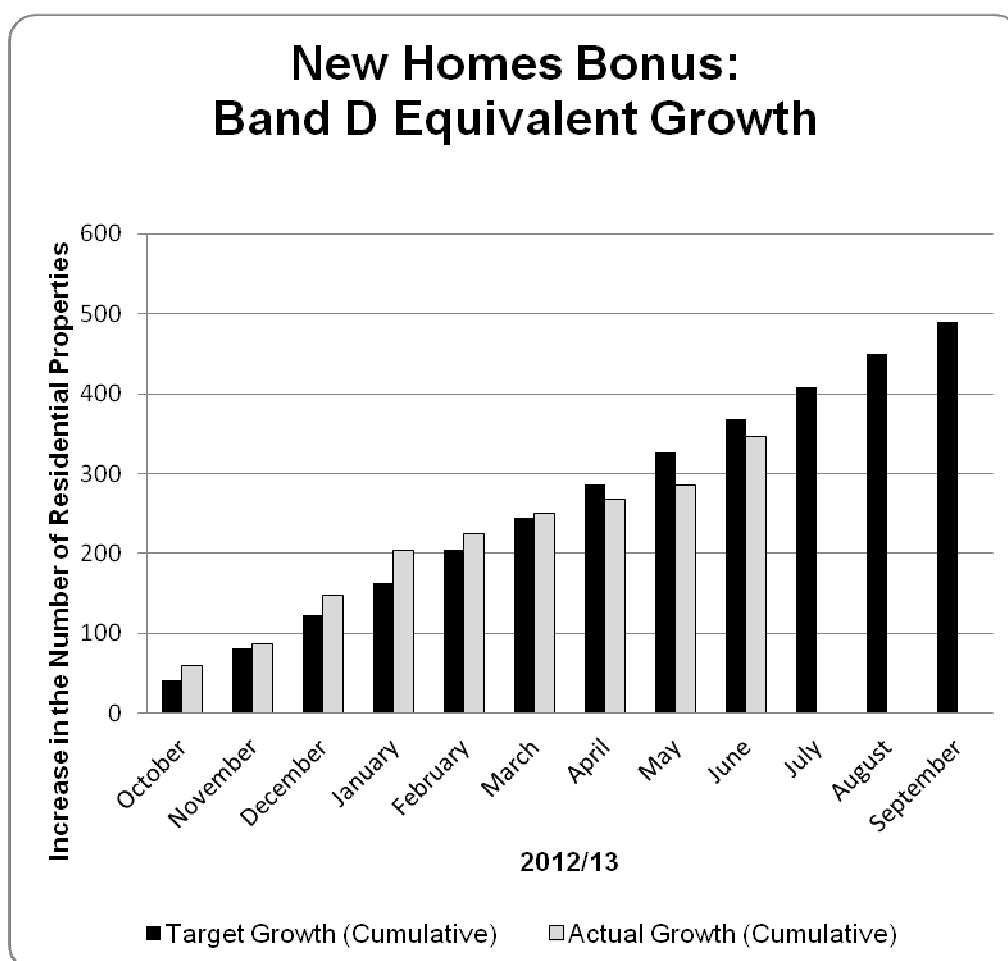
TO FOLLOW

New Homes Bonus

2013 Budget/MTP	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
New Homes Number	831	528	823	1,203	1,352
Band D Equivalent	790	490	764	1,116	1,255
Affordable Homes Number	285	75	206	301	338
Resulting increase in Bonus	£0.993m	£0.599m	£0.984m	£1.475m	£1.699m
Cumulative	£2.905m	£3.505m	£4.489m	£5.964m	£6.832m
and risk provision of	£0	£0.050m	£0.150m	£0.300m	£0.450m

The Planning assumptions are only reviewed once a year because they require a significant piece of work that is jointly carried out with the County Council – the figures above are based on the December 2012 update.

The completions can be monitored on a monthly basis, the graph below shows the cumulative increase in “Band D equivalent” new build for the nine months against the proposed draft target of 490.



ANNEX C

**AMOUNTS COLLECTED AND DEBTS WRITTEN OFF
Debt Collection**

The total amount of payments received, less customer refunds and transfers to other debts to the end of June 2013 are as follows:

	April to June 2013
	£000
Type of Debt	
Council Tax	26,339
NNDR	19,042
Sundry Debtors	1,596
Excess Charges	42

With regard to arrears for Sundry Debts and Excess Charges, the position is as follows:

Debt Type	September 2012 %	December 2012 %	February 2013 %	June 2013		
				%	£000	Ref
Housing Support	40.4	41.9	38.3	35.0	337	
Property & Land Rents	4.1	6.2	6.3	4.3	92	
Operations Division	1.0	0.7	1.1	2.1	41	*1
One Leisure	2.0	2.2	3.8	2.7	30	
Other (*)	14.6	8.8	6.3	14.6	258	*2
Discretionary Housing Benefit	56.5	64.4	59.3	70.8	76	*3
Overpaid Housing Benefit	75.1	77.2	77.5	77.3	1,102	
Total Debts (excluding Excess Charges)	19.2	19.7	19.3	20.5	1,937	
Excess Charges	22.5	22.5	24.5	25.8	43	*4

* This includes Building Control Fees, Licensing Charges, Section 106 contributions, Printing Charges and other adhoc/project amounts due to the Council.

The reasons for increases in arrears greater than 0.3% are:

- *1 Operations (incl Markets Tolls) - up from 1.1% to 2.1%**
The increase is mainly due to two CCTV contribution invoices that were raised in May 2013 that still remain unpaid.
- *2 Other - up from 6.3% to 14.6%**
The increase is due to a Section 106 invoice, payment of which is delayed whilst legal agreements between the contractor and the debtor are signed. If this amount was discounted from the recorded debt, the arrears percentage would be 8.6%
- *3 Discretionary Housing Benefit – up from 59.3% to 70.8%**
This debt can be subject to significant movement. In this case over £10,000 more debt was raised in the last quarter than would normally have been expected. It is not yet clear what proportion will be recovered.
- *4 Excess Charges - up from 22.5% to 24.5%**
New car parking orders were introduced in early April 2013 and the slight rise is in the main due to the increase in the associated penalty charges.

Debts Written Off

Whilst the amounts have been written-off in this financial year, much of the original debt would have been raised in previous financial years.

	Up to £5,000		Over £5,000		Total
	April to June 2013	Total	April to June 2013	Total	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Type of Debt					
Council Tax	112.2	112.2	0.0	0	112.2
NNDR	21.1	21.1	9.2	9.2	30.3
Sundry Debtors	29.0	29.0	0.0	0.0	29.0
Excess Charges	2.3	2.3	0.0	0.0	2.3
Irrecoverable Benefits (HB&CTB)	*	*	*	*	*
* These amounts are not yet available.					

Authority to write off debts

The Head of Customer Services is authorised to write-off debts of up to £5,000, or more after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resources, if she is satisfied that the debts are irrecoverable or cannot be recovered without incurring disproportionate costs.

This page is intentionally left blank

COMT	24 th June 2013
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY (ENVIRONMENTAL WELLBEING)	9 th July 2013
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PANEL	15 th July 2013
CABINET	18 th July 2013

LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY TO WIND TURBINE DEVELOPMENT DRAFT REVISED SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Report by Planning Service Manager (Policy)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval for the 'Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development Supplementary Planning Document' and the endorsement of supporting technical evidence.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The 'Wind Power Supplementary Planning Document' (Wind Power SPD) was adopted by the Council in 2006. It has since been used as part of the local policy basis for determining wind turbine planning applications, and also as part of the Council's policy defence at related appeals and public inquiries.
- 2.2 Changes in circumstance since then, which include new national policy guidance, experience gained by the Council in handling wind turbine planning applications, and learning from the experiences of other authorities, have made it appropriate to update the Wind Power SPD
- 2.3 A new 'Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development Supplementary Planning Document' (Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development SPD – attached as Appendix A) has been prepared to update, clarify, and replace the Wind Power SPD. This takes into account:
- The publication of new national policy guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
 - The development of the technical methodological approach to assessing the landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development that has taken place since 2005.
 - The need for guidance on the siting and design of smaller scale wind turbines.
 - A need to clarify the evidence base that underpins the documents.
- 2.4 It is important to note that the new Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development SPD does not, and was never intended, to change the main conclusions of the Wind Power SPD (2006), which remain valid. The intention was to produce an up to date, consistent, and usable document that is NPPF compliant.

- 2.5 Both the existing and new Supplementary Planning Documents are primarily concerned with guiding the location of wind turbine development with reference to the key characteristics of the District's component Landscape Character Areas. Both assume, for policy purposes, a nil wind farm scenario as a starting point.

3. THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

- 3.1 The draft Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development SPD was subject to a six week consultation between 16th November 2012 and 4th January 2013. Presentations on the draft document were given to Full Council (on 19th December 2012) and to Development Management Panel (on 17th December 2012).
- 3.2 Over 350 responses were received from a wide range of consultees, including members of the public, local pressure groups, council members, Parish Councils, other Local Planning Authorities, several Non-Governmental Organisations, planning consultants, and national and international renewable energy companies.
- 3.3 The Statement of Consultation, attached as Appendix B, focuses on presenting a consistent Council response to the themes and issues raised during the consultation, rather than individual consultee responses. The most common consultation responses focussed on the following issues:
- Cumulative impacts of wind turbines, and the lack of assessment of the current situation with regard to operational and consented turbine developments.
 - Health issues, especially those associated with noise.
 - Differing impacts associated with wind turbine development of varying sizes and scales.
 - The establishment of a minimum distance between wind turbines and residential properties.
- 3.4 Each consultation response has been considered and minor clarifications have been made to the draft Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development SPD, or in the preparation of additional supporting evidence. However, it is not intended to take forward a policy stance on establishing a minimum distance between wind turbines and residential properties.

4. CUMULATIVE IMPACT OF WIND TURBINES

- 4.1 Both the NPPF and Companion Guide to Planning Policy Statement 22 'Planning for Renewable Energy' (which remains extant) confirm that a local planning authority's renewable energy strategy needs to address cumulative landscape and visual impacts of renewable developments.
- 4.2 To address this, and the concerns raised by consultation respondents about cumulative impacts of wind turbine developments, the Council commissioned a study entitled 'Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire' as a further piece of technical evidence to assess the current situation as of 1st May 2013 (attached as Appendix C). This study has detailed all operational and consented wind turbine developments in the district, and also those awaiting determination.

- 4.3 The study considers the current cumulative effects of wind turbines in the district, and offers guidance on the capacity of local landscapes to accommodate further wind turbine development. It is intended that its analysis will be used in the consideration of potential cumulative impacts resulting from new wind energy proposals. The evidence it presents will support Huntingdonshire District Council's emerging Local Plan policies, as well as the Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development SPD.
- 4.4 It is envisaged that the new Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development SPD, along with the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire study, are likely to be fully compliant with the forthcoming new national planning guidance on wind turbine development, which will follow on from the Ministerial Statement on 'Local Planning and Onshore Wind' issued on 6th June 2013.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 That Cabinet adopts the 'Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development Supplementary Planning Document', with the making of any minor amendments prior to publication being delegated to the Assistant Director, Environment, Growth and Planning after consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Housing Strategy.
- 5.2 That Cabinet notes the Statement of Consultation and endorses the officer responses to the issues raised during the consultation on the draft Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development Supplementary Planning Document.
- 5.3 That Cabinet endorses the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire study as technical evidence that supports the Council's policy approach to renewable energy developments.

CONTACT OFFICER - enquiries about this report to Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) 01480 388400.

This page is intentionally left blank

Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

Huntingdonshire Local Plan | Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

Contents

Huntingdonshire Local Plan | Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

1	Introduction	1
	Purpose of this document	1
	Recent trends	2
	Basis for the guidance	3
2	Overview of landscape capacity	6
	How to use the guidance	6
	Key considerations	7
	Summary of potential capacity	10
	Cumulative Capacity	10
3	The Fens	12
4	Fen Margin	15
5	Central Claylands	19
6	Ouse Valley	22
7	South East Claylands	24
8	Northern Wolds	27
9	Grafham Water	29
10	Southern Wolds	31
11	Nene Valley	35
12	Urban peripheries	37
13	Siting and design issues for turbines less than 100m	40
14	Landscape Sensitivity Criteria	42
	Physical Qualities	42
	Perceptual Qualities	44
15	Policy sources	46
■	Appendices	
1	Glossary	47

1 Introduction

Purpose of this document

- 1.1** Supplementary Planning Documents (or SPDs) are produced to expand upon the policies contained in the adopted development plan for the area⁽¹⁾. The role of an SPD is to provide guidance on the application of existing Policies in the Adopted Development Plan. The SPD does not form part of the development plan nor is it intended to provide policies beyond those within the development plan. The overall purpose of this SPD is to assist the interpretation and application of those policies concerned with landscape character and the location of renewable energy schemes. In particular the guidance seeks to:
- provide information on the relative sensitivity and capacity of the district's landscapes in relation to wind turbines;
 - indicate criteria that need to be taken into account when considering specific proposals of this type; and
 - provide guidance on potential mitigation measures where appropriate.
- 1.2** This SPD is a revision of the February 2006 SPD: Wind Power. The SPD has been revised in the light of:
- the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
 - the development of the methodological approach to assessing the landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development that has taken place since 2005;
 - certain inconsistencies that have been identified between the SPD and *Wind Turbine Development in Huntingdonshire* (2005), the study undertaken by Land Use Consultants that underpinned the SPD (described in this SPD as the LUC study); and
 - the need for guidance on the siting and design of smaller turbines
- 1.3** This SPD contains important information for anyone contemplating or concerned with this type of development, and will be taken into account as a 'material consideration' when planning proposals are assessed.
- 1.4** Clearly, turbines can form a very visible feature in the landscape, although not all landscapes are sensitive to the same degree. This SPD provides strategic guidance on the characteristics that need to be considered, and is intended to set out a positive approach to guide development rather than absolute thresholds. It should help to guide proposals to the most appropriate locations and ensure that the key features and values of Huntingdonshire's landscapes are safeguarded.
- 1.5** **While this SPD provides an initial indication of the relative sensitivity and capacity of different areas it should not be interpreted as a definitive statement that a particular landscape is suitable for a particular development. Every site is unique, and any proposal involving wind turbines must be informed by a detailed site-specific analysis of landscape constraints and impacts.** Proposals will also need to address the many other factors that need to be taken into account, such as biodiversity value, the historic environment, tranquillity and the effect upon people living and working in the vicinity. Each proposal will be assessed on its own merits.
- 1.6** This SPD is split into sixteen chapters. This introduction continues with a brief overview of recent trends involving wind power development, and explains the basis for the guidance. Chapter 2 'Overview of landscape capacity' then sets out the principles that have informed the work, and provides an overview of the potential capacity of each landscape character area [LCA]. This is followed by ten chapters that provide detailed guidance for each of the nine character areas, and additionally for proposals located at the edge of urban areas. There has been no revision to the guidance for proposals located at the edge

¹ See 15 'Policy sources' for details.

1 Introduction

of urban areas. Chapter 13 and 14 are new; 13 'Siting and design issues for turbines less than 100m' contains advice on the siting of single or small groups of turbines below 100m, 14 'Landscape Sensitivity Criteria' list the criteria on which the landscape sensitivity assessments are based. Chapter 15 'Policy sources' provides links to relevant policies and Appendix 1: 'Glossary' contains a glossary of terms used in the SPD.

Recent trends

- 1.7** The effects of climate change have had an important impact on national and international policies towards energy supply. The UK Government has committed itself to achieving significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and an increase in the proportion of our energy that comes from renewable sources.
- 1.8** This commitment, coupled with Government support for renewable technologies, has led to an increasing number of applications for wind turbine developments across the country.
- 1.9** Paragraph 97 of the NPPF requires that local planning authorities should:
- have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable sources;
 - design policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts; and
 - consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure the development of such sources.
- 1.10** The footnote to the above paragraph in the NPPF recommends that planning authorities should follow the approach set out in the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (read with the relevant sections of the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy Infrastructure). Where plans identify areas as suitable for renewable and low-carbon energy development, they should make clear what criteria have determined their selection, including for what size of development the areas are considered suitable⁽²⁾.
- 1.11** The NPPF requires local planning authorities to approve applications if their impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. It also requires that once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas⁽³⁾.
- 1.12** This guidance does not seek to identify suitable areas for wind turbine development, however it does identify:
- the potential capacity of the landscape character areas [LCAs] found in the district to accommodate wind turbine development, of a range of group sizes, without significant adverse changes to the character of the landscape; and
 - criteria to be used in the assessment of individual sites so that the landscape and visual impacts of individual proposals can be assessed in a consistent and transparent manner.
- 1.13** At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development⁽⁴⁾. The primacy of the development plan remains, so development proposals that accord with the plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. However, if the plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date the presumption in favour of sustainable development means that development proposals

2 National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 97

3 National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 98

4 NPPF paragraph 14

should be approved unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, or policies in the NPPF indicate that developments should be restricted.

- 1.14 Other relevant considerations and criteria are contained in the development plan detailed in Chapter 15 'Policy sources'.

Basis for the guidance

- 1.15 This Supplementary Planning Document is a revision of the February 2006 Wind Power SPD which was based upon the research undertaken for the District Council in the LUC study. That study built upon earlier work undertaken by Landscape Design Associates to characterise Huntingdonshire's landscapes. This was adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 2007⁽⁵⁾. The Landscape and Townscape Assessment identified nine landscape character areas in Huntingdonshire, ranging from the rolling Wolds in the west to the low-lying Fens in the north-east. These landscape character areas are shown in figure 1.1.
- 1.16 The work carried out by LUC aimed to articulate those characteristics of the landscape character areas that are sensitive to different forms of turbine development, and to combine this with an understanding of any special values attached to those landscapes in order to gain an understanding of their relative capacity for wind turbine development. In recent sensitivity studies the section on landscape values is more likely to be included as perceptual characteristics whose sensitivity to wind turbine development can be assessed alongside the sensitivity of the physical characteristics. Although the approach in the LUC study is more complicated it addresses the same issues and the final capacity judgement reflects both the physical and perceptual sensitivities of the landscape.
- 1.17 The LUC study was undertaken in accordance with best practice approaches to landscape assessment current in 2005⁽⁶⁾ and was also informed by an understanding of those types of turbine development most likely to come forward in the area (taking into account prevailing wind speeds and the relative efficiency of different turbine models). The study assumes that commercial turbines of up to 120m in height (to the top of the blade) will be most efficient, but that variations in height of + or - 20m will not be discernible on the ground. Although there are now commercial turbines of up to 150m none of these have yet been proposed for Huntingdonshire. This SPD does not assess the capacity of the landscape to accommodate 150m high turbines although the analysis of the landscape characteristics would be relevant to the assessment of any proposals for turbines above 140m in height.
- 1.18 **When the LUC study was undertaken there were no operational or consented wind turbine developments in Huntingdonshire. The conclusions reached in the study refer to the capacity of the landscape without any existing wind turbines and these conclusions have not been revised. Their inclusion in this revised SPD does not imply capacity over and above those schemes that have been consented or built since the study was undertaken.**
- 1.19 The LUC study was concerned with turbines of between 100 and 140m. In recent years there has been an increase in the number of applications for single turbines below 100m. It is anticipated that these applications will continue and that in addition there may be applications for small groups of say 2 to 3 small turbines. Additional guidance on the siting of turbines below 100m in height has been provided in a new chapter (13 'Siting and design issues for turbines less than 100m').
- 1.20 A number of important points should be borne in mind concerning the scope and use of both the LUC study and this Revised Supplementary Planning Document:

5 Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (HDC, 2007)

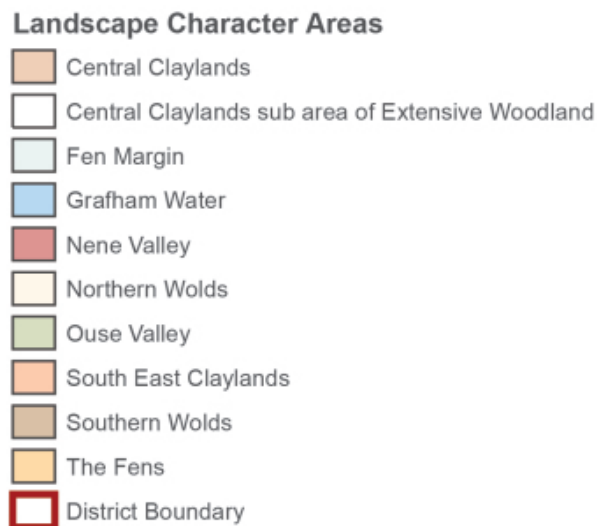
6 The principal guidance is still Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002)

1 Introduction

- the study was undertaken from the starting point that wind turbine applications will continue to come forward within the district; it does not debate the merits of wind turbines *vis-à-vis* other forms of renewable energy development or offshore turbine development;
- the LUC study only considers landscape and visual considerations and, as noted above, there are many other factors which will influence decisions;
- this SPD provides a starting-point for decision-making, but local variations in character will need to be considered in relation to individual proposals, as part of the detailed site-specific assessment.

1.21 Huntingdonshire District Council has prepared a Guidance Note for Applicants and Agents of Wind Turbine Developments. This sets out what information the Council requires in order to effectively progress Pre-Application discussions and Planning Applications. It can be viewed on the HDC Planning and Buildings [website](#).

Key to Figure 1.1



2 Overview of landscape capacity

2 Overview of landscape capacity

How to use the guidance

- 2.1** This chapter provides an overview of the guidance in the SPD, including the key landscape and visual considerations that need to be assessed and a summary of the potential capacity in the different landscape character areas.
- 2.2** More detailed guidance on the siting, form and arrangement of turbines and ancillary structures is contained in each of the chapters that follow (one for each character area). Further information on the basis for the capacity assessments can be found in the LUC Study.
- 2.3** One of the most significant changes between the original SPD and this revised SPD is the definitions of the scale of turbine development with regard to number of turbines within a group. The LUC study is one of the earlier landscape sensitivity studies undertaken in England. The assessment considered the sensitivity of the landscape to four broad types of development based on the number of commercial turbines and defined these as single (1), small (2-12) medium (13-24) and large (25 plus).
- 2.4** Subsequent wind turbine landscape sensitivity studies undertaken in southern and eastern England both by LUC and other consultants have tended to subdivide the first group and it is now widely recognised that 12 turbines do not represent a small group in terms of the landscapes of southern and eastern England. In more recent studies a small group has rarely included more than 6 turbines and sometimes as few as 3. Medium scale groups are generally up to 12 turbines with 12-25 considered either a large group or a medium/large group. 25 turbines and above are described as large or very large groups⁽⁷⁾. Even within a small group defined as 2-6 turbines it has been accepted at appeal⁽⁸⁾ that it may be justified to advise that fewer than six (e.g. 2-3 turbines) may be the maximum that can be accommodated.
- 2.5** In the light of more recent approaches to the assessment of landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development the scales of turbine development applied in the original SPD have been refined and the original assessments reviewed.
- 2.6** The new group sizes to be considered are as follows:
- Single turbine
 - Small Group: 2-5 turbines
 - Medium Group: 6-12 turbines
 - Large Group: 13-24 turbines
- 2.7** Within each of these groups there may be minor qualifications. These will be drawn out from the details of the original LUC study as assessed using professional judgement of suitably qualified landscape personnel, with the aim of making this revised SPD a more usable and coherent document.
- 2.8** The 25 plus group has been omitted from this SPD. Although this group size was initially considered the LUC study concluded that nowhere in the district was suitable for turbine groups of above 25. This conclusion is consistent with current approvals. The largest approved/ operational onshore scheme (not including those schemes with later extensions) in eastern England is a 13 turbine scheme at Wadlow Farm in Cambridgeshire⁽⁹⁾. Further support for this conclusion can be found in the 2008 study by Ove Arup for the East of England Regional Assembly⁽¹⁰⁾ which undertook a regional level landscape sensitivity

7 Appendix A of the SPD consultation draft provided a comparative study of wind turbine sensitivities assessments with regard to the numbers of turbines considered within each group class.

8 Appeal Decision APP/L2630/A/08/2084443 Land around Busseys Loke, Hempnall, Norwich, Norfolk

9 Information derived from Renewable UK's (formerly BRE) UK Wind Energy Database – UKWED

10 Placing Renewables in the East of England, Ove Arup & Partners Ltd 2008

Overview of landscape capacity 2

and capacity study. This study considered groups of 25 turbines and above but concluded that groups of this size were unlikely to be appropriate in the East of England⁽¹¹⁾. In the detailed findings of the study the maximum number of turbines considered likely to be acceptable was 16⁽¹²⁾.

- 2.9 Capacity judgements in relation to each scale of development are presented on the following basis:⁽¹³⁾
- **Low capacity** to accommodate wind turbines: development would be likely to result in a significant adverse change in landscape character and/or affect key landscape values
 - **Moderate capacity** to accommodate wind turbines, without detriment to landscape character: there are likely to be key sensitivities or values that must be respected in relation to turbine development; in particular, proposals must follow the guidance on siting, form and cumulative impacts
 - **High capacity** to accommodate wind turbines: there is an opportunity to locate turbine development without affecting key characteristics and/or values in the landscape, although the guidance on siting, form and cumulative impacts should be followed.
- 2.10 Note that in the following chapters detailed guidance is provided only for those character areas where potential capacity has been assessed as either moderate or high.

Key considerations

- 2.11 There are many issues that need to be taken into account when considering wind turbine development. This SPD deals solely with landscape and visual matters. Other considerations are set out in the policy documents listed in 15 'Policy sources', and these must also be addressed in the course of developing specific proposals. However there is a necessary overlap between the assessment of landscape and visual impacts and the assessment of the impact of wind turbines on the setting of heritage assets because in almost all cases the impacts on setting will be as a result of visual changes.
- 2.12 Included in the landscape characteristics identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (HDC 2007) are those characteristics of the landscape that are derived from the presence of heritage assets, for example the presence of church spires or towers as landmark features. The impact on the setting of heritage assets will be considered separately as part of a cultural heritage assessment, however where heritage assets play a role in the defining the local landscape character it is essential that they are also considered as part of the sensitivity of the landscape. The Guidance Note for Wind Turbine Developments includes further information on the role of photographs and photomontages with regard to effects on cultural heritage assets, landscape character and visual amenity. It can be viewed via the HDC Planning and Buildings [website](#).
- 2.13 Up-to-date advice on approaches to landscape assessment is set out in *Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland* published by The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002)⁽¹⁴⁾.
- 2.14 The LUC study identifies the landscape attributes, both physical and perceptual against which any proposal for wind turbines should be assessed. However it should be recognised that these headings are closely linked; for example information on scale and enclosure and land cover will influence the extent to which any development is visible in the landscape. The LUC study does not provide a list of criteria for assessing

11 Placing Renewables in the East of England Section 6.7.1 Pages 31-2

12 Placing Renewables in the East of England Appendix D Pages D11-12

13 In respect of landscape impacts, with reference to National Policy Statement EN-1 (5.9.15) it should be noted that significant adverse impacts do not necessarily render a proposal unacceptable in planning terms if it can be demonstrated that such significant adverse effects would be outweighed by the benefits (including need) for the project.

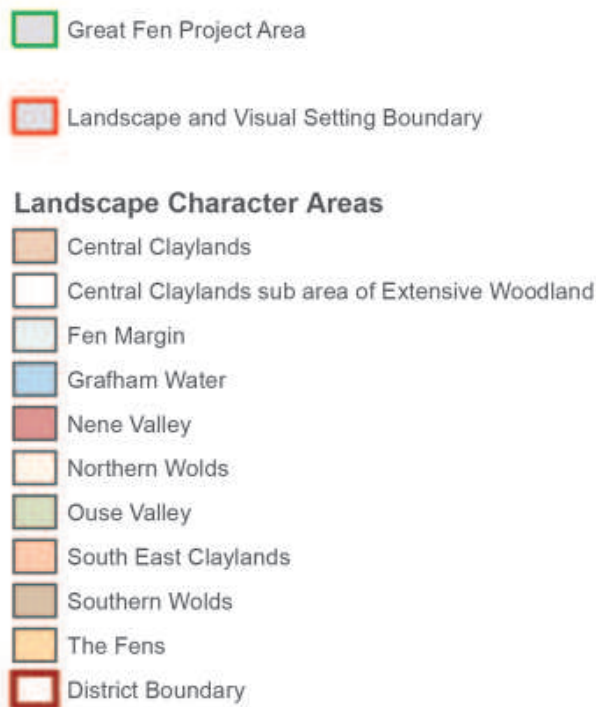
14 The accompanying Topic Paper 6 sets out further guidance on approaches to evaluating landscape sensitivity and capacity

2 Overview of landscape capacity

landscape sensitivity to wind energy development but 14 'Landscape Sensitivity Criteria' of this SPD contains a list of criteria, derived from the conclusions of the LUC study and from more recent work by LUC⁽¹⁵⁾.

- 2.15** The Great Fen Project had begun at the time of the original SPD but progress has been more rapid than originally envisaged. A landscape and visual setting for the Great Fen has been identified in the report produced by Landscape Design Associates and policy protection in this area⁽¹⁶⁾ will limit the capacity for wind turbine development. This is illustrated in figure 2.1 which shows the different landscape character areas, the Great Fen boundary, and the boundary of its Landscape and Visual Setting.

Key to Figure 2.1



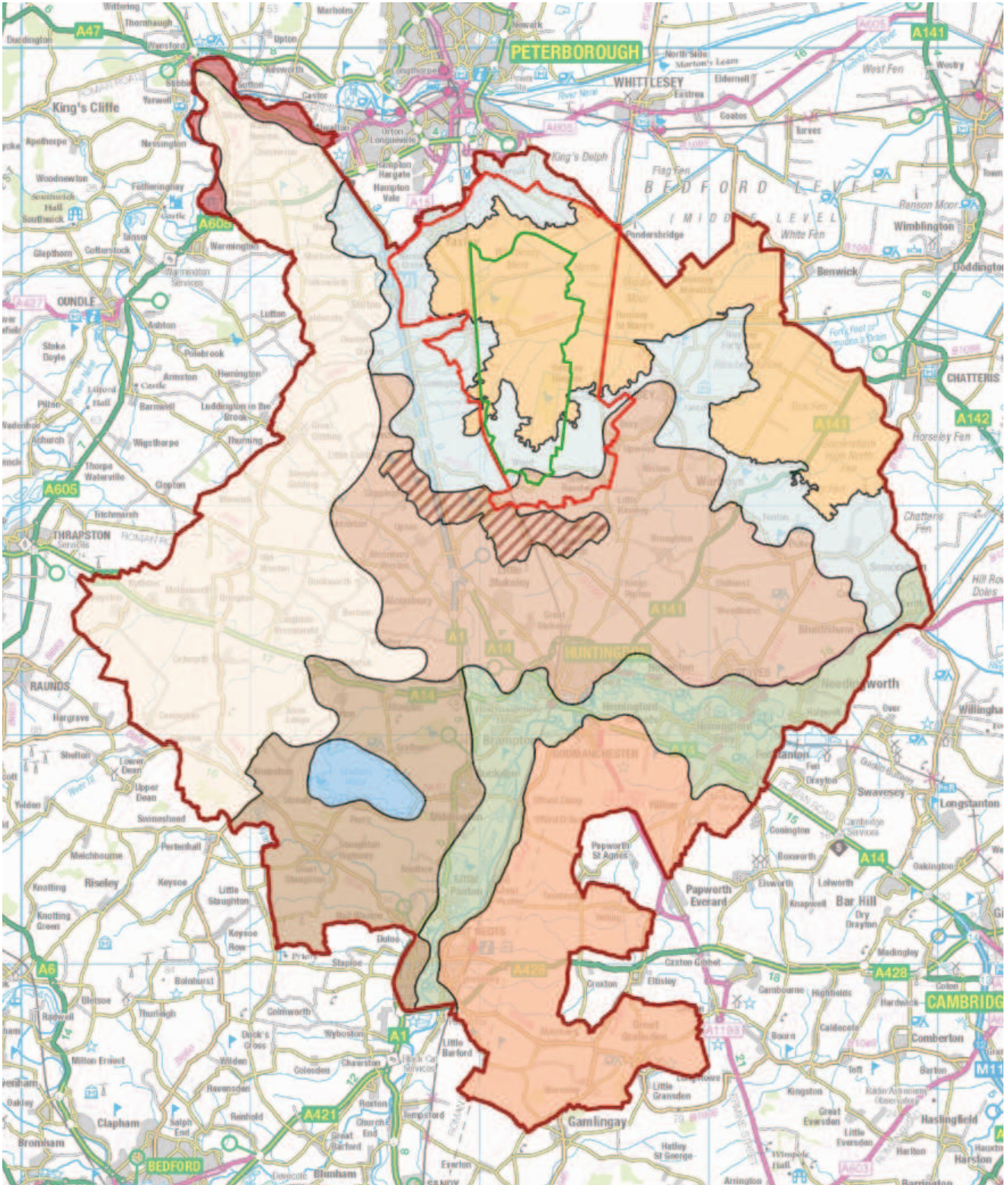
15 An Assessment of the Landscape Sensitivity to Onshore Wind Energy & Field-Scale Photovoltaic Development in Torrington District November 2011.

16 Defining the Landscape and Visual Setting to the Great Fen Project Area, LDA July 2008 and HDC Huntingdonshire's Draft Local Plan: Stage 3, policy LP 7 and paragraph 4.75

Overview of landscape capacity 2

Huntingdonshire Local Plan | Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

Figure 2.1 Landscape Character Areas and the Great Fen Landscape and Visual Setting



2 Overview of landscape capacity

Summary of potential capacity

- 2.16** Table 1 provides a summary of the overall capacity for wind turbine development in Huntingdonshire. It is accompanied by a map showing the various landscape character areas. The map at Figure 2.1 shows the different Landscape Character Areas, The Great Fen boundary, and the boundary of its Landscape and Visual setting.
- 2.17** The information in this table provides a ‘quick guide’ but should not be used in isolation; it must be read in conjunction with the further guidance and information on cumulative development provided in chapters 3 to 13, together with the background material in the LUC Study.

Table 1 Summary of landscape capacity for wind turbine development

Landscape character area	Single turbine (1 turbine)	Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)	Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines)	Large -scale group (13-24 turbines)
1: The Fens	High	High	High	Moderate (lower end of scale e.g. 13-15 turbines)
2: Fen Margin	High	High	High	Moderate (lower end of scale e.g. 13-15 turbines)
3: Central Claylands	High	High	High	Moderate
4: Ouse Valley	High	Moderate (lower end of scale 2-3 turbines)	Low	Low
5: South East Claylands	High	High	High	Moderate
6: Northern Wolds	High	Moderate	Low	Low
7: Grafham Water	High	Moderate (2 turbines only)	Low	Low
8: Southern Wolds	High	High	Moderate	Low
9: Nene Valley	Moderate	Low	Low	Low

Cumulative Capacity

- 2.18** Capacity judgements in relation to the potential for cumulative development with regard to each scale of development are presented on the following basis:
- **High capacity:** There is scope to accommodate a number of turbine developments of this scale without significant adverse changes in landscape character or key landscape values. However care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other and the specific guidance provided in Sections 3 -13 should be followed.
 - **Moderate capacity:** There is some scope to accommodate a number of turbine developments of this scale without significant adverse changes in landscape character or key landscape values. However there are likely to be key sensitivities or values that will limit the number of potential schemes,

care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other and the specific guidance provided in Sections 3 -13 should be followed.

- **Low capacity:** More than one development of this scale is likely to result in significant adverse change in landscape character and/ or affect key landscape values.
- **None:** this character area would not be able to accommodate more than one scheme of this scale.

2.19 There is no assessment of cumulative capacity if the landscape character area has been assessed as unable to accommodate even a single development of the scale under consideration.

2.20 The assessments for cumulative capacity are given in relation to each scale of development. However there will also be cumulative issues where proposals are for different scales of development. For example, a landscape may have high capacity for a number of single turbines but this capacity will be reduced where there is an existing consent for one or more turbine groups. Similarly the presence of several single turbines may reduce the capacity of a landscape for a group of turbines.

2.21 Consideration will need to be given in all circumstances to the visual relationship between one turbine or turbine group and another when these can be viewed simultaneously. Visual relationships with other turbines or turbine groups will also be an important consideration when considering the location of turbines under 100m in height. The potential for cumulative impacts as a result of combinations of small, medium and large scale wind turbine developments, both in terms of height and turbine numbers, has added additional complexity to the cumulative assessments required, including assessments for turbines of less than 100m in height.

2.22 A key consideration will be the avoidance of cluttered or visually confusing images particularly from sensitive locations such as settlements; the location and style of turbines will be important in avoiding such impacts. Consideration will also need to be given to the visual relationship with turbine developments in adjacent landscape character areas and adjacent districts.

2.23 Cumulative assessments also need to consider the effect on the landscape area of successive and/or sequential views of single turbines or groups of turbines. It is important to avoid creating areas where wind turbines dominate the landscape character, or areas where turbines become the all pervasive landscape element.

3 The Fens

3 The Fens



Single Turbine

3.1 The Fens have a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The expansive scale of the landscape, flat topography and simple land cover patterns would allow a single turbine to fit well and it could form a landmark feature or focal point. However, care will need to be taken in siting turbines to avoid the sites and setting of valued landscape components. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:

- a. Provide a positive contribution providing a focal point within long-range open views.
- b. Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.
- c. Consider relationships with the small-scale dispersed settlement pattern. The traditional linear form and single plot depth suggests there is no scope to attach a turbine to a settlement.
- d. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape for example the occasional large farm building, utility buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a single turbine to relate to infrastructure associated with the main roads.
- e. Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the geometric field patterns.
- f. Avoid introducing solid built structures into isolated areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.

- g. Avoid the site and setting of valued landscape components notably the remaining areas of peat, and woodland and wetland SSSI, plus areas identified for habitat restoration (Great Fen).*
- h. Consider the visual relationship with existing and proposed turbine developments in the adjacent areas of Fen landscape beyond the district boundary.*
- i. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment.*

Cumulative development

- 3.2** There is scope for the Fens to accommodate a number of single turbines, but care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. Single turbines within this landscape will act as a point of focus or landmark. Views of more than one turbine could dilute this perceived landmark function and create a potentially confusing viewing experience. Particular consideration should be given to the visual relationship with turbine developments in the adjacent districts.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

- 3.3** The Fens have a **high** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the need to conserve isolated tranquil areas and important habitats including the Great Fen and its landscape and visual setting. Particular care will need to be taken in siting turbines to avoid creating visual confusion and clutter where existing vertical elements are already dominant. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. The location of a small-scale group should take into account the following guidance:

- a. Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter. Introduction of new pylon lines will not generally be appropriate in the Fens.*
- b. Avoid the site and setting of valued habitat components (pasture, woodland and wetland) including areas identified as having potential for habitat creation through the Great Fen Project.*
- c. Consider relationships with the dispersed settlement pattern. Small-scale turbine developments should be sited away from settlements.*
- d. Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the rigid geometric field patterns which could provide a template for the arrangement with a consistent and repetitive spacing of turbines. Note that some areas within the Fens have a more sinuous, organic pattern, where a geometric arrangement would be inappropriate.*
- e. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings, utility buildings or industrial areas. Additional buildings or infrastructure associated with turbine development should not be introduced into areas characterised as being remote with an absence of built features.*
- f. Conserve and maintain areas characterised as having a strong sense of remoteness and isolation.*
- g. Consider the visual relationship with existing and proposed turbine developments in the adjacent areas of Fen landscape beyond the district boundary.*
- h. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment.*

Cumulative development

- 3.4** The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one small-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments to respect the consistent character of the landscape. In this landscape long-range views are often characteristic and

3 The Fens

views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience. Particular consideration should be given to the visual relationship with turbine developments in the adjacent landscape character area and adjacent districts.

Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines)

3.5 The Fens have a **high** capacity to accommodate a medium-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a medium-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the need to conserve isolated tranquil areas and important habitats including the Great Fen and its landscape and visual setting. Particular care will need to be taken in siting turbines and to avoid creating visual confusion and clutter where existing vertical elements are already dominant. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. The location of a medium-scale group: should follow the guidelines set out for a small-scale group. In addition the location of a medium-scale group should take into account the following guidance:

- a. *Consider a clustered arrangement to avoid disrupting long views to the horizon.*
- b. *Respect existing landmark features and the views towards them.*

Cumulative development

3.6 The landform and land cover pattern may provide scope for more than one medium-scale turbine group within this landscape. However the Great Fen and the surrounding policy area constitute roughly 44% of this landscape character area and the consequent limitations on development here will limit the scope for further medium scale schemes. The location of developments should follow the guidance set out for cumulative small scale groups.

Large-scale group (13-24 turbines)

3.7 The Fens have a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a large-scale group although a group at the lower end of this scale of development will be more appropriate (e.g. 13-15 turbines). Although such a development could be accommodated within the context of the flat landform and expansive open landscape, it could impinge on the sense of remoteness and isolation and be out of scale in the context of the woodland and settlements. Locations for a large-scale group of turbines are constrained and should follow the guidelines set out above for small and medium scale groups.

Cumulative development

3.8 There is unlikely to be capacity for more than one large scale group within this character area. Hence capacity for cumulative development is low.

4 Fen Margin



Single Turbine

4.1 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The scale of the landscape, gentle topography and land cover patterns would allow a single turbine to fit well and it could also correspond to settlement patterns forming a landmark feature or focal point in relation to the edge of larger extended villages. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:

- a. Consider opportunities for a single turbine to provide a landmark 'gateway' feature or focal point in relation to the edge of larger villages such as Yaxley, Somersham, Ramsey and Sawtry. The aim should be to enhance the settlement edge and relationship with the surrounding landscape, and avoiding creation of visual clutter.
- b. Avoid impinging on the setting of the smaller historic villages such as Conington.
- c. Relate to the land cover pattern in particular the woodland edges and hedgerow field boundaries.
- d. Avoid introducing turbines and additional structures into rural areas, which are generally characterised by a sense of tranquillity and isolation with limited access such as the area east of Sawtry.
- e. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a single turbine development to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1).
- f. Respect the sites and settings of valued landscape components including the woodlands and historic features.

4 Fen Margin

- g. Consider strategic opportunities for the creation of Fen Edge woodland.*
- h. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

- 4.2** There is scope for the Fen Margins to accommodate a number of single turbines, however care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. Single turbines within this landscape will act as a point of focus or landmark within long open views and set against dramatic skies. Views with more than one turbine development could dilute the perceived landmark function and could create a confused viewing experience. The skyline ridge forming the backdrop to the Fens is also sensitive to more than one single turbine development.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

- 4.3** The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However, there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the more intimately scaled landscape around Colne and ensuring the development is sited to avoid impacts on valued landscape components, in particular the relationship with the Fens, settlements, and areas identified as having a tranquil and isolated character including the Great Fen and its landscape and visual setting. Proposals for a small-scale group of turbines should take into account the following guidance:

- a. Avoid the more intimately-scaled wooded/orchard landscape around Colne.*
- b. Consider opportunities for a small-scale group of turbines to provide a landmark 'gateway' feature or focal point in relation to the edge of larger villages such as Yaxley, Somersham, Ramsey and Sawtry. The aim should be to enhance the settlement edge and relationship with the surrounding landscape, and avoiding creation of visual clutter.*
- c. Avoid impinging on the setting of the smaller historic villages such as Conington.*
- d. Relate to the land cover pattern in particular the woodland edges and hedgerow field boundaries with consistent, repetitive spacing between turbines.*
- e. Avoid introducing turbines and additional structures into those parts of the area which are generally characterised by a sense of tranquillity and isolation with an absence of built structures and limited access, such as the area east of Sawtry. Note that pylons are not currently a visible feature within the area and could be a very dominant influence cutting across the sloping topography.*
- f. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a small-scale turbine group to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1).*
- g. Respect the sites and settings of valued landscape components including the woodlands and historic features.*
- h. Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.*
- i. Consider the important visual relationship with the adjacent Fens landscape. The skyline view from the Fens is particularly sensitive*
- j. Consider strategic opportunities for the creation of Fen Edge woodland.*
- k. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

- 4.4** The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one small-scale turbine group within this landscape. A small-scale turbine development will act as a point of focus or landmark within long open views and set against dramatic skies. Views with more than one turbine development could dilute

the perceived landmark function and could create a confused viewing experience. The skyline ridge forming the backdrop to the Fens is also sensitive to more than one turbine development. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments.

Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines)

4.5 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a medium-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a medium-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However, there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the more intimately scaled landscape around Colne and ensuring the development is sited to avoid impacts on valued landscape components, in particular the important visual relationship with the Fens, settlements, and areas identified as having a tranquil and isolated character including the Great Fen and its landscape and visual setting. Proposals for a medium-scale group of turbines should take into account the following guidance:

- a. *Avoid the more intimately-scaled wooded/orchard landscape around Colne.*
- b. *Avoid impinging on the setting of the smaller historic villages such as Conington.*
- c. *Relate to the land cover pattern in particular the woodland edges and hedgerow field boundaries with consistent, repetitive spacing between turbines.*
- d. *Avoid introducing turbines and additional structures into those parts of the area which are generally characterised by a sense of tranquillity and isolation with an absence of built structures and limited access, such as the area east of Sawtry. Note that pylons are not currently a visible feature within the area and could be a very dominant influence cutting across the sloping topography.*
- e. *Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a small-scale turbine group to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1).*
- f. *Respect the sites and settings of valued landscape components including the woodlands and historic features.*
- g. *Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.*
- h. *Avoid siting a development on the Fens ridgeline which forms the backdrop skyline with the Fens*
- i. *Consider strategic opportunities for the creation of Fen Edge woodland.*
- j. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

4.6 The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one medium-scale turbine group within this landscape. A medium-scale turbine development will act as a point of focus or landmark within long open views and set against dramatic skies. Views with more than one turbine development could dilute the perceived landmark function and could create a confused viewing experience. However the Great Fen and the surrounding policy area constitute roughly 28% of this landscape character area and the consequent limitations on development here will limit the scope for further medium scale schemes. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments.

Large-scale group (13-24 turbines)

4.7 This landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a large-scale group. A large-scale group could relate to the landscape scale and gently sloping topography although it would not fit well in relation to the skyline and views from the Fens where it is considered that such a group could appear over dominant in the landscape. It is suggested that the lower end of a large-scale group (e.g.13-15 turbines) would be more appropriate than a larger number of turbines. Locations for a large-scale group are constrained and the following guidance should be taken into account:

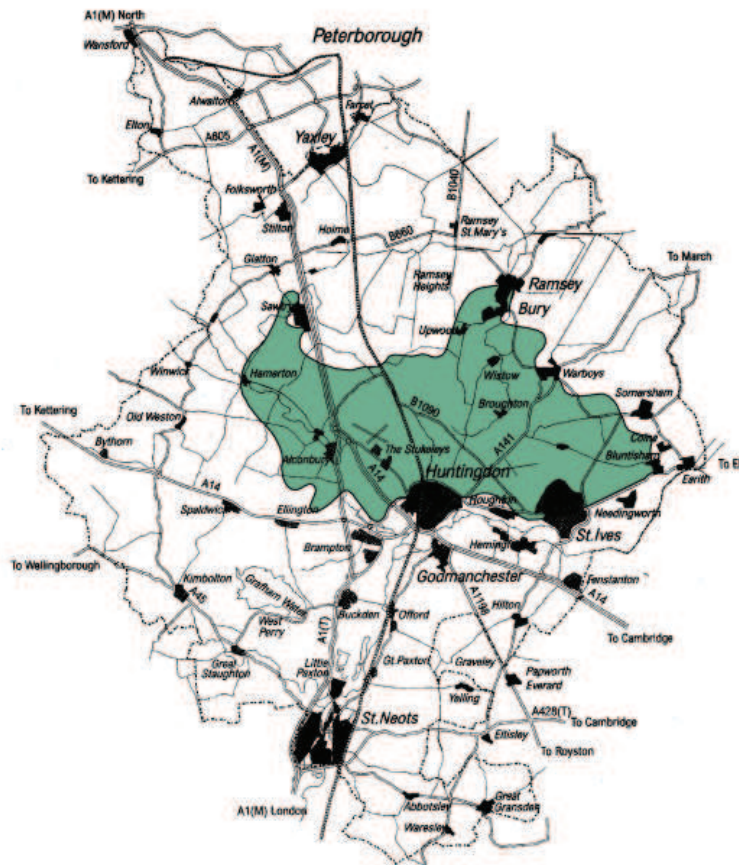
4 Fen Margin

- a. *Where capacity is identified a turbine group at the lower end of the scale (i.e. 13-15 turbines) will be more appropriate.*
- b. *Avoid the more intimately scaled wooded/orchard landscape around Colne.*
- c. *Relate to the land cover pattern in particular the woodland edges and hedgerow field boundaries with consistent, repetitive spacing between turbines.*
- d. *Avoid introducing turbines and additional structures into those parts of the area which are generally characterised by a sense of tranquillity and isolation with an absence of built structures and limited access. Note that pylons are not a feature of this area and would be a very visible intrusion in views from the Fens.*
- e. *Ensure that the development does not conflict with settlements - a development of this size will be out of scale and over dominating in relation to the villages.*
- f. *Relate to existing development, for example the occasional large farm buildings or industrial areas.*
- g. *Respect the sites and settings of valued landscape components including the woodlands and historic features.*
- h. *Consider the visual relationship of a large-scale group of turbines with the adjacent Fens landscape.*
- i. *Avoid siting a development on the Fens ridgeline which forms the backdrop skyline with the Fens.*
- j. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

- 4.8** Given the size of the area and importance of protecting the setting of settlements, the sensitive relationship with the Fens and conserving isolated tranquil areas (including the Great Fen and its landscape and visual setting) it is unlikely that more than one large-scale development could be accommodated. Hence capacity for cumulative development is low.

5 Central Claylands



Single Turbine

5.1 The landscape of the Central Claylands has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The large-scale, open landform and simple arable dominated land cover pattern would allow a single turbine to fit well, forming a landmark feature or focal point. There is also scope for a single turbine to relate to existing built structures and development. In considering the location of a single turbine the following guidance should be taken into account:

- a. Consider the greater sensitivities of the more enclosed wooded landscape to the north west and the intimate orchard-dominated landscape to the east around Bluntisham.
- b. Avoid rural areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that development does not result in visual confusion and clutter and respect existing landmarks such as views to church spires.
- c. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example utility buildings or industrial areas or buildings associated with disused airfields. There may also be an opportunity for a single turbine to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1, A14, A141).
- d. Consider opportunities for siting in relation to extended urban areas on the edge of the larger settlement such as those at St Ives and Huntingdon. In this way a single turbine could take on a functional role as well as providing a new landmark or gateway on the urban edge (see guidance on urban peripheries in Chapter 12).
- e. Relate to the landform with turbines sited on the extensive open plateau areas (where this does not conflict with other uses e.g. active airfield use).

5 Central Claylands

- f. *Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, particularly areas currently open, but where there are identified opportunities for woodland creation seek to link existing ancient woodland sites in the north west part of the character area.*
- g. *Respect the scale and settings of the intact historic villages and historic landscape features such as the medieval moats.*
- h. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

5.2 There is scope for the Central Claylands to accommodate a number of single turbines, but care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. Single turbines within this landscape will act as a point of focus or landmark. Views of more than one turbine development could dilute the perceived landmark function of a turbine and create a potentially confusing viewing experience. An exception is the location of turbines along communications corridors where it may be acceptable to have a regular spacing of single turbines relating to existing large-scale infrastructure.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

5.3 The Central Claylands landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. The guidance relating to the siting and design of a small-scale group of turbines is essentially the same as that for a single turbine, and the following matters should be taken into account:

- a. *Consider the greater sensitivities of the more enclosed wooded landscape to the north west and the intimate orchard dominated landscape to the east around Bluntisham.*
- b. *Avoid rural areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that development does not result in visual confusion and clutter and respect existing landmarks such as views to church spires.*
- c. *Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example utility buildings or industrial areas or buildings associated with disused airfields. There may also be an opportunity to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1, A14, A141).*
- d. *Consider opportunities for siting in relation extended urban areas on the edge of the larger settlements such as those at St Ives and Huntingdon. In this way a small-scale group could take on a functional role as well as providing a new landmark or gateway on the urban edge (see guidance on urban peripheries in Chapter 12).*
- e. *Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the large-scale field pattern, with turbines sited in a simple linear or grid arrangement with consistent and repetitive spacing between individual turbines.*
- f. *Relate to the landform with turbines sited on the extensive open plateau areas (where this does not conflict with other uses e.g. active airfield use).*
- g. *Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, particularly areas currently open, but where there are identified opportunities for woodland creation seek to link existing ancient woodland sites in the north west part of the character area.*
- h. *Respect the scale and settings of the intact historic villages and historic landscape features such as the Medieval moats.*
- i. *Avoid introducing additional built structures into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.*

- j. Consider impacts on views in relation to the lower lying Fens and Fen Margins.*
- k. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

- 5.4** The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one small-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this landscape some long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience. Decisions will need to be made on a case-by-case basis.

Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines)

- 5.5** The Central Claylands landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a medium-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a medium-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. Locations for a medium-scale group of turbines should follow the guidelines set out above for a small-scale group although a medium scale group is unlikely to be suitable as a new landmark or gateway on the urban edge.

Cumulative development

- 5.6** The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one medium-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this landscape some long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience. Decisions will need to be made on a case-by-case basis.

Large-scale group (13-24 turbines)

- 5.7** The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a large-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature, a large-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern if efficiently arranged and could relate particularly well to the more open, level plateau areas. The guidance set out for small and medium scale groups applies, although in the case of urban extensions it is considered that more than 12 turbines will usually be too dominant in relation to the size of the market towns.

Cumulative development

- 5.8** The Central Claylands do have capacity to accommodate more than one large scale turbine group, although locations will be relatively constrained particularly in relation to settlements and impacts on long views, where the open exposed character could result in intervisibility between developments.

6 Ouse Valley

6 Ouse Valley



Single Turbine

6.1 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. A single turbine would fit well in relation to the more open areas of the flat valley floor and in conjunction with existing built features, for example amenity/ recreational uses or communication corridors. Locations for a single turbine are relatively constrained, particularly with regard to potential effects on nature conservation values. The following guidance should be taken into account:

- a. *Respect the nature conservation interests associated with the wetlands along the valley floor.*
- b. *Retain the sense of tranquillity and relative isolation.*
- c. *Maintain the recreational value of the Ouse Valley landscape.*
- d. *Avoid areas which retain a distinctive valley landscape such as the summer grazing meadows. It is likely that only the more open arable or amenity areas will provide appropriate locations.*
- e. *Consider opportunities for locating a turbine in association with existing infrastructure such as the railway or main roads (A1 and A14). There may be an opportunity for turbine development in relation to existing recreational infrastructure such as a visitor centre or marina.*
- f. *Respect the setting of the small historic villages of the Ouse Valley e.g. Needingworth, the Hemingfords, Holywell.*
- g. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

- 6.2** Whilst there is scope for the Ouse Valley to accommodate more than one single turbine possible locations are constrained. This is a landscape that has an important role in providing an 'escape' for people living in the adjacent towns and is valued for its tranquillity and scenic quality; turbine development should not affect the perception of these qualities. Decisions will need to be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

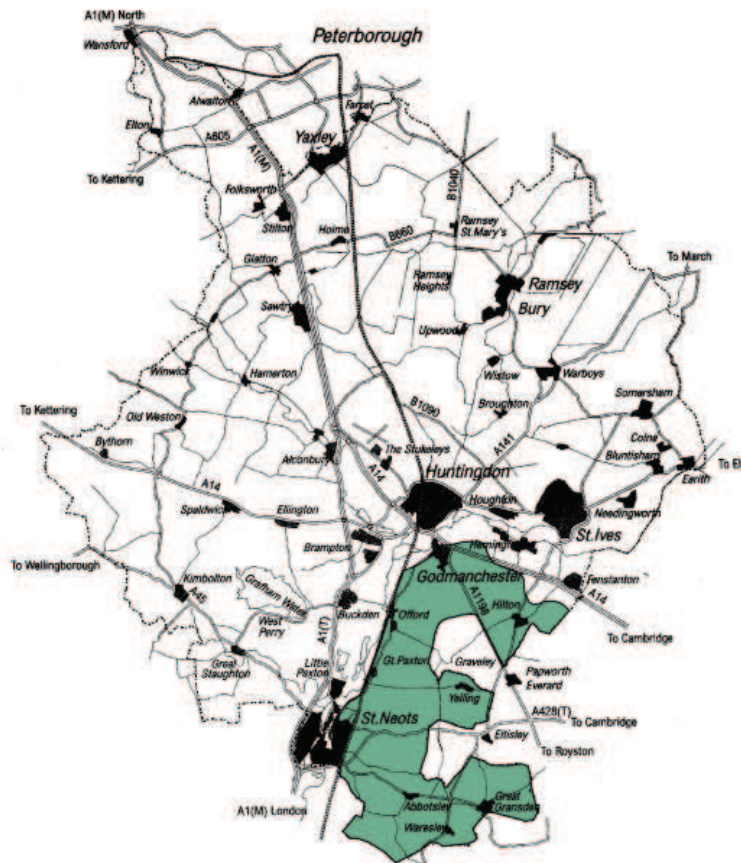
- 6.3** The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. However, this capacity relates to the lower end of the scale (i. e. 2-3 turbines). The guidance for single turbines applies equally to this scale of development.

Cumulative development

- 6.4** There is very little scope for the Ouse Valley to accommodate more than one small-scale group. Decisions will need to be taken on a case-by-case basis.

7 South East Claylands

7 South East Claylands



Single Turbine

7.1 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The simple, open landform and medium to large-scale views means that a single turbine has the potential to form a focal point and appear balanced within the landscape. It would not intimidate or dominate the landscape and would not affect any key values. However, care will need to be taken in siting turbines, particularly in the more undulating wooded area in the south, and to avoid creating visual confusion and clutter where existing vertical elements are already dominant. The guidance set out below should be taken into account:

- a. *Seek to provide a positive focal point within medium to long-range open views, mirroring the landmark function of church towers and spires.*
- b. *Avoid those areas where there is already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.*
- c. *Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings.*
- d. *Relate to the geometric field pattern with the turbine sited at junctions of two or more boundaries.*
- e. *Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, notably remnant historic features.*
- f. *Respect the scale and setting of the small, intact villages and views to church towers and spires.*
- g. *Consider the visual relationship with the Ouse Valley and the 'hidden' tributary valleys that cross the landscape.*

- h. Avoid introducing solid built structures (e.g. transmission stations) into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.*
- i. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

7.2 There is scope for the South East Claylands to accommodate a number of single turbines, but care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. Single turbines within this landscape will act as a point of focus or landmark. In this open landscape medium and long-range views are often possible and views of more than one turbine could dilute the perceived landmark function of a turbine and create a potentially confusing viewing experience.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

7.3 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although more obvious and dominant in the landscape, the generally open character of the South East Claylands means that a small-scale group of turbines would not dominate views and could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. The following guidance should be taken into account:

- a. Avoid the more undulating, intact and enclosed landscape to the south (around Waresley).*
- b. Avoid those areas where there is already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.*
- c. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings.*
- d. Respond to the geometric field pattern with turbines sited in a simple linear arrangement with consistent and repetitive spacing between individual turbines.*
- e. Relate to the landform with turbines located along contour lines as opposed to across them.*
- f. Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, notably remnant historic features.*
- g. Respect the scale and setting of the small, intact villages and views to church towers and spires.*
- h. Consider the visual relationship with the Ouse Valley and the 'hidden' tributary valleys that cross the landscape.*
- i. Avoid introducing solid built structures (transmission stations etc) into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.*
- j. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

7.4 The simple landform and landcover pattern provides scope for more than one small-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this open landscape medium and long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience.

Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines)

7.5 The northern part of this landscape character area, (approximately north of the B1046 which runs from St Neots southeast through Abbotsley and Great Gransden) has a **high** capacity to accommodate a medium-scale group. Although more obvious and dominant in the landscape, the generally open character

7 South East Claylands

of this part of the South East Claylands means that a medium-scale group of turbines would not dominate views and could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. Locations for a medium-scale group of turbines should follow the guidelines set out above for a small-scale group.

Cumulative development

7.6 The simple landform and landcover pattern provides scope for more than one medium-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this open landscape medium and long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience.

Large-scale group (13-24 turbines)

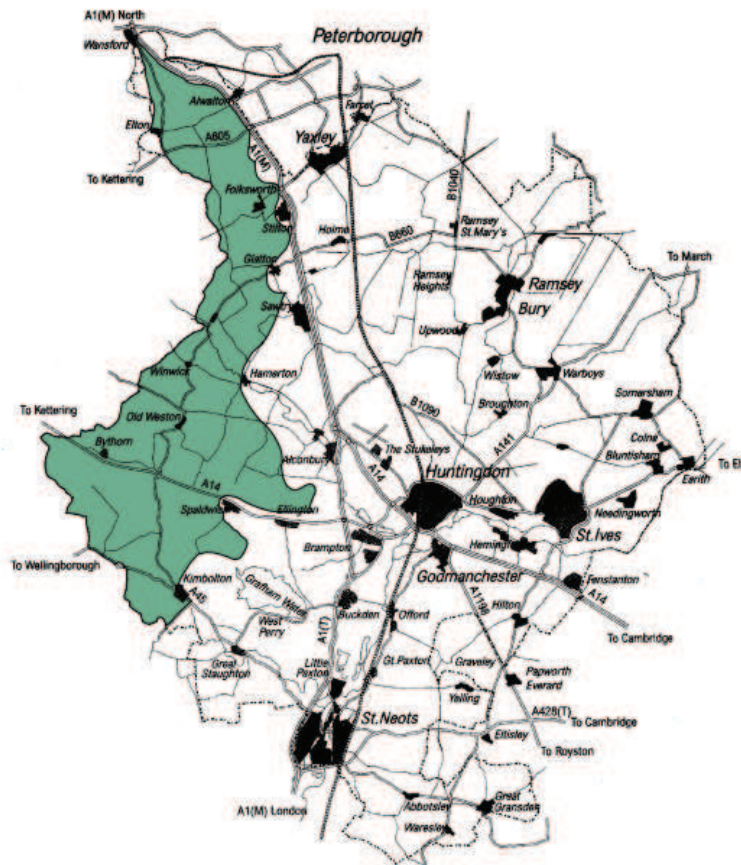
7.7 The northern part of this landscape character area (approximately north of the B1046 which runs from St. Neots south east through Abbotsley and Great Gransden) has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a large-scale group of turbines. This scale of development could fit within the open, medium to large-scale landscape. However particular care will be needed in relation to siting and design to ensure that such a development respects key landscape values, particularly the perception of parts of the area as rural with serene and tranquil aspects. The introduction of transmission lines and additional built structures often associated with this type of development will generally not be appropriate within this open landscape which is characterised by an absence of buildings outside the villages. In considering the location of a large-scale group of turbines the following guidance should be taken into account:

- a. *Respect the small-scale and historic character of the intact villages.*
- b. *Avoid areas where there is already a large number of existing vertical structures.*
- c. *Consider the impact on views from adjacent landscapes, particularly the more sensitive landscapes of the Ouse Valley.*
- d. *Respect the subtle variations in topography – appropriate locations generally being on summits or along contours – and relate to the regularity of the field pattern.*
- e. *Respect the sites and settings of valued landscape components.*
- f. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

7.8 More than one development of this scale could change the perception of the landscape's character and could start to create a landscape which is seen to be dominated by turbines. Capacity for cumulative development is low.

8 Northern Wolds



Single Turbine

8.1 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. A single turbine would fit well with the scale of the landscape and land cover patterns on the arable land of the open plateau and ridges. Key sensitivities relate to the more intimate valleys, historic villages and valued elements, particularly with respect to historic features and the distinctive church spires. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:

- a. *Respect the landform and relate turbines to the strong ridges and plateau; avoid locating turbines within the more intimate landscape of the valleys and along valley crests where they will be out of scale with the landscape and settlements such as at Kimbolton.*
- b. *Avoid siting turbines on areas of pasture with ridge and furrow.*
- c. *Respect the site and settings of the historic villages which characterise the Northern Wolds.*
- d. *Consider the views to and setting of the distinctive church spires which form a landmark feature, and ensure turbine development does not result in visual clutter in relation to these key views. A single turbine could form a separate focal point in its own right.*
- e. *Consider opportunities to site a single turbine in relation to existing farm/utility or industrial buildings (e.g. disused airfields) creating a functional image.*

8 Northern Wolds

- f. *Avoid the introduction of new pylon lines into the Northern Wolds. The area is currently characterised by the absence of disruptive features and pylon lines would be difficult to accommodate in relation to the distinctive ridge and valley topography.*
- g. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

8.2 While there is scope for the Northern Wolds to accommodate a number of single turbines, care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. This is a landscape highly valued in the district for its 'unspoilt' quality and harmonious character; turbine development should not affect the perception of this special character. Decisions will need to be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

8.3 The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape, a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and land cover pattern. Key sensitivities relate to the more intimate valleys, historic villages and valued elements, particularly with respect to historic features and the distinctive church spires. The location of a small-scale group should take into account the following guidance:

- a. *Respect existing landmark features such as key views to church spires.*
- b. *Respect the landform and relate turbines to the strong ridges and plateau; avoid locating turbines within the more intimate landscape of the valleys and along valley crests where they will be out of scale with the landscape and settlements such as Kimbolton.*
- c. *Avoid siting turbines on areas of pasture with ridge and furrow.*
- d. *Respect the site and setting of the historic villages which characterise the Northern Wolds.*
- e. *Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings, utility buildings or industrial areas (such as disused airfields).*
- f. *Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the woodland edges and field patterns with a consistent and repetitive spacing between turbines.*
- g. *Consider the impact on views of the horizon from the Central Claylands, Southern Wolds, Fen Margins and Fens.*
- h. *Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.*
- i. *Avoid the introduction of new pylon lines into the Northern Wolds. The area is currently characterised by the absence of disruptive features and pylon lines would be difficult to accommodate in relation to the distinctive ridge and valley topography.*
- j. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

8.4 There is very little scope for the Northern Wolds to accommodate more than one small-scale group. This is a landscape highly valued in the district for its 'unspoilt' quality and harmonious character; turbine development should not affect the perception of this special character. Decisions will need to be taken on a case-by-case basis. Hence capacity for cumulative development is low.

Note – Guidance in the original SPD was that this LCA had high capacity for 2-3 turbines but low capacity for 4-12 turbines. This has been revised to moderate capacity for 2-5 turbines which more accurately reflects the detail of the LUC study and the definitions for low and moderate capacity.

9 Grafham Water



Single Turbine

- 9.1** The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The open character and large scale of the landscape would allow a single turbine to be successfully accommodated in the area.
- 9.2** The recreational value of this landscape also means that there is scope for a single turbine to become a focal point and educational feature in conjunction with the visitors' centre or other amenity/functional buildings. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:
- a. Seek to make a positive contribution by providing a focal point in views and signalling the presence of Grafham Water from beyond the site.
 - b. Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.
 - c. Relate to existing building structures in the area, e.g. the visitors' centre/ amenity buildings, and consider opportunities for education/interpretation.
 - d. Consider potential impacts on the SSSI (bird population).
 - e. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.

9 Grafham Water

Cumulative development

- 9.3** There is unlikely to be scope for accommodating more than one single turbine around Grafham Water. In such a small character area more than one turbine would be perceived as a small-scale group. More than one single turbine would effectively rule out the possibility of accommodating a small scale group.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

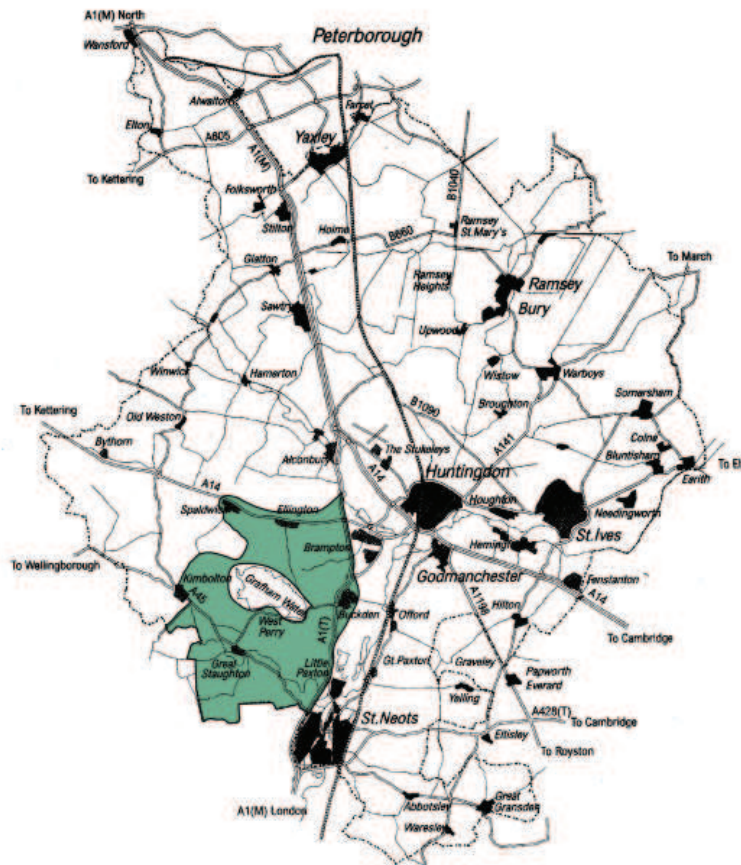
- 9.4** The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group of turbines, but only towards the lower end of this range. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape, a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape scale. However, the available land area is small and there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected. It is therefore judged that 2-3 turbines would be the maximum number of turbines that could be accommodated. Proposals for a small-scale group of turbines should take into account the following guidance:

- a. *Respect existing vertical features that form landmarks such as key views to Grafham church spire and towers.*
- b. *Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.*
- c. *Consider opportunities for siting turbines adjacent to existing structures such as the visitors' centre or in amenity areas rather than the wider farmed landscape.*
- d. *Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.*
- e. *Consider potential impacts on the SSSI (bird population).*
- f. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

- 9.5** The small area of Grafham Water could not accommodate more than one small-scale (2-3 turbines) development.

10 Southern Wolds



Single Turbine

- 10.1** The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The medium scale of the landscape, gentle topography and land cover patterns would allow a single turbine to fit well and it could correspond to land cover and settlement patterns forming a landmark feature or focal point.
- 10.2** However, care will need to be taken in siting turbines and to avoid creating visual confusion and clutter where existing vertical elements are already dominant. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:
- a. *Seek to make a positive contribution by providing a focal point within medium to long-range open views, mirroring the landmark function of church towers and spires.*
 - b. *Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.*
 - c. *Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings, utility buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a single turbine to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1, A14).*
 - d. *Consider opportunities for siting in relation to extended urban areas on the edge of the larger settlements. In this way a single turbine could function as a landmark or gateway.*
 - e. *Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the woodland edges and geometric field patterns.*

10 Southern Wolds

- f. Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, notably the extensive areas of woodland (SSSI).*
- g. Respect the more sensitive ridge which divides the valleys of the Kym and Ellington Brook – this ridge should remain a predominantly rural, wooded skyline.*
- h. Consider the visual relationship of a single turbine with the Ouse Valley.*
- i. Avoid introducing additional solid built structures such as sub-stations into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.*
- j. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

10.3 There is scope for the Southern Wolds to accommodate a number of single turbines, but care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. Single turbines within this landscape will act as a point of focus or landmark. Views of more than one turbine development could dilute the perceived landmark function of a turbine and create a potentially confusing viewing experience. In particular the central ridge that divides the valleys of the Kym and Ellington Brook should remain a predominantly rural wooded skyline and should not be cluttered with numerous tall vertical structures.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

10.4 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape, a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However, there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the need to retain the strong wooded skyline afforded by the central ridge between the two valleys. Particular care will need to be taken in siting turbines and to avoid creating visual confusion and clutter where existing vertical elements are already dominant. The location of a small-scale group should take into account the following guidance:

- a. Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.*
- b. Respect existing landmark vertical features such as key views to church spires and towers.*
- c. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings, utility buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a small scale turbine development to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1, A14).*
- d. Consider opportunities for siting in relation to extended urban areas on the edge of the larger settlements. In this way a small turbine group (e.g. 2-3 turbines) could function as a landmark or gateway.*
- e. Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the woodland edges and geometric field patterns with a consistent and repetitive spacing between turbines.*
- f. Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.*
- g. Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, notably the extensive areas of woodland (SSSI).*
- h. Avoid the more sensitive ridge which divides the valleys of the Kym and Ellington Brook – this ridge should remain a predominantly rural, wooded skyline.*
- i. Avoid impinging on skylines that provide enclosure to the river valleys.*
- j. Consider the visual relationship with the Ouse Valley.*

- k. *Avoid introducing additional solid built structures, such as transmission stations, into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.*
- l. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

- 10.5** The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one small-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this landscape some long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience.

Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines)

- 10.6** The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a medium-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape, a medium-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However, suitable locations will be limited by the number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the need to retain the strong wooded skyline afforded by the central ridge between the two valleys. Particular care will need to be taken in siting turbines and to avoid creating visual confusion and clutter where existing vertical elements are already dominant. The location of a medium-scale group should take into account the following guidance:
- a. *Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.*
 - b. *Respect existing landmark vertical features such as key views to church spires and towers.*
 - c. *Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings, utility buildings or industrial areas.*
 - d. *Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the woodland edges and geometric field patterns with a consistent and repetitive spacing between turbines.*
 - e. *Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.*
 - f. *Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, notably the extensive areas of woodland (SSSI).*
 - g. *Avoid the more sensitive ridge which divides the valleys of the Kym and Ellington Brook – this ridge should remain a predominantly rural, wooded feature.*
 - h. *Avoid impinging on skylines that provide enclosure to the river valleys.*
 - i. *Avoid disrupting long views across the area and the sensitive views into and out of the Ouse Valley.*
 - j. *Avoid introducing additional solid built structures, such as transmission stations, into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/ utility buildings.*
 - k. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

- 10.7** Scope for more than one medium-scale turbine group within this landscape is limited due to the presence of key sensitivities within the landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this landscape some long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience.

10 Southern Wolds

Huntingdonshire Local Plan | Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

Note – Guidance in the original SPD was that this landscape had high capacity for a group of 4-12 turbines but low capacity for a group of 13-24 turbines. This was reviewed due to the change in turbine group sizes and the abrupt change in capacity. The assessment has been revised to high capacity for a group of 2-5 turbines and moderate capacity for a group of 6-12 turbines. This reflects the sensitivities identified in the landscape and the definitions for high and moderate capacity.

11 Nene Valley



Single Turbine

11.1 The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The intimate nature and small scale of the landscape and presence of a large number of highly valued landscape features, notably the distinctive limestone villages, historic landscapes and important nature conservation interests suggests that locations for siting a single turbine will be limited to the few open arable areas or in association with existing infrastructure along the A1 corridor. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:

- a. *Respect the nature conservation interests associated with the wetlands along the valley floor.*
- b. *Respect the sites and settings of historic landscape features including the historic parkland and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.*
- c. *Retain the sense of tranquillity and relative isolation.*
- d. *Maintain the recreational value of the Nene Valley landscape.*
- e. *Avoid areas which retain a distinctive valley landscape such as the water meadows. It is likely that only the more open arable land will provide an appropriate location.*
- f. *Consider opportunities for locating a turbine in association with existing infrastructure along the A1 corridor.*

11 Nene Valley

Huntingdonshire Local Plan | Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

- g. Respect the setting of the distinctive limestone villages of the Nene Valley e.g. Stibbington, Water Newton, Elton.*
- h. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

- 11.2** The very small geographical extent of the Nene Valley in Huntingdonshire suggests that there would not be scope to accommodate more than one single turbine development.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

- 11.3** The landscape has a **low** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group of turbines for the reasons noted above. However, there may be an opportunity to locate a very small development (e.g. 2 turbines) in association with infrastructure along the A1 corridor. There is no capacity for cumulative development. The guidance in relation to a single turbine should be taken into account.

12 Urban peripheries

Introduction

- 12.1** This chapter provides 'generic' guidance on potential landscape capacity and mitigation requirements in relation to wind turbine development bordering urban areas (e.g. in association with urban extensions).
- 12.2** As well as the issues associated with the landscape adjoining such sites, various other visual considerations may affect the capacity to accommodate development of this type and scale. This guidance sets out these additional factors and should be taken into account when planning wind turbines near urban areas.
- 12.3** Land Use Consultants identified three sets of criteria for gauging the capacity of urban-related sites, which were developed from those used to assess the landscape character areas:

Townscape character:

- Landscape setting
- Character of the existing urban edge
- Landform and scale
- Size and form of settlement
- Urban structure
- Role and function

Visual sensitivity:

- Key landmarks
- Settlement skyline
- Key views
- Location of sensitive viewers

Values:

- Conservation areas
- Quality and condition of the urban edge
- Natural and historic values
- Special cultural associations
- Intrinsic values

- 12.4** Guidance reflecting these criteria is set out below; it is supported by a 'checklist' of questions contained in Annex A of LUC's report.
- 12.5** In addition there are three over-arching points that should be borne in mind at the urban periphery:
- a. *In general turbines should only be located in landscape character areas that have been identified as suitable for development (on the scale proposed) elsewhere in this guidance.*
 - b. *There may be opportunities for locating wind turbines in urban extensions of mixed-use development, or in association with existing or new industrial areas.*
 - c. *Simple, large scale landforms are likely to be best suited to turbine development. Narrow valleys or areas of intimate landform are unlikely to be suitable.*

Townscape Character

- 12.6** The location of a wind turbine (or group of turbines) should take into account the following guidance **in addition to that for the landscape character area in which the site falls:**

12 Urban peripheries

- a. *Wind energy developments should respond to the scale of the built form on the urban edge. For example, where the scale of built features on the urban edge is large, wind turbines may relate well to the built form.*
- b. *The form of the urban edge (linear, organic etc.) may influence the layout of turbines. However, the landscape pattern will also be important. For example in the fens the rigid field pattern may be a stronger determinate of turbine form than an organic settlement edge.*
- c. *Ensure any boundary treatment (e.g. fencing) or infrastructure accompanying the wind turbine development relates to townscape character and respects local styles and materials.*
- d. *The turbine/ group of turbines should not dominate or overwhelm the urban area – smaller areas are likely to be able to accommodate smaller scale, and fewer, structures.*
- e. *Where historic buildings form a settlement edge, that edge is unlikely to be suitable for turbine development.*
- f. *The turbine/ group of turbines should not have an adverse effect on the visual or physical relationship of the urban area with the surrounding landform.*
- g. *The turbine/ group of turbines should not have an adverse effect on the form or function of 'nodes', 'historic gateways', 'memorable areas' or landscape 'buffers' as identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape assessment.*
- h. *Consider opportunities for a turbine(s) to strengthen urban morphology, through the creation of new nodes, gateways or landmarks.*
- i. *Consider opportunities for a turbine(s) to create a new role for the urban edge.*
- j. *Ensure development does not have an adverse effect upon the function of the area in relation to the town, for example in terms of its recreational function, nature conservation function or open space function.*

Visual Sensitivity

12.7 The location of a wind turbine (or group of turbines) should take into account the following guidance in addition to that for the landscape character area in which the site falls:

- a. *Ensure that wind turbines do not obstruct, intrude into, or detract from existing positive landmarks e.g. spires, towers, mills (refer to key landmarks identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment).*
- b. *Consider opportunities for wind turbines to create a new positive focus in views.*
- c. *Ensure that wind turbines contribute positively to the settlement skyline, particularly as seen from popular viewpoints.*
- d. *Pay particular attention to the 'key views' identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment and ensure that turbines do not have a significant detrimental impact upon these views.*
- e. *Consider views from sensitive visual receptors, such as local residents, in siting wind turbines.*
- f. *Only use screen planting where it is appropriate to landscape character. For example, in a large scale open landscape it may be inappropriate to provide screen planting.*
- g. *Consider the use of off-site tree planting to filter views of turbines, where appropriate to the landscape character.*

Values

12.8 The location of a wind turbine (or group of turbines) should take into account the following guidance in addition to that for the landscape character area in which the site falls:

- a. *Ensure that turbine development does not have an adverse impact upon historic settlement cores or the character of conservation areas.*
- b. *Seek opportunities to improve the condition/quality of the landscape/ townscape in which the development will occur. Consider off-site as well as on-site improvements which are in accordance with the recommendations provided in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape assessment.*

- c. *Ensure wind turbines do not have an adverse impact upon any areas known for their special cultural or literary associations.*
- d. *Ensure wind turbines do not have an adverse impact upon any intrinsic values such as nature conservation, heritage or recreational interests.*

13 Siting and design issues for turbines less than 100m

Huntingdonshire Local Plan | Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

13 Siting and design issues for turbines less than 100m

- 13.1** Although prepared for larger turbines the sensitivity assessment in the LUC study and the guidance and criteria to be considered when siting turbines are generally applicable to smaller turbines. A primary objective of the SPD is to guide potential developments to sites where landscape and visual effects (including cumulative effects) are acceptable. Turbines less than 100m height will have varying landscape and visual effects, as commercial scale turbines do, depending on height, cluster size, location and a variety of other factors discussed below. As with commercial scale turbines, smaller turbines must respect the setting of heritage assets⁽¹⁷⁾.
- 13.2** The Council has prepared a Guidance Note for Wind Turbine Developments which includes advice on projects involving turbines of less than 100 metres height to blade tip. It can be viewed via the Council's [website](#).
- 13.3** In addition to the guidance for landscape character areas (chapters 3-11) and for urban peripheries (chapter 12) the location of a single turbine less than 100m in height should take into account the location of any other single turbines or turbine groups in the area. The guidance on issues to be considered for cumulative development of single turbines within sections 3-11 and visual sensitivity in chapter 12 are of particular relevance.
- 13.4** Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has recently produced helpful guidance on the siting and design of small scale wind turbines⁽¹⁸⁾. Although some of that guidance is specific to the landscape of Scotland much of the general advice is relevant to the landscape of Huntingdonshire and is outlined below.
- 13.5** Unlike taller turbines, turbines of less than 100m in height come in a variety of styles, designs and colours, generally with faster rotation speeds. The choice of turbine is a key factor in the ability of any particular landscape to accommodate a small turbine without significant adverse effects. It may be appropriate to reflect the style, rotational speed or the location of existing turbines to avoid complex visual mixes of turbine types in any location. Applicants should show that they have considered a number of different turbine options at the pre-planning stage.
- 13.6** The following paragraphs set out the siting and design issues that are of particular importance to small scale turbines:

Size and Scale:

- 13.7** Smaller turbines are often located close to built features (such as farms, walls, houses or settlements) and vegetation features like hedges or copses which provide scale indicators in the landscape. It is therefore particularly important to ensure that turbines relate to the scale of adjacent landscape features.
- 13.8** Even small turbines have the potential to dominate small scale topography. Care should be taken not to introduce turbines which would have an overbearing presence on complex or intricate landforms.

Relationship with settlements:

- 13.9** The following factors need to be considered when small turbines are located close to settlements:
- It is important to consider the height of the turbine in relation to nearby buildings or structures. The turbine should not have an overbearing presence or dominate adjacent buildings;

17 Land at Moorhays Farm, Elm Lane, Charlton Musgrove, Wincanton, APP/R3325/A/11/2162443.

18 Siting and Design of Small Scale Wind Turbines of between 15 and 50 metres in height (SNH March 2012)

Siting and design issues for turbines less than 100m 13

Huntingdonshire Local Plan | Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

- Where a turbine has no direct visual relationship to a building group it is important for its setting to have some logic. Consideration of its relationship to existing settlement pattern is required to give some rationale to its location;
- Greater care will be needed in settled areas designated for their ecological, landscape or historical value, such as the Great Fen (see section 2.15 and Figure 2.1 'Landscape Character Areas and the Great Fen Landscape and Visual Setting') and conservation areas;
- The relationship between small-scale turbines and the setting of and approaches to settlements is important. Care should be taken not to let turbines dominate views of the settlement from main approaches; and
- Views from within the settlement to important sites or distinctive landscape features should also be considered when siting and designing new small scale proposals.

Heritage assets:

13.10 As with larger turbines the assessment of the impact on heritage assets should be undertaken separately as part of a cultural heritage assessment. Views to and from heritage assets, both within settlements and in the wider landscape will be an important consideration in the siting of smaller turbines.

Landform:

13.11 Smaller turbines have more potential to use landform to restrict their visual impact than larger commercial models. This should be explored, particularly when there are potential adverse impacts on views from sensitive receptors, such as settlements or heritage assets, which could be mitigated through screening. Advantage should be taken of the combined screening properties of topography and vegetation

Ancillary infrastructure:

13.12 Attention to the initial siting and design of any ancillary development will help to minimise impacts and reduce visual clutter.

14 Landscape Sensitivity Criteria

14 Landscape Sensitivity Criteria

14.1 The criteria that have been applied when assessing landscape sensitivity to wind energy development are described below in two groups, 'physical qualities' and 'perceptual qualities'. Only indicators of sensitivity likely to be relevant to the landscape of Huntingdonshire have been included.

Physical Qualities

Scale and Enclosure

14.2 Large scale open landscapes are likely to be less sensitive to wind turbine development than small scale intimate landscapes with a strong sense of enclosure. Turbines are more likely to appear out of scale and dominate landscapes with smaller and/ or irregular field sizes and landscapes with frequent human scale features.

Table 2 Indicators of sensitivity – Scale and Enclosure

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Large scale open, elevated landscape	Medium-large scale landscape with limited sense of enclosure	Medium scale landscape, may contain a variety of field sizes, some sense of enclosure	Small-medium scale landscape field sizes mostly smaller, sense of enclosure	Intimate small scale landscape, small irregular fields, strong sense of enclosure

Landform and Topography

14.3 A smooth, convex or flat landform is likely to be less sensitive to wind turbine development than a landscape with a dramatic rugged landform, distinct landform features or pronounced undulations because turbines are less likely to detract from visually important landforms, appear confusing or unsettling (due to turbines being at varying heights or on the crest of valleys).

Table 3 Indicators of sensitivity – Landform and Topography

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Smooth, convex or flat landscape, extensive lowland, elevated plateau	Simple, gently undulating landform, few distinct landform features	Distinct landform, convex hills, plateau incised by valleys	Distinct or irregular landform features, noticeable changes in level	Distinct or irregular landform, sharp/ marked changes in level

Land Cover Pattern

14.4 Simple, regular landscapes with extensive areas of uniform ground cover are likely to be less sensitive to wind energy development than landscapes with more complex or irregular land cover.

Table 4 Indicators of sensitivity – Land Cover Pattern

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Uniform groundcover	Large-scale fields, little variety in land cover	Medium sized fields, some variations in land cover	Irregular smaller scale fields, variety in land cover	Irregular small scale fields, complex and varied land cover

Landscape Sensitivity Criteria 14

Settlement Pattern and Density

14.5 More sparsely settled areas are likely to be less sensitive than more densely settled areas or areas with a high proportion of historic villages as there will be opportunities to site turbines so that they do not dominate distinctive settlements.

Table 5 Indicators of sensitivity – Settlement Pattern and Density

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Sparse settlement	Widely dispersed settlement	Dispersed settlement; modern housing	Frequent villages, some historic, limited sprawl or modern development	Frequent historic villages, historic settlement pattern apparent

Landmarks and Visible Built Structures

14.6 Landscapes that contain large scale infrastructure, major communications routes and large-scale developments are less sensitive to wind turbine development although development needs to be carefully sited to avoid visual clutter. Historic landmarks such as important views to distinctive church spires and towers increase sensitivity, especially where they occur frequently.

Table 6 Indicators of sensitivity – Landmarks and Visible Built Structures

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Few or no historic landmark features, landscape dominated by large scale development/ infrastructure or major communication routes	Few historic landmark features, large scale development/ infrastructure or major communication routes present but not dominant	Infrequent historic landmark features, some large development/ infrastructure, or major communication routes	Some historic landmark features, little influenced by large development/ infrastructure, or major communication routes	Frequent historic landmark features, lack of large scale development or infrastructure

Skyline

14.7 Prominent and distinctive skylines, or skylines with important landmark features that are identified in the landscape character assessment, are likely to be more sensitive to wind turbine development because turbines may detract from these skylines as features in the landscape, or draw attention away from existing landform or landmark features on skylines.

Table 7 Indicators of sensitivity – Skyline

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Large-scale flat or plateau landscape where skylines are not prominent and/or there are no important landmark features on the skyline	Large-scale landscape where skylines are not prominent and/or there are very few landmark features on the skyline – other skylines in adjacent LCAs are more prominent	Landscape with some prominent skylines, but these are not particularly distinctive. There may be some landmark features on the skyline	Landscape with prominent skylines that may form an important backdrop to views from settlements or important viewpoints, and/ or with many landmark features on the skyline	Landscape comprising prominent or distinctive skylines and/ or with particularly important landmark features on the skyline

14 Landscape Sensitivity Criteria

Visual Connections with Adjacent Landscapes

14.8 Where the landscape character assessment has identified that views to and from adjacent landscapes are important the sensitivity to wind turbine development may be increased as landscape impacts may extend to adjacent landscape character areas.

Table 8 Indicators of sensitivity – Visual Connections with Adjacent Landscapes

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Self-contained, very limited connections with adjacent LCAs	Occasional views from adjacent LCAs	Intervisibility with adjacent LCAs	Extensive views from adjacent LCAs	Extensive views from adjacent LCAs, these views are a key characteristic of one or more adjacent LCAs

Perceptual Qualities

14.9 In the LUC study these are covered in the Landscape Value section although there are no individual sensitivity assessments.

Human Response

14.10 Landscapes whose scenic qualities are highly valued within the district are likely to be more sensitive to wind turbine development than landscapes of lower scenic quality or where there has been a loss of character due to agricultural intensification.

Table 9 Indicators of sensitivity – Human Response

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Landscape is considered to have low scenic quality such as an industrial area or despoiled land and is not highly valued	Landscape has low-medium scenic quality, valued locally but has been subject to agricultural intensification	Landscape has a medium scenic quality valued locally for its rural character	Landscape has a medium-high scenic quality, valued for its rural character and/or recreational opportunities	Landscape has a high scenic quality, valued for its recreational opportunities, tranquillity, varied topography, and/or unspoilt character

Remoteness and Tranquillity

14.11 Relatively remote or tranquil landscapes, due to freedom from human activity and disturbance and having a perceived naturalness or a strong feel of traditional rurality, tend to be more sensitive to wind turbine development because wind turbine development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from the sense of tranquillity and or remoteness/ naturalness. Landscapes that contain many signs of modern development are generally less sensitive.

Table 10 Indicators of sensitivity – Remoteness and Tranquillity

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Landscape with much human activity and development, significantly affected	Landscape with human activity and dispersed modern development, Some	Landscape with some modern development and human activity but	Landscape with little modern human influence and development, rural	Tranquil landscape with little modern human influence and development, sense

Landscape Sensitivity Criteria 14

Huntingdonshire Local Plan | Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
by major communications routes	impact from major communications routes	retaining some rural and serene aspects	and serene aspects are most apparent	of quiet and isolation are preminent

15 Policy sources

15 Policy sources

- 15.1** The development plan is currently made up of the East of England Plan, saved policies from the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 2003, saved policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 and Alteration 2002 except those superseded by the Core Strategy, the Core Strategy 2009, and the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan 2011. Also in use but not adopted as part of the Development Plan is the Development Management DPD: Proposed Submission 2010.
- 15.2** The council has recently embarked on the process of producing a single Local Plan for Huntingdonshire that will replace all current parts of the Development Plan except the East of England Plan. Government has indicated its intention to revoke the East of England Plan along with all other RSS and has started a process of strategic environmental assessment in order to achieve this objective.
- 15.3** The guidance in this SPD supplements the policies contained in a number of documents. The key sources and policies are as follows:

The Adopted Development Plan Policies:

- East of England Plan 2008, policy ENG2: Renewable Energy Targets;
- Core Strategy 2009, policy CS 1: Sustainable Development in Huntingdonshire

Emerging Development Plan Policies:

- Development Management DPD: Proposed Submission 2010, policy C 3: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy.
- Draft Development Management Policies, policy DM 21: Renewable and low carbon energy

Other relevant sources of Planning Policy and Guidance include:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)
- Companion Guide to PPS22 (ODPM, 2004)

Appendix 1: Glossary

Ancient woodland

An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD.*

Cumulative effects

Cumulative effects are the summation and or additional effects that result from changes caused by a development in conjunction with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions.**

Designated heritage asset

A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.*

Diversity

Where a variety of qualities and characteristics occur.**

Development plan

This includes adopted Local Plans and *neighbourhood development plans*, and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. (Regional strategies remain part of the development plan until they are abolished by Order using powers taken in the Localism Act. It is the government's clear policy intention to revoke the regional strategies outside of London, subject to the outcome of the environmental assessments that are currently being undertaken.)*

Heritage asset

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).**

Historic environment

All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.**

Land cover

Combinations of land use and vegetation that cover the land surface.**

Landform

Combinations of slope and elevation that produce the shape and form of the landscape.**

Landscape capacity

The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without unacceptable adverse effects on its character. Capacity is likely to vary according the type and nature of change being proposed.**

Landscape character

The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape and how this is perceived by people. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. It creates the particular sense of place of different areas of the landscape.**

Landscape features

A prominent eye-catching element, for example, wooded hilltop or church spire.**

Landscape sensitivity

The extent to which a landscape can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on its character.**

Appendix 1: Glossary

Huntingdonshire Local Plan | Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

Landscape value

The relative value or importance attached to a landscape; (often as a basis for designation or recognition) which expresses national or local consensus, because of its quality, special qualities including perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness, cultural associations or other conservation issues.**

Local Plan

The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.*

Mitigation

Measures including any process, activity, or design to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for adverse environmental impact or effects of a development project.**

Open space

All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

Photomontage

An illustration of a proposed development that has been superimposed on or combined with a photograph from a recorded location.

Receptor

Physical landscape resource, special interest, or viewer group that will experience an effect.**

Renewable and low carbon energy

Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).*

Scale Indicators

Landscape elements and features of a known or recognisable scale such as houses, trees and vehicles that may be compared to other objects where the scale of height is less familiar, to indicate their true scale.

Site of Special Scientific Interest

Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.*

Supplementary planning documents

Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.*

Tranquillity

A perceptual description applied to landscapes that are perceived to be relatively more natural, peaceful and quiet when compared to other areas which may be visually developed or noisy.

Visual effect

Change in the appearance of the landscape as a result of development. This can be positive (i.e. beneficial or an improvement) or negative (i.e. adverse or a detraction).**

Visual Sensitivity

The intrinsic sensitivity of visual receptors, such as residents, to visual change.

* Definitions derived from the National Planning Policy Framework

** Definitions derived from *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* 2nd Edition (2002) Landscape Institute/ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX B

Draft Revised SPD: “Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development” - Revised Statement of Consultation.

A draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) entitled “Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development” was issued by Huntingdonshire District Council on 16th November 2012. The initial Statement of Consultation is now revised in the light of the consultations received.

The document was put out to full public consultation from 16th November 2012 for a seven week period until Friday 4th January 2013. It is intended as a replacement for the current SPD “Wind Power” which was adopted in 2006. Copies were made available at the Council Offices at Pathfinder House, and at Libraries throughout the district, and notice of the consultation was circulated to all parish councils and an extensive list of renewable energy companies, interested business organisations, local interest groups, consultants, pressure groups and other bodies, as well as private individuals with a known interest. A press release was issued to local newspapers.

The main channel of consultation was via the Council’s consultation portal at <http://consult.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/portal> but responses were also taken via email and in writing. All these responses can now be viewed on the consultation portal – including responses that were allowed even though they were made after the formal consultation period had ended.

Over 360 responses were received and this level of response is doubtless due to the rapid spread of wind turbine developments of all scales throughout the district since the original SPD was adopted in 2006. During that period there have been three high profile local Inquiries, with a further one due to start at the end of 2013. Local action groups opposed to some of the larger schemes have further contributed to the rise in public awareness of the issues surrounding wind farms. Many of the consultation responses have come from members of such groups and there has been an inevitable concentration on specific issues highlighted by their representations – with responses often duplicating lists of issues and proposals. Nevertheless the overall range of the consultation responses represents a wide spectrum of views, with submissions from energy companies and environmental consultants often arguing for a more liberal interpretation of policy, contrary to the more restrictive suggestions of action groups and individuals.

This revised Statement of Consultation will be made available prior to the adoption of the SPD. It includes details of:

- a) The persons and organisations that have **responded** during the consultation process. These are listed in Appendix 1.
- b) A summary of the main issues raised in representations received.
- c) How those issues have been addressed in the revised supplementary planning document, and what amendments, if any, are proposed.

NB It must be noted that HDC have commissioned a position statement on the “Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire.” The current draft form of this study will be finalised when new planning guidance (following from Ministerial Statement on “Local Planning and Onshore Wind” dated 6th June) has been published. It will then be subject to full public consultation and be presented to Cabinet for adoption.

Broad Issues arising from the Consultation Process

Many of the consultation responses covered more than one issue, and sometimes their content does not fit neatly into a specific topic. In these cases the responses are noted under more than one issue summary. Nevertheless, with the level of responses received, it was felt that an analysis on the basis of the main issues that were raised by consultees was the only sensible method of reporting on the consultation process.

The numbers listed after each issue refer to the ID number given in the consultation portal.

There is a summary of the issues raised by the responses, then in the “comment” section there is a detailed description of any amendments that are deemed necessary, or a “no changes needed” judgement.

1. Responses requiring no comment

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - General Issues

5-7/9/10/14/21/25/26/29-31/34-37/38/48/51-53/56/65/66/70/76/77/83/84/90/
135/137/149/157/178/190/191/223/225-228/234/267/271/273/297/298/
302/305/308/312/330/333/337/346/353/359/361/362

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - Specific Support

11-13/15/17/18/20/22/23/27/28/33/243/245

Many of the comments were very general in nature, often anecdotal and referring to no specific part of the draft SPD, and containing no actual proposal or amendment. Some comments in this category expressed general approval, and others expressed support / agreement relating to specific points.

Comment: No changes needed.

2. General health Issues, especially potential noise impacts

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -

32/65/112/118-25/133/137/138/188/229/230/336

Some parties were concerned about potential effects on general health by Wind Turbine Developments [WTDs], particularly relating to their potential noise effects.

Comment: These issues must be considered separately from landscape and visual matters. National guidance is already available on the Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms [ref ETSU-R-97], and planning applications for wind turbine developments will consider noise, shadow flicker and general health impacts on a case by case basis, and as deemed appropriate by the relevant guidance. Planning conditions can be used to help monitor and mitigate against noise impacts.

No changes needed.

3. Residential Amenity impacts and the recommendation of a minimum separation distance between turbines and particular properties, and/or between turbines and settlements.

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
42/67/68/69/86/95/115/137/160/166/186/188/229/230/
232/236/240/258/261/315/316/318/326/327/331/336/356/357

Many responses were concerned with potential visual and noise impacts that WTDs might have on dwellings and settlements and have put forward amendments to this draft SPD to establish minimum separation distances between turbines and residential properties, and also in some cases between turbines and settlements, particularly those with designated Conservation Areas. These concerns were prompted mainly by potential visual impacts, but also potential noise effects.

Comment: There is no Government support for instituting the idea of a separation distance in English planning policy. There is no generally agreed separation distance necessary to prevent overbearing or overwhelming visual intrusion from commercial scale wind turbines. Although such impacts are often considered to occur within 800m of a property Inspectors have found overbearing or overwhelming impacts at greater distances but they have also allowed schemes at closer distances. This SPD will not establish a separation distance, but rather will continue to support the principle that each case will be considered on its merits.

Residential visual amenity assessment is a necessary part of the Environmental Impact Assessment information considered during the planning process, but it is an impact on private amenity and should be considered separately from Landscape Sensitivity assessment and guidance.

Since the consultation on the Draft SPD the District Council has commissioned a position statement on “The Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact of Wind Turbines.” A section (paras 4.22-4.37) of this draft study puts forward guidance thresholds and criteria which will help assess impacts on residential properties and settlements – but it must be emphasised that at present the position statement is guidance rather than policy.

This draft SPD is not the appropriate document to consider noise impacts. As has been stated elsewhere in this report there is national guidance on “Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms” [ref ETSU-R-97] and this issue will be considered as a separate matter within the planning process.

No changes needed to the draft SPD with regard to this particular issue.

NB It must be noted that HDC have commissioned a position statement on the “Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire.” The current draft form of this study will be finalised when new planning guidance (following from Ministerial Statement on “Local Planning and Onshore Wind” dated 6th June) has been published. It will then be subject to full public consultation and be presented to Cabinet for adoption.

4. Quality and veracity of photomontages supplied with wind farm applications

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 75/97/129/142/171/188/231/315/347

A number of comments were received to the effect that the current best practice methodology for producing photomontages (“Visual Representation of Wind Farms – Good Practice Guidance” Scottish Natural Heritage, 2006), was flawed and resulted in unrealistic representations of wind farms. Some comments recommended that current best practice should be replaced by recommendations recently produced by The Highland Council [“Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments” Highland Council, 2010].

Comment: Huntingdonshire District Council is fully aware of the continuing debate about photomontage techniques and it is noted that SNH are currently consulting on this (see “Visual Representation of Wind Farms” – Consultation Draft May 2013).“ Whatever the outcome of this process, technical guidance on this complex issue should not be covered in a document which relates to Landscape Sensitivity, and the draft revised SPD will not cover these issues, nor recommend any particular technical methodology.

Nevertheless, with the construction of increasing numbers of wind turbine developments HDC officers will take the opportunity to compare photomontage evidence presented as part of a planning application with views of the completed development. But any conclusions drawn from this process will not be included in a revised SPD.

No changes needed.

5. Cross boundary cooperation and the encouragement of a wider strategic approach to renewable energy issues.

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 3/71/96/166/185/186/236/299/301/303/306/309

Some individuals and local councils sought more cooperation between LPAs within an area or region, favouring a broader strategic approach to renewable energy issues.

Comment: Whether this is desirable or not, or whether it could be achieved under the current planning system where regional plans have been revoked, it is certainly not within the remit of a Supplementary Planning Document based on assessments of Landscape Sensitivity. However, it must be noted that LPAs do consult with neighbouring LPAs on development which may have some cross boundary impact, especially those deemed to require EIA or LVIA.

No changes needed.

6. Grid connection

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 5/6/91/117/126/262/315/317/335/357

Several comments were received advising HDC to use the draft revised SPD to stipulate that any connection from wind farm to national grid must be made via underground cables, rather than poles, pylons, and overhead cables.

Comment: Whilst it is not possible under planning law for HDC to stipulate such a requirement, the recently issued “Wind Turbine Developments – A Guidance Note for Applicants and Agents” (revised July 2013) will be amended to include the following –

- a) A requirement that any planning application for a wind turbine development must include full details of the proposed grid connection. This is in line with the guidance contained in the PPS22 Companion Guide, Technical Annex, para 99.
- b) A statement that HDC prefers and expects that in order to minimise adverse environmental effects, grid connections will be made via underground cables.

No changes needed.

7. Turbine height and landscape capacity

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
39/40/89/90/93/94/106/109/132/136/139/147/148/151/
158/162/164/167/169/170/173/177/179-184/186/194/195/
215/216/217/223/236/241/256/257/261/265/290/292/299/
315/316/319/324-326/331/332/335/340-343/345/347/355-357

A large number of comments were received proposing amendments to the assessment of capacity of each Landscape Character Area [LCA] to wind turbine developments. Most thought that capacity should be graduated according to the height of the proposed turbines, and that guidance on capacity should be provided for a range of turbine heights and group sizes.

Comment: It is accepted that there is an obvious relation between turbine height and potential landscape and visual impact, landscape sensitivity and landscape capacity. However the draft SPD [and the existing SPD] clearly states that it is primarily concerned with analysing the varying landscape sensitivity throughout the district to commercial scale wind energy developments with turbine heights of 120 +/- 20m [see draft revised SPD “Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development“ para 1.16 and 1.18].

This is what the original LUC study assumed and recent commercial scale applications still comprise turbines whose size sits within that envelope – i.e. the conclusions of the LUC study area still absolutely relevant to the current situation.

For smaller turbines the draft revised SPD has not produced detailed guidance on the sensitivity and capacity of the district’s landscapes. This would have required an additional study equivalent to the original LUC one. In preference to this approach the draft revised SPD has added a new chapter [Chapter 13 “Siting and Design Issues for Turbines less than 100m”] containing general guidance and confirming in para 13.1 that the guidance and criteria to be considered when siting commercial scale turbines is generally applicable to smaller turbines as well.

Developments with turbines less than 100m will be considered using the guidance in Chapter 13 of the draft revised SPD and the relevant guidance and criteria for each LCA provided elsewhere in the document. Proposals will be considered on a case by case basis, and each application will be assessed on its merits. The caveats contained in paras 1.5 and 1.19 of the document apply equally to commercial scale development proposals and schemes with smaller turbines. The generic guidance now included in the draft revised SPD obviates the need for more detailed guidance on sensitivity and capacity issues related to smaller turbines within each LCA.

HDC has recently commissioned a **position statement on “The Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact of Wind Turbines.”** This draft report is concerned with the cumulative impacts of all operational and consented schemes, and those applications as yet undetermined.

It will assess the impacts of more than one size of turbine, and of differing cluster sizes, and will analyse the remaining capacity in each Landscape Character Area and the district, with reference to guidance in the existing and draft revised SPD's. It is intended as a tool to help assess the current cumulative impacts, and to guide the assessment of those effects resulting from future proposed wind turbine developments.

No changes needed to the draft SPD with regard to this particular issue.

NB It must be noted that HDC have commissioned a position statement on the “Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire.” The current draft form of this study will be finalised when new planning guidance (following from Ministerial Statement on “Local Planning and Onshore Wind” dated 6th June) has been published. It will then be subject to full public consultation and be presented to Cabinet for adoption.

8. Wind turbine efficiency and deliberate restrictions on output

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 4/54/91/117/126/228/320/351

Some comments were received on the comparative efficiency of wind turbines as a means of generating electricity, and the manipulation of output to maximise profit.

Comment: These issues, in particular the assessment of the generating efficiency, are not matters for planning policy, and are certainly outside the remit of this SPD. The SPD will not comment on the topic, nor on the need or otherwise for renewable or low carbon energy generation. See NPPF para 98.

No changes needed.

9. Grafham Water LCA and ornithological Issues

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 17/26/49/50/61/239/244

Some consultees remarked that Grafham Water was entirely unsuitable for any wind turbine development due to the presumed adverse impact on bird populations, migration routes and daily bird movements.

Comment: Although this issue is not within the remit of a study based on landscape sensitivity and capacity – and so the draft revised SPD will not judge this issue – the relevant nature conservation organisations (Natural England, RSPB, and the Wildlife Trust) are all consulted on the wildlife and ecological implications of wind turbine developments, and their comments will be a material consideration when a planning application is considered.

No changes needed.

10. Miscellaneous issues proposed for inclusion within the draft revised SPD

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
4/46/49/50/54/61/79/80/91/96/110/117/126/222/228/230/
239/244/268/294/300/306/309/320/321/334/336/359

Proposals were received that a variety of topics should be considered and/or assessed by the revised SPD.

Comment: these topics included –

- a) Cultural Heritage Impacts.
- b) Use of Financial Bonds in case of health or other unforeseen effects.
- c) Impacts on Tourism and the local economy.
- d) Assessment of whether EIA is required by WTDs – see also item 20 on this issue.
- e) Provision of a comprehensive guide to all issues and policy relevant to WTDs – see also item 12 on related matters.

All of the above are important issues and some of them will be considered at various stages throughout the Development Management process – but none of them is strictly relevant to the consideration of Landscape Sensitivity to WTD, and they should not be included in this SPD.

No changes needed.

11. Cumulative impacts

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -

11/60/86/92/101-104/144/145/174/175/198/199/205/212/
213/217/225/226/235/250/251/277/278/285-287/304/315/317/
319/324-326/329/331/334/336/338-341/344/345/347/355

- a) Many responses considered that the guidance on cumulative impacts contained in the draft revised SPD was not specific enough and proposed that in certain cases a separation distance of 15 kilometres between developments comprising commercial scale turbines should be applied.
- b) Consultees also often remarked that the lack of any mention of sequential cumulative effects is a serious omission.
- c) A smaller group of responses thought that the guidance on cumulative capacity contained in table 2 of the draft revised SPD had been reinterpreted when compared to the existing SPD, and that this had been done without any evidence base.

Comment:

- d) The idea of a 15km separation distance was used in the report “Placing Renewables in the East of England” produced for EERA in 2008 by Ove Arup. Part of that report was a very broad brush study which used certain assumptions to make a calculation of the potential generating capacity that onshore wind energy projects might provide in the East of England. It is clearly stated in the report (para 1.3) that -
“Whilst the information presented here is appropriate for a strategic regional study, it is not a sufficient basis for decisions about individual renewable energy proposals in the region and it must not be used as such. Each application for renewable energy development in the region must be considered on its merits, including site-specific issues that are not appropriate for discussion in a regional study such as this.” **In the light of this unambiguous statement the draft revised SPD will not include any recommendation for a separation distance between WTDs.**
- e) Cumulative visual effects can be divided into three categories – simultaneous, successive or sequential – depending whether the viewer is stationary, turning round or moving along a linear route. The fact that the draft revised SPD does not consider these different categories in detail does not mean that the varying types of cumulative effect will not be assessed when an application for a WTD is considered. It is a consequence of the potential complexity of the cumulative assessment process and serves to emphasise the importance of considering each case on its merits. Like all the guidance

in the SPD, that on cumulative capacity [paras 2.18 – 2.25] is guidance only – a **starting point for decision making**, as stated in para 1.19.

Nevertheless, the section on cumulative capacity is written with an implicit assumption that the cumulative visual effects that are being analysed are **simultaneous** cumulative visual effects.

It is only at para 2.24 that the term **successive** views is introduced – and then the wording implies that earlier paras are considering a different kind of view. For the sake of clarity and completeness it is proposed to amend the draft revised SPD as follows –

- (i) **Add to para 2.22, first sentence...**“Consideration will need to be given in all circumstances to the visual relationship between one turbine or turbine group and another **when these can be viewed simultaneously.**”
 - (ii) **Add to para 2.24, first sentence ...** “Cumulative assessments also need to consider the effect on the landscape area of successive **and/or sequential** views of single turbines or groups of turbines.”
- f) Table 2 in the draft revised SPD was intended to be a useful, tabular version of the text from the existing SPD that related to the guidance on cumulative capacity in different LCAs. The tabular version perhaps has a more prescriptive character than the earlier text, and this was considered (by some consultees) to be contrary to the over-riding caveat that each application must be considered on its own merits. **The draft SPD will be amended by removing paras 2.18 and 2.25, Table 2 and associated footnote 1, thus returning to the existing situation where the guidance on cumulative impacts is contained in the different LCA chapters.**

NB It must be noted that the forthcoming HDC position statement on “The Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire” also discusses these issues.

12. Wider Planning Policy Issues

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 57/259/274/275/282/299/316/320/348

There were several proposals concerning broad policy matters.

- a) Some responses thought that there should be stronger reference to the NPPF, in particular para 14 of that document.
- b) Some wanted stronger references to the Development Plan, others to emerging DPD policies.
- c) Several consultees wanted a more detailed explanation of the role of SPDs, whilst some thought there should be further reference National Policy Statement EN-1 with regard to the benefits of and need for renewable energy projects and how they relate to other adverse impacts.
- d) Other comments proposed that references to climate change should be omitted from the SPD and that text should be amended to state HDC opposition to wind turbine developments.
- e) Several responses thought that guidance on these issues should be framed for the whole of the District, and not separated into guidance for each of the component LCAs.

Comment: Actions to address these points will be –

- f) A new paragraph inserted after 1.12 of the SPD referring to NPPF para 14 and the numbering amended accordingly. This to read:
'At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development [footnote: NPPF paragraph 14]. The primacy of the development plan remains, so development proposals that accord with the plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. However, if the plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date the presumption in favour of sustainable development means that development proposals should be approved unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, or policies in the NPPF indicate that developments should be restricted.'
- g) A separate reference to the Development Plan is not necessary as 1.1 clearly states the nature of SPD and contains a link to section 15 that deals with the Development Plan. Ideally a more detailed reference to DPD policies would be included. However this would date the SPD very quickly as the policies that it would be supplemental to are currently contained in the Development Management DPD: Proposed Submission 2010 document that is not going to be taken any further as part of the Development Plan. Policies will be included in the emerging Local Plan to 2036, however the exact detail of these is not known as they will be subject to further public consultation. In these circumstances it will only be possible to have reference in the policies to the SPD.
- h) A short explanation of the role of SPDs will be **added** after the first sentence of para 1.1, viz ***"The role of an SPD is to provide guidance on the application of existing Policies in the Adopted Development Plan. The SPD does not form part of the development plan nor is it intended to provide policies beyond those within the development plan"***
- i) There will be a footnote added to para 2.9 with reference to EN-1, viz ***"In respect of landscape impacts, with reference to National Policy Statement EN-1 (5.9.15) it should be noted that significant adverse impacts do not necessarily render a proposal unacceptable in planning terms if it can be demonstrated that such significant adverse effects would be outweighed by the benefits (including need) for the project."***
- j) The proposal that references to climate change should be omitted from the SPD and that text should be amended to state HDC opposition to wind turbine developments is rejected. It is a requirement of the 2008 Planning Act that the Development Plan contain policies that seek to tackle to the effects of Climate Change through adaptation and mitigation. It is therefore entirely reasonable that an SPD that deals with a form of renewable energy and supports such policies of the Development Plan should include the identified text in para 1.7. The suggested replacement text must be rejected.
No changes needed.
- k) PPS22 Companion Guide recommends an approach to these issues based on landscape character assessment and Hunts DC followed this guidance when adopting the Wind Power SPD in 2006 and the associated Landscape and Townscape Assessment in 2007. Guidance that was only based on district-wide criteria would not take account of (or seek to protect) the distinctiveness of the different constituent parts of the Huntingdonshire landscape. **No changes needed.**

13. Removing the “large” category from the proposed reclassification of group sizes.

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 336/338/367

HDC Overview and Scrutiny Panel [Environmental Well-Being], and some individual members, considered that the large scale grouping of 24 turbines is too large a development for the district.

Comment: The existing SPD “Wind Power” 2006 classified a large group as one of over 25 turbines [see para 2.3 of that document]. The LUC Study [2005] and the Wind Power SPD concluded that nowhere in the district was suitable for turbine groups of more than 25 – they would be likely to result in a significant adverse change in landscape character and /or affect key landscape values. In the light of this conclusion, and other studies and assessments carried out in southern and eastern England, the classification of turbine group sizes has been revised [see draft revised SPD para 2.3 – 2.8] and the large scale group is now defined as between 13-24 turbines. There is no justification or evidence base to warrant further changes to the group sizes by removing the proposed large scale group [13-24 turbines] category. It must be noted that the inclusion of this category in the draft revised SPD does not indicate support or otherwise for applications of this scale – it merely brings them within the remit of this guidance. **No changes needed.**

14. Presentation Issues

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
24/72/87/90/105/108/134/163/176/180/182/
206/219/269/272/276/283/293/348/349/357

Responses were made regarding various matters of presentation. These included –

- a) The poor quality of Figure 1.1. and its key.
- b) The uncertainty of the purposes of the sketch illustrations, pictures 3.1/3.2/4.1/5.1/5.2/6.1/8.1/9.1/10.1/11.1/12.1
- c) The map of the LCA at the start of Chapter 7 is inadequate to show the B1046 road which is specifically mentioned in the text.
- d) Typographical errors in the document.

Comment: The following changes will be made to the draft SPD.

- e) **Figure 1.1 and the associated key will be replaced with improved quality images; additionally the key for Figure 2.1 will be expanded to include all LCAs.**
- f) Some of the original illustrations were omitted prior to drawing up the draft revised SPD, but it is apparent from the consultation responses that the presence of those remaining illustrations adds nothing to the understanding and clarity of the guidance. **All the illustrations will be omitted.**
- g) Although it would be impossible to clearly show the B1046 on the existing map, additional explanation will be added to the text to clarify the exact route of that road. **Add to para 7.5: “The northern part of this landscape character area, (approximately north of the B1046 which runs from St. Neots southeast through Abbotsley and Great Gransden) has a high capacity**”

Add to para 7.7.: “The northern part of the landscape character area (approximately north of the B1046 which runs from St. Neots south east through Abbotsley and Great Gransden) has a moderate capacity “

h) The following minor errors will be amended –

- **Para 1.13 omit “policies listed”, replace with “detailed”.**
- **Para 2.8 will be amended to – “The largest approved/operational onshore scheme (not including those schemes with later extensions) in Eastern England”**
- **Para 2.8 will be amended to – “ ...the 2008 study by Ove Arup for the East of England Regional Assembly ⁽¹⁰⁾ which undertook ...”**
- **Paras 2.15 and 2.16 will be amended to : “... Figure 2.1 which shows the different Landscape Character Areas, The Great Fen boundary, and the boundary of its Landscape and Visual setting.”**
- **Para 7.6 first line: change “one small-scale turbine group“ to “one medium-scale turbine group”**
- **Para 13.1, first sentence, omit “single.”**
- **Para 13.1, last sentence, “small turbines” should be changed to “smaller turbines”**
- **Para 13.8, 3rd bullet point will be amended to “.....Greater care will be needed in settled areas designated for their ecological, landscape or historical value, such as the Great Fen (see section 2.15 and figure 2.1) and Conservation Areas.**

15. Identification of Historic Villages

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
107/111/150/220/263/269/315/326/329/339-41/343/345/347/355

Consultees were concerned that the mention of “historic villages” in several of the site specific guidance criteria for the LCAs was not precise enough, and wanted these villages identified. Often it was suggested that those villages with Conservation Areas should be the ones intended by the criteria, and that this should be made clear by listing those villages in the Draft revised SPD.

Comment: Several of the villages and settlements mentioned by name in the SPD can be considered as “historic”, even though they do not have a Conservation Area, e.g. Conington, mentioned in para 4.1 for the Fen Margin LCA.

In the Northern Wolds, the village of Buckworth, though not mentioned in the SPD text, is an archetypal Northern Wolds historic settlement with a prominent landmark church spire standing out on the horizon, and the village clustered on the higher parts of the valley sides. However there is no Conservation Area.

Impacts on Cultural Heritage Assets are usually considered separately from landscape and visual effects, yet there is an acknowledged overlap between the two, particularly when the setting of Heritage Assets is being considered. Limiting the category of “historic villages” to just those with designated Conservation Areas will unduly restrict the protection to historic villages

and settlements that the SPD guidance can give via its status as a material consideration in any planning application. This proposed change is not justified.

No changes needed.

16. Up to date Review Needed

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
74/78/81/85/88/92/127/128/130/143/155/156/167/168/186-
189/192/199/236/252/254/299/328/348

Many consultees proposed that the revision of the Wind Power SPD (2006) should be accompanied by a review of the existing and consented Wind Turbine Developments in the district, and that this review would give an indication of the “accuracy or validity” of the existing SPD.

Comment: HDC has recently commissioned a **position statement with regard to “The Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact of Wind Turbines.”** This will focus on the cumulative impacts of all operational and consented schemes, and undetermined applications which are still pending. It will also offer guidance on the assessment of future proposals. It will assess the impacts of more than one size of turbine, and of differing cluster sizes, and will analyse the remaining capacity in each Landscape Character Area and the district, with reference to guidance in the existing and draft revised SPD’s .

However the position statement will not be a reflection of the “accuracy or validity” of the existing SPD, indeed it is difficult to see how such an assessment could be applied to a “Guidance” document. The existing SPD is valid in the sense that it has been adopted by the Council after going through the required processes, and whether it is accurate or not in its judgements of landscape sensitivity and/or capacity can only really be tested by the ultimate arbiter of planning decisions – the appeal system and the Planning Inspectorate.

No changes are needed to the draft revised SPD with regard to this issue.

NB It must be noted that HDC have commissioned a position statement on the “Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire.” The current draft form of this study will be finalised when new planning guidance (following from Ministerial Statement on “Local Planning and Onshore Wind” dated 6th June) has been published. It will then be subject to full public consultation and be presented to Cabinet for adoption.

17. The Guidance is too restrictive

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
62/64/207-210/235/248/251/266/271/279/281/284-287

Some responses thought the guidance contained in the draft SPD was too restrictive, and that there were some scenarios that were not considered, or that in some cases the draft SPD contained conflicting guidance and assessment criteria – also see item 18 below.

Comment: The draft SPD is guidance (para 1.1) and “a starting–point for decision making (para 1.19). It does not, nor could it ever, cover all potential wind turbine development scenarios in all potential locations. It confirms that guidance contained in the draft revised SPD “should not be interpreted as a definitive statement that a particular landscape is suitable for a particular development. Every site is unique, and any proposal involving wind turbines must be informed by a detailed site specific analysis of landscape constraints and impacts.” (draft SPD,

para 1.5). **In order to re-enforce this emphasis on the uniqueness of each proposal an additional sentence will be added to para 1.5, “Each proposal will be assessed on its own merits.”**

18. Criteria to be considered when assessing landscape sensitivity

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
62-64/113/136/140/153/165/201/207/209/210/361

Consultees raised a number of issues concerning landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development and the criteria used in its assessment –

- a) Some responses questioned the relevance of the “Torridge Study” – a recent study by LUC of landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development carried out in 2011 for Torridge District Council, Devon.
- b) Some comments remarked on the seeming inconsistency of the criteria detailed in Chapter 14.
- c) Consultees were sometimes unsure whether the assessment of landscape sensitivity applied just to the immediate locality of a proposed development, or to the wider landscape and landscape character area.

Comment:

- d) Criteria for assessing landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development are based on the attributes of the landscape that are most likely to be affected by wind turbine development. These attributes are generic – things like settlement pattern, skyline, topography – and are common to all landscapes whether they are in Devon or Cambridgeshire. The “Torridge Study” is referred to in the draft SPD para 2.14 footnote 13, and part of its methodology forms the basis for Chapter 14. It has been used because it represents a refinement of the assessment methodology that formed part of the original LUC Huntingdonshire Study – and, importantly, it is a more readily understandable explanation of part of the assessment process.
No changes needed.
- e) The criteria detailed in Chapter 14 of the draft SPD will not necessarily be consistent with each other, and their relative importance in a sensitivity assessment will vary with the landscape under consideration and the type and scale of development proposed.
No changes needed.
- f) The assessment of landscape sensitivity can take place at all geographical scales. At the scale of a particular landscape character area (or on an even larger scale, such as a Natural England designated National Character Area), there could be a broad brush assessment of sensitivity to a particular type of development, but within that area there will probably be variations of sensitivity associated with smaller scale variations in landscape character. Each assessment is valid as long as the parameters that relate to it are made plain.
No changes needed.

19. Further explanation of some topics needed

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -

Some comments suggested that more information and explanation was needed with regard to certain paragraphs in the draft SPD. In particular the following -

- a) The reference to “evolving assessment” in paragraph 1.2
- b) The reference to “further survey and assessment” in para 2.7
- c) The reference to “valley crests” in paras 8.1 (a), 8.3 (b), and related issues concerning the “ridge” dividing the Kym and Ellington Brook valleys which features in the Southern Wolds chapter of the draft SPD, paras 10.2 (g), 10.3, 10.4 (h), and 10.6 (g).
- d) The reference to the SNH guidance in Chapter 13.

Comment:

- e) The reference to “evolving assessment” in para 1.2 refers to the trends in landscape sensitivity (and capacity) studies that have been undertaken since the LUC study was done in 2005 and the original Wind Power SPD was adopted in 2006. These are explained in greater detail in paras 2.3 – 2.6 of the draft SPD. There has been no specific assessment further to the LUC Study. **In the interests of clarity it is proposed to amend para 1.2 (second bullet) to read “The development of the methodological approach to assessing the landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development that has taken place since 2005”.**
- f) The reference to “further survey and assessment” in the draft SPD para 2.7 refers to the minor amendments and clarifications that have been made with regard to the new group sizes detailed in the draft SPD para 2.6. These are relevant to paras 6.3 and 9.4 in the draft SPD, and Chapter 8 on the Northern Wolds where there were various inconsistencies between the text of the LUC study, the table 14.1 in the LUC study, the text in the original SPD, and table 2.1 in the original SPD. One of the aims of the draft SPD was to clarify and reduce these inconsistencies, whilst remaining “true” to the arguments of the LUC study – and in so doing to produce a more useful and coherent SPD. **To clarify this, para 2.7 in the draft SPD will be amended to read “ Within each of these groups there may be minor qualifications. These will be drawn out from the details of the original LUC study as assessed using professional judgement of suitably qualified landscape personnel, with the aim of making this revised SPD a more usable and coherent document.”**
- g) Some responses noted the lack of definition for the term “valley crests” and the uncertainty and discussion this had engendered at the recent Inquiry for the original Bicton windfarm proposal. The term is used in the chapter on the Northern Wolds LCA, paras 8.1(a) and 8.3(b) in both the existing and draft SPDs. From the wording of paras 8.1(a) and 8.3(b) it is apparent that the thrust of the guidance is to protect the “more intimate landscape of the valleys” and the settlements located there.
I agree with the appeal decision which concluded that the word (crest) “should be understood in its normal sense as the top part of something that slopes or rises upwards. Thus a slope would have a distinct horizon, the position of the crest possibly changing depending on the position of the viewer.” see Bicton appeal decision para 25.

Attempts by various consultees to provide a concise definition usually involved invoking other equally undefined terms such as “valley sides,” and using simple diagrams which would be out of place in a supplementary planning document. The variable nature of most of the key components (such as landform, vegetation cover, scale, sensitivity etc) mean that it is impossible to create a workable criterion on this issue that would cover all the possible permutations. The only recourse is the existing one of providing

guidance on the various issues that might apply in each LCA, when considering each application on its merits.

No change needed.

- h) Most of the consultees who commented on Chapter 13 thought that the extracts from the SNH guidance were useful, and often suggested that other extracts be included. However although the SNH document is referred to, there is significant overlap between its guidance and that already contained in the draft SPD. Accordingly specific references to skylines, ridges etc will not be included as these are covered already. Nevertheless the suggestion re “small scale topography” would be a useful and relevant addition, and **a new paragraph will be added after 13.7 (but still under the heading “Size and Scale”). This to read - “Even small turbines have the potential to dominate small scale topography. Care should be taken not to introduce turbines which would have an overbearing presence on complex or intricate landforms.”**

20. Concerns that Chapter 13 of the draft revised SPD classifies 100m height turbines as “small,” and assumes that all turbines less than 100m height have similar impacts, and other issues with regard to such turbines.

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 90/109/135/151/164/169/192/223/265

- a) Some consultees considered that Chapter 13 “Siting and Design Issues for Turbines less than 100m” implied that all such turbines are classified as “small” when compared with commercial scale turbines of over 100m in height to blade tip – and that consequently their landscape and visual effects were also classified as being of a similar scale.
- b) Some responses sought clarification of the regulations surrounding Environmental Impact Assessments and what scale of turbine development might require an EIA. There was a suggestion that all turbines over 80m should require an EIA submitted with the planning application.
- c) Other responses suggested that there should be more detailed guidance for small scale wind turbine developments.

Comment:

- d) There was an unfortunate typographical error in para 13.1 of the draft revised SPD. The last line of this para should read “...**smaller turbines**...” and not “...small turbine...” as the consultation version stated. This will be amended. The LUC study, the original Wind Power SPD, and the draft revised SPD all focus primarily on commercial scale turbines with a height of 120m +/- 20m. Turbines below this scale are “smaller” – though not “small.” Because HDC receives many applications for turbines below 100m height it was deemed sensible and logical to include relevant guidance in this document. At no place in this chapter is there any suggestion that all turbines of 100m height and lower have similar impacts – indeed the draft revised SPD states repeatedly that each case must be treated on its merits, and gives site specific guidance indicating that impacts will vary with scale and location of the proposal. In order to reinforce these points, and for avoidance of doubt, para 13.1 will be amended to include an additional sentence immediately before the last sentence of that para – “...**are acceptable. Turbines less than 100m height will have varying landscape and visual effects, as commercial**”

scale turbines do, depending on height, cluster size, location and a variety of other factors discussed below. As with...

- e) EIA requirements follow from an EU directive which is encompassed in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011. HDC must comply with these regulations. A full EIA is an extremely wide ranging assessment covering many issues that may not all be relevant to every qualifying project. However when a Scoping Opinion is requested by a developer, HDC can require certain information even if it deems that a full EIA is not necessary. In the case of wind turbine developments it is common practice to require a fully detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (and other assessments eg Ornithology, Cultural Heritage) even if an EIA is not required. **No changes needed.**
- f) Guidance for small scale turbine developments is discussed in Chapter 13 (with other references), the HDC note “Wind Turbine Developments – a Guidance Note for Applicants and Agents,” and there is also relevant information in the draft position statement “Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines.” Each case must be assessed on its merits, but these documents discuss the relevant issues which must be considered. It would be impossible for any guidance to cover all the permutations of turbine size, cluster size, location etc. This issue based approach is the most realistic and practical. **No changes needed.**

21. Comments on Specific Guidance Criteria for Various Character Areas

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 318/338/353/354/366

- a) Some comments (often associated with the Stop Bicton Wind Farm Action Group) suggested that the site specific guidance for the Northern Wolds LCA should be amended at para 8.3(g) so that Southern Wolds LCA was added.
- b) HDC Overview and Scrutiny Panel requested that Ouse Valley LCA guidance para 6.1(e) be reconsidered.

Comment :

- c) Para 8.3(g) recommends that when siting a potential small-scale wind turbine development of 2-5 turbines care should be taken to “consider the impact on views of the horizon from the Central Claylands, Fen Margin and Fens.”
The Northern Wolds LCA shares long boundaries with the Central Claylands and Fen Margin LCAs. Additionally it has a strong visual connection with the Fens LCA, with the Northern Wolds often forming the skyline of long distance views from the Fens even though their boundaries are not shared – hence the rationale behind 8.3(g).
But the Northern Wolds LCA also shares a long boundary with the Southern Wolds, and this link is referred to in the LUC study - paras 11.1 and 11.2 last bullet point. Relevant issues include –
 - i. These two wolds LCAs have important physical features in common too, namely the valley of the river Kym and the ridge of higher ground that overlooks this valley. Both

these features run on a roughly north west / south east axis extending from the county boundary west of Tilbrook to the Ouse Valley.

- ii. The ridge is more wooded in the Southern Wolds LCA and is an important element of the site specific guidance criteria for that LCA.
- iii. The key issues of the Northern Wolds chapter of the Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD include the “protection of key views towards the distinctive skyline of ridge tops, church towers, and woodland.

For these reasons it is consistent with existing guidance to **amend para 8.3(g) to read “Consider the impact on views of the horizon from the Central Claylands, Southern Wolds, Fen Margins, and Fens.”**

- d) The draft revised SPD states that the Ouse Valley LCA has a high capacity for a single turbine, although locations would be “relatively constrained, particularly with regard to potential effects on nature conservation values.” Other relevant aspects of the guidance include retaining “the sense of tranquillity and relative isolation” and avoiding the “areas which retain a distinctive valley landscape.” In the light of these potential constraints, and given the stated capacity for a single turbine, it is entirely sensible that the guidance recommends consideration of locations “in association with existing infrastructure,” so that the higher sensitivity locations within the LCA which are so important in maintaining the key characteristics of tranquillity and high ecological value are avoided.

No changes needed.

22. Rejection of the Premises of the Draft Revised SPD

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
4/19/43/44/45/54/221/237/242/246/270/320/322/323/350/351/360

A number of consultees, including some individual council members, rejected the implicit assumption of the Draft Revised SPD that suitable locations throughout the district might be able to accommodate turbine development of an appropriate scale. Several consultees thought that only the Fens and adjacent low lying areas had the landscape qualities to accommodate commercial scale turbines, and that the visual impacts of such developments were unacceptable in the remainder of the district. Significant changes were proposed to the SPD.

Comment: The introduction to the Draft Revised SPD (paras 1.2 and 1.6) makes it clear that the purpose of the revision to the existing Wind Power SPD was not to rewrite its conclusions; to do so would have required another extensive study and this was deemed wholly unnecessary as the draft revised SPD was felt to be broadly in line with national policy (NPPF, National Policy Statements and PPS22 Companion Guide), contained appropriate guidance that could be used in Development Management, and reflected the issues and judgements made at relevant appeals.

Having Supplementary Planning Guidance which is not compliant with national policy is not a realistic option for a local planning authority, as would become quickly apparent when the inevitable appeals were decided.

No changes needed.

23. Great Fen Project

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 47/99/111/141/150/196/356

Some responses noted the “policy protection” for the Great Fen area highlighted at paras 2.15 and chapters 3 and 4. Clarification was requested as to why similar protection was not being recommended for other areas of high landscape, nature conservation, or biodiversity value.

Comment: The NPPF (Section 11 “Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment”) specifically lists nationally designated areas, such as National Parks and AONBs, where great weight should be given to “conserving landscape and scenic beauty.” It lists categories of site designated for their nature conservation and/or biodiversity value, (Ramsar sites, SSSIs etc) where planning permission should be refused unless certain conditions are met and sets out the general principle in NPPF para 113 that “*Local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks.*”

Huntingdonshire has no nationally designated landscape areas, but it does possess some significant and designated areas of outstanding nature conservation and biodiversity value. The Great Fen project is the largest and most significant of these, and its status has been recognised in emerging local plan policies and supporting text (see draft policy LP7: Strategic Green Infrastructure Enhancement, and supporting text 4.75. NB the original footnote 14 to para 2.15 will need updating to reflect current emerging policy). Other areas with nature conservation and biodiversity interest are referred to in the emerging local plan, but none apart from the Great Fen have the “policy protection” against wind turbine development. It must be noted however that local plan policies would not preclude proposals for wind turbines in or near the Great Fen, only that the policy would be an important material consideration when determining the application. Similarly other designated areas (SSSIs etc), which might be affected by a proposal, would also be a material consideration but the weight given them would be less than that given to the Great Fen, given its specific inclusion in the emerging local plan – though of course each case must be assessed on its merits.

No changes needed, apart from updating of footnote 14, para 2.15.

24. Factual Errors and Misunderstandings in Some Consultee Responses

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
58/82/89/131/132/146/194/195/255/315/316/325/326/329/339-342/345

Some responses contained particular factual errors, some of which were common to several responses. These repeated errors were –

- a) Assuming the locally designated “Area of Best Landscape” has current status – this designation was abolished following the publication of PPS7 in 2004.
- b) Assuming that other LPAs have policies which fix a minimum distance between turbines and dwellings / settlements – there are no such policies. There may be recommendations or draft recommendations. Milton Keynes DC recently “lost” a Judicial Review on such an issue, though the case was complicated by other related matters. South Cambs DC do not have such a “minimum distance rule.” The government position is still one of opposition to the introduction of any “minimum distance rule.”

- c) Assuming that designating an LCA as having a high capacity for a particular scale of turbine development automatically gives permission for such developments in any part of the LCA - this is a misunderstanding of the SPD guidance, which can militate against particular applications wherever they may be proposed, eg the application for the original wind farm proposal at Bicton, near Kimbolton where the SPD guidance was an important part of the Inspector's decision to dismiss an appeal after HDC had refused planning permission.
- d) Assuming that all new commercial scale applications will be for turbines greater than 127m height – the most recent applications (at Molesworth and Bicton) are for turbine heights of 126m and 125m respectively.
- e) Assuming that the terminology classifying group cluster sizes applies across all height bands, ie implying that a group of six 40m turbines is a medium scale group, but a group of three 125m turbines is only a small scale group – the draft revised SPD Chapter 1 makes clear that it applies primarily to turbines of 120m +/- 20m, and the terminology of cluster sizes is consistent within that height band. At no point is it claimed that the terminology should be used across differing height bands, and apart from Chapter 13 other height bands are not considered.

APPENDIX 1: List of those responding to the public consultation.

Full Name	Company / Organisation
	Lightfoot Design
	Pegasus Planning Group
	Renewable Energy Systems Ltd
	HDC Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-being)
	Nene Valley Gliding Club
	TCI Renewables Ltd
Andrew Brown	
Anna and Michael Horrell	
Ann Enticknap	St Ives Town Council
Beatrice Brandon	

Caroline McArthur	
Chris and Vicky Wood	
Chris Kemp	
Chrissie Short	
Christopher J Ayrton	
Cllr Jonathan Gray	
Cllr Mrs Banerjee	
Cllr Peter Reeve	
Cllr Robin Howe	
Cllr Ian Bates	
David Brown	
David Orr	
Denise Johnson	
Gareth Martin	Fenland District Council
Geoff Burn	
Geoffrey Pawling	
Henry Malt	
Jon Croke	
Klokkaris	
Lynda and David Grindley	
Margaret Malt	
Marie Stacey	Hallmark Power Ltd
Martin and Diane Patterson	
Miss Emma Naylor	Peterborough City Council
Miss Nicola Bell	RWE Npower Renewables Ltd (RWE NRL)
Miss Sian Williams	The Wildlife Trust BCN
Mr Alan Marnes	
Mr Allan Parsons	
Mr and Mrs Abel	
Mr Andrew Pooley	
Mr Bev Gray	CFAG
Mr Charles Paull	Tilbrook Parish Council
Mr David Abbott	Highways Agency
Mr Gareth Ridewood	CPRE Cambridgeshire
Mr George Isaacs	
Mr Ian Dickson	
Mr Jack Kenny	
Mr James Muelchi	
Mr John Chase	Buckden Parish Council
Mr John Gimblett	
Mr Jonathan Chitty	
Mr K Fowler	
Mr Larry Fitch	Abbotsley Parish Council
Mr Lionel Thatcher	Kimbolton & Stonely Parish Council
Mr Maurice Dixon	
Mr Nathan Hawkes	

Mr Richard Flynn	
Mr Rimmer	
Mr Rob Watson	
Mr Ronald Jones	
Mr Roy Reeves	Warboys Parish Council
Mrs Anne Beszant	
Mrs Fiona Anderson	Hamerton & Steeple Gidding Parish Council
Mrs Joy Allington	
Mrs Lorna Lane-Ley	
Mrs Margaret Telford	
Mrs Marjorie Tattersall	
Mrs Odette Eldred	
Mrs Pat Barker	Brington and Molesworth Parish Council
Mrs Pat Dillon	Toseland Parish Council
Mrs Penelope Bryant	Somersham Parish Council
Mrs Sarah Wilson	Godmanchester TC
Mrs S Maher	
Mrs Victoria Wood	Stop Molesworth Wind Farm Action Group
Mr Thomas Cosgrove	Broadview Energy
Mr Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge	English Heritage
Mr Watters	
Ms Amy Howard	
Ms Zoe Woods	
Offord Cluny & Darcy Parish Council	Offord Cluny & Offord Darcy Parish Council
Pam Wardle	Catworth Parish Council
Pat Huff	
Planning Liaison Anglian Central	The Environment Agency
Revd Philip Foster	
Richard Murphy	Stop Bicton Wind Farm
Richard West	
Rob Colmer	
Rodney Nelson	
Rowland Wood	
Sarah Malt	
Silvia Earl	
Stephen Brandon	
Susan Bickley	
Susan Hayward	

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX C

Report to:

Huntingdonshire District Council

**Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact of
Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire**

A Position Statement

prepared by

The Landscape Partnership

Final Draft May 2103

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Policy and Guidance Background
3. Review of constraints and existing wind turbines schemes in Huntingdonshire
4. Criteria to guide the assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects
5. Guidance to applicants for undertaking Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts

APPENDICES

1. Examples of approach to cumulative effects by local authorities
2. Examples of relevant appeals
3. References
4. Glossary

FIGURES

Constraints

- Figure 01 Topography, Watercourses and Landscape Character Areas
Figure 02 National Biodiversity Designations
Figure 03 Cultural Heritage
Figure 04 Existing wind turbine schemes including those 'In Planning'

Current schemes (Operational and Consented only)

- Figure 05 Prominent and Conspicuous Zones
Figure 06 Prominent and Conspicuous Zones and Constraints

Current & Potential schemes (Operational, Consented and those 'In Planning')

- Figure 07 Prominent and Conspicuous Zones
Figure 08 Prominent and Conspicuous Zones and Constraints

1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the report

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by The Landscape Partnership on behalf of Huntingdonshire District Council, who commissioned a study in February 2013 to consider the cumulative impacts of wind turbines and the future capacity of the landscape to accommodate further wind turbines in the District. The study and report is a position statement to inform the officers and members of Huntingdonshire District Council. It evaluates the current cumulative situation and also proposes some guidance on potential criteria for the assessment of cumulative landscape and visual impacts arising from wind turbine proposals.
- 1.2 Cumulative effects have been defined in a generic sense as, *'impacts that result from incremental changes caused by other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions together.'*¹
- 1.3 In terms of wind turbine development cumulative impacts have been defined as, *'the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together. In practice the terms 'effects' and 'impacts' are used interchangeably.'*²
- 1.4 It should be recognised that cumulative landscape and visual effects are just two aspects of a full range of issues that should be considered in relation to guiding a strategy for wind energy in Huntingdonshire and for any proposal for wind turbine development. The revised SPD should form the basis for assessing landscape sensitivity. The approach to a number of other issues is set out in Huntingdonshire District Council's 'Wind Turbine Developments – A Guidance Note for Applicants and Agents'. (Revised version June 2013)

Background

- 1.5 The current Huntingdonshire District Council SPD relating to wind turbines in the landscape is "Supplementary Planning Document: Wind Power" [Feb 2006]. This study was based on the landscape character units identified in an original assessment of Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) in the District that was carried out by LDA in 2002 [adopted in 2007]. The existing SPD Wind Power [2006] is also underpinned by the study "Wind Turbine Development in Huntingdonshire" prepared by Land Use Consultants in 2005. The capacities shown for each of the LCAs in the 2006 SPD were based on a situation where there were no existing wind

¹ Hyder (1999) *'Guidelines for the Assessment of indirect and cumulative impacts as well as impact interactions'*

² Scottish Natural Heritage (2012) *Assessing the Cumulative Effect of Onshore Wind Energy Developments*

turbine developments in HDC and therefore represented a projection based on best information and guidance available at the time.

- 1.6 Revisions are proposed to the 2006 SPD in the light of: changes in the planning system including the introduction of the NPPF, the new Local Plan and changes in the methodologies for assessing turbines. The Draft Revised SPD 'Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development' (2012) offers guidance on siting and the potential capacity of each of the Landscape Character Areas to accommodate various scales of Wind Turbine Development: from a single turbine to a large scale group. The Draft SPD also indicates the cumulative landscape capacity within each landscape character area for each group size. The Draft Revised SPD "Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development" has been subject to public consultation and is due for consideration in its post consultation state by Council Members in July 2013
- 1.7 The bulk of the text within the Draft Revised SPD concentrates on the capacity for turbines between 100m and 140m in height. However, additional general guidance is provided for the siting of turbines below 100m within Chapter 14 of the draft revised version. Further discussion about the cumulative aspects in the Draft SPD, are provided in Section 2 below.

Requirements for this study

- 1.8 Huntingdonshire District Council has identified an urgent need to provide a position statement which details the cumulative impacts of all operational and consented Wind Turbine Developments (WTDs) of all scales and turbine sizes, and an assessment of the remaining capacity within the LCA's and the District as a whole for WTDs. This independent position statement should focus on the cumulative landscape and visual impacts and in particular the remaining landscape capacity in each LCA and the district. The position statement should be compliant with the NPPF and relevant local policy.
- 1.9 The report will study the current cumulative effects of wind turbines in the district, and offer guidance to officers, members, developers and the general public on the capacity of local landscapes to accommodate further wind turbine development. Its analysis will be used in the consideration of potential cumulative impacts resulting from new wind energy proposals. The evidence it presents will support Huntingdonshire District Council's emerging local plan policies and the draft revised SPD "Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development" and together with the "Guidance Note for Applicants and Agents" and the 2005 LUC Study "Wind Turbine Development in Huntingdonshire," it forms a suite of documents that inform these policies.

1.10 The study was identified to cover the following aspects:

- a) A review of existing renewable policy and the SPD by HDC together with the proposed Draft SPD : Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development with regard to guidance on capacity and cumulative impacts
- b) The identification and plotting in GIS of all single turbine and wind farm developments in the District grouped into the following categories :
 - o operational
 - o consented but not built
 - o planning application or appeal stage
- c) The identification and plotting in GIS of all single turbine or wind farm developments within 10km distance from the district boundary.
- d) On site 'ground truthing' of the local context in Huntingdonshire and the current landscape and visual impacts of wind turbines and wind farms with particular reference to the sensitivity and capacity criteria in the existing and Draft Revised SPD.
- e) Review of selected recent appeal decisions in England where cumulative landscape and visual impact has been a consideration in allowing or dismissing appeals to provide some benchmarking criteria.
- f) Review of selected SPD's guidance from other LPA's for cumulative effect of wind turbines.
- g) Recommendations for assessing capacity and for considering current and future applications in HDC with regard to the cumulative landscape and visual impact.

1.11 The study provides a strategic overview of the current situation at a point in time. It also sets out a number of criteria which should be used as a guide to identifying and assessing cumulative effects. The recommendations are not to be interpreted as absolute in all respects. For each application there will still be a requirement for developers to undertake a detailed site based assessment of cumulative impacts including for any other consented wind turbine proposals and any others still 'in planning' at the time. Guidance for undertaking these studies is found at Section 5 of this report.

1.12 The findings of this report are not intended to replace the requirements of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact

Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 (as amended). Detailed consideration of a site may identify factors specific to that site which will need to be balanced alongside issues identified in this document.

2 POLICY AND GUIDANCE BACKGROUND

2.1 The report has considered government guidance and other studies including those carried out by and for local authorities on the cumulative impacts of wind turbines undertaken within England, Scotland and Wales. Selected Inspector decisions from public inquiries, where cumulative impacts have formed one of the main determining factors have also been included. Whilst each of these studies and inspectors' decisions must relate to the specific aspects of the landscape and views in which they are set, they do nevertheless provide 'benchmarking' on accepted approaches to considering cumulative impacts and the type of landscape and distances which are currently being considered to be acceptable or unacceptable. Creating a national picture of general principles can then be applied and related to the situation in Huntingdonshire to create a picture that is appropriate to the District.

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

2.2 The key paragraphs in the NPPF relevant to the cumulative effect of WTD are 97 and 98 as set out below:

97 To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. They should:

- *have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources;*
- *design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts;*
- *consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure the development of such sources;*

98. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should:

- *not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and*
- *approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should also expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.*

National Policy Statements for Energy EN1 and EN3 (both July 2011)

- 2.3 Para 97 also refers to EN1 and EN3 as being relevant considerations. National Policy Statements EN1 and EN3 were primarily produced to advise on large energy infrastructure projects (> 50MW). However, the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should follow the approach in these documents and for this reason they are still relevant. However EN1 and EN3 do not include any specific guidance on cumulative landscape and visual effects. However EN1 does state at para 5.9.19, *It may be helpful for applicants to draw attention, in the supporting evidence to their applications, to any examples of existing permitted infrastructure they are aware of with a similar magnitude of impact on sensitive receptors. This may assist the IPC in judging the weight it should give to the assessed visual impacts of the proposed development.* This would seem to support the use of other schemes where there may be cumulative impact issues to 'benchmark' any cumulative landscape and visual impact.

PPS22 Renewable Energy – A Companion Guide (2004)

- 2.4 The PPS 22 Companion Guide remains an extant document. The companion guide provides practical advice as to how the policies originally set out in PPS22 could be implemented, and the retention of the companion guide indicates that this advice is still pertinent. Section 4 states in regard to key issues in planning for renewables at the local (District) level ,

'4.5 Local planning authorities have an important role to play in the implementation of appropriate renewable energy schemes. Both as policy-makers and as more direct agents of change, they have the opportunity to engage with local communities and to achieve real progress towards national and regional targets.

4.6 Key issues in planning for renewables at the local level include:

- the introduction of the spatial planning approach within the new system provides an important opportunity for integrating renewable energy generation into the wider local planning framework;*
- local planning authorities should prepare criteria-based policies that focus on key local issues, within the framework set out by national planning policy and the Regional Spatial Strategy, or Spatial Development Strategy in London. Policies may relate to standalone schemes or the development of integrated renewables within developments;*
- supplementary planning documents can be useful in illustrating how particular types of technology, or passive solar design principles, can be applied in the particular local context;*

- 2.5 Section 5 of the Companion Guide provides guidance on the assessment of landscape and visual impact issues relating to individual development proposals, and also cumulative effects as set out in Section 5 below.

“Placing Renewables in the East of England” – Report produced for EERA by Ove Arup (Feb 2008)

- 2.6 The East of England Plan also known as the Regional Spatial Strategy was revoked in 2012. However, parts of the evidence base have still been identified as of relevance. The regional renewable energy study ‘Placing Renewables in the East of England’ (Arup) considered the potential of the Eastern Region to accommodate (among other technologies) WTD. It was based on a regional strategic and largely desk based approach that identified the landscape capacity based on the National Character Area (NCA) scale of unit. The study found that both NCA 46 (The Fens) and NCA 88 (The Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands) had a ‘low-medium/medium’ sensitivity to wind turbines at a height of 100-140m. The findings of this assessment were due to the relatively large scale and simple nature of the two NCA landscapes assessed as a whole. However, there are some marked local variations within the claylands in particular that would indicate more variable sensitivity at a local scale.
- 2.7 With regard to cumulative impacts an estimate of the theoretical ‘maximum’ capacity of the NCA’s was undertaken. This identified that major visual effects could occur at up to 10km distance (based on research by The University of Newcastle upon Tyne). However, with modifying factors including tree screening in the region it was considered that tolerance of severe-major effects up to 5km may be acceptable in cases where there are fewer receptors, such as sparsely populated and less sensitive landscapes. In these locations a separation distance of 10km between wind farms was therefore examined to assess capacity. Where there were a greater number of receptors or a higher sensitivity landscape, greater separation distances of 15km between wind farms was considered to avoid notable cumulative impact on receptors and overwhelming the scale of the landscape involved.

Assessing the cumulative impact of onshore wind energy developments - Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH March 2012)

- 2.8 SNH have produced an updated version of their earlier 2006 document on cumulative effects and this covers the effect on landscape and birds. This study forms one of the most detailed guidance documents in the UK on assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects. The majority of the publication guides local authorities, applicants and consultants on how to carry out cumulative assessment for specific applications. However it also provides guidance on strategic planning. Reference is made to ‘Strategic Locational Guidance for onshore Wind farms in respect of the Natural Heritage Policy statement no. 02/02’ (SNH) which notes the presence of three zones of sensitivity in Scotland.

Zone 1:

Lowest natural heritage sensitivity identifies areas at the broad scale with least sensitivity to wind farms, with the greatest opportunity for development, within which overall a large number of developments could be acceptable in natural heritage terms, so long as they are undertaken sensitively and with due regard to cumulative impact. (15% of land area of Scotland)

Zone 2: Medium natural heritage sensitivity identifies areas with some sensitivities to wind farms. However, by careful choice of location within these areas there is often scope to accommodate development of an appropriate scale, siting and design (again having regard to cumulative effects) in a way which is acceptable in natural heritage terms. (55 % of land area of Scotland)

Zone 3:

High natural heritage sensitivity identifies areas of greatest sensitivity to wind farms, which place the greatest constraint on their development, and where, in general, proposals are unlikely to be acceptable in natural heritage terms. There may however be some sites in this zone where wind farm development of appropriate scale and careful design could be accommodated if potential impacts on the natural heritage are fully explored and guarded against by employing the highest standard in siting and design. (30% of land area of Scotland)

2.9 The 2012 cumulative guidance also states from para 18 that in relation to Strategic Planning,

18. In all cases, the focus is on forward planning: setting out the vision for windfarm development; and determining the thresholds of acceptable change, where the most suitable locations for development are, and what might be an appropriate design and scale.

19. The strategic plans (often underpinned by a landscape capacity study) should consider a range of specific scenarios, in terms of the numbers, scale and distribution of windfarm developments to be accommodated. It should then make use of the resulting cumulative impact assessment to draw conclusions as to which of these scenarios is acceptable.

20. The area included within a strategic cumulative assessment should not be constrained by administrative boundaries. Effective assessments should cover the whole of a region, straddling more than one planning authority, or that of a natural heritage management unit such as a National Park or Firth Partnership area.

21. *Planning authorities are encouraged by Scottish Planning Policy to:*

- *define broad areas of search suitable for large scale (>20MW) wind farms (equal to approximately 10no. 125m turbines)*
- *identify the criteria they should meet through the development of Supplementary Planning Guidance.*

22. *This approach will have enhanced value if it is also associated with a view of the **capacity** of the area for such development and identification of the critical factors which are likely to present an eventual limit to development. We have recently published a review of landscape capacity studies which provides useful advice.*

2.10 The above extracts identify that the identification of thresholds is appropriate together with the fact that there would be an eventual limit to development. The approach to using various scenarios of development has been undertaken by a number of authorities in Scotland and England. However, no firm figures or hard thresholds are provided identifying the likely limit of development. Clearly the landscape capacity and other factors will vary locally.

2.11 Section 3 of the SNH report notes at para 45,

The cumulative impact of windfarm development on landscape and visual amenity is a product of:

- *the distance between individual windfarms (or turbines),*
- *the distance over which they are visible,*
- *the overall character of the landscape and its sensitivity to windfarms,*
- *the siting and design of the windfarms themselves, and*
- *the way in which the landscape is experienced.*

2.12 These factors are all important and there is no reason why these cannot form a consideration in the development of strategic advice at the local scale for Huntingdonshire District Council.

Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impacts Assessment (LI and IEMEA) (April 2013)

2.13 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) is now in its third edition. The updated 2013 version includes for the first time a chapter (7) on cumulative landscape and visual effects. It recognises that the study of cumulative effects for WTD has been at the forefront of the development of cumulative assessment in part due to the number and size of the structures involved. The majority of Chapter 7 in the GLVIA is focused on the process of guidance for carrying out a cumulative assessment for a specific proposal. This is logical as the primary purpose of the GLVIA is to guide those carrying out EIAs. Part of the

process includes identification of which other schemes to include in a cumulative assessment. The GLVIA indicates that this should usually be those that are existing, consented or at planning application/appeal stage. Only in exceptional circumstances should it include those not yet submitted as a planning application and in such circumstances this is more likely to apply to nationally significant infrastructure projects (i.e. > 50MW for wind turbines).

2.14 Para 7.17 of the GLVIA sets out a range of types of cumulative effects including the following which are considered to be of particular relevance to WTD:

- An extension to an existing scheme or a new development that intensifies the landscape and visual effects in addition of other existing schemes
- Filling an area with the same or different types of development over time such that it substantially alters the landscape resource, views or visual amenity
- Incremental change such that the combined landscape or visual effect becomes significant even though the individual schemes in their own right may not be – this may e.g. apply to a number of smaller turbines within an area

2.15 In relation to the extent of a study area the GLVIA suggests (para 7.21 and 7.30) that this maybe reflected through the use of LCAs as a unit to assess the effects and/or through combined Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV). The GLVIA also encourages a practical and pragmatic approach to cumulative study areas to ensure that the assessment is focused on identifying the extent of 'significant' cumulative effects rather than recording any level of effect regardless of magnitude.

2.16 The GLVIA also considers cases where there may be wider concerns about cumulative impacts where it states at para 7.41,

'where the cumulative landscape and/or visual effects of the proposal combined with the cumulative baseline lead to a need for the consenting authority to take broader action, such as implementing an overarching mitigation programme or amending planning policies based on their judgement that the effects on receptors have reached or passed an acceptable threshold.'

The above extract would indicate that an approach such as that set out in this study (see Sections 3 and 4 below) have a basis for identifying thresholds and criteria to assess current and future applications where cumulative issues are involved.

Huntingdonshire District Council SPD: Wind Power (Feb 2006)

- 2.17 This document represents the currently adopted SPD on WTD which is now under review as set out below. The study was in turn based on an earlier study of 2005 Wind Turbine Development in Huntingdonshire by LUC.

Wind Turbine Development - A Guidance Note for Applicants and Agents

(revised version June 2013)

- 2.18 This note provides guidance on the factors to include in the assessment leading to planning applications whether as part of an ES or as supporting information for an application that does not require an ES. There is no specific guidance related to cumulative effects in this note.

Huntingdonshire District Council Draft Revised SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development (2012)

- 2.19 The Draft Revised SPD sets out the intended approach of the District to wind energy. With regard to cumulative effects the capacity for each LCA to accommodate 'more than one' WTD is assessed within the details for each LCA. A limit of turbine numbers or group sizes is based on the relative landscape sensitivity of the LCA's.

Other Local Authority SPDs and related studies

- 2.20 The process of considering cumulative landscape and visual effects from WTD has also been considered by a number of local authorities who have conducted their own studies and a number have produced SPDs. While each geographical location and local authority is distinct, reference to comparable studies can be a useful means for benchmarking the approaches taken elsewhere to inform the choice of criteria used in this study. Appendix 1 provides a brief summary of reference studies considered.

Appeal Decision principles

- 2.21 A number of appeal decisions involving cumulative landscape and visual impacts have been reviewed. Each case should always be considered on its own merits and site specific circumstances. However, Appendix 2 includes a summary of relevant points from the various Inspectors findings and identifies some principles relating to cumulative issues from each appeal.

3. REVIEW OF CONSTRAINTS AND EXISTING WIND TURBINE SCHEMES IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

3.1 The assessment of cumulative issues involves an appreciation of a number of factors. This study has identified a number of constraints relevant to WTD and represented and analysed this data using GIS. A number of the following topics are illustrated by accompanying Figures 01-04. Each of the drawings also plot the Huntingdonshire District LCA boundaries and also show a 10km buffer from the District boundary. The relative capacity of each LCA for wind turbine developments of specific group numbers has been more fully assessed in the original LUC study, the current SPD and the Draft Revised SPD Review.

Topography and watercourses

3.2 Figure 01 illustrates the underlying pattern of landform and watercourses within Huntingdonshire set against the defined LCA's. At a national scale the District is primarily located with NCA 88 (Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands) with a proportion to the north east located within NCA 46 (The Fens). The Huntingdonshire LCAs are a refinement of the NCAs and provide a district scale focus that is applicable to the assessment of suitability for WTD. The main ridgelines in the district have been shown on Fig 01 together with an indication of the distances between ridges. The pattern of landform and drainage in each of the Huntingdonshire LCAs is summarised below:

- **The Fens:** The LCA is located to the north east of the district and is essentially a flat landscape with heights ranging by no more than 1 or 2 metres above or below sea level. There is a complex network of drains, dykes and lodes many following the reclaimed geometric field pattern. The area and associated higher land to the west drains into either, the River Nene Old Course, Yaxley Lode or the Fenton Lode/Twenty Foot Drain on route to the Wash.
- **The Fen Margin:** The LCA follows the western and southern edge of the Fens. Landform is gently sloping and typically between 2-10m AOD. There are localised areas that reach up to c. 20 metres e.g. Warboys Heath. The drainage includes a number of tributary streams that run off the claylands into the Fens to the east.
- **The Central Claylands:** The LCA is a large gently undulating plateau typically 30-40m AOD and reaching up to just over 50m to the north west. The area historically hosted a number of airfields. There are some gentle tributary valleys with associated streams in which a number of small villages are located e.g. Abbots Ripton and Broughton. The area mainly drains to the north east with some other areas draining to the south east towards the Ouse and Alconbury Brook to the south West also to the Ouse.
- **The Ouse Valley:** The LCA comprises the valley of the main river within the District. The valley sides comprise moderate to gentle side slopes with a number of associated

secondary tributary valleys. The valley is c. 5-6km wide between the flanking areas of higher ground. The central flood plain and valley floor is c. 2km wide and meanders north and then east through the area. The LCA also includes a series of water bodies associated with former mineral extraction in the valley floor.

- **South East Claylands:** The LCA forms the north west extension of a more extensive undulating area of clay plateau that continues into South Cambridgeshire District to the east. The landform slopes down to the Ouse Valley to the north and west and the land drains via a number tributary streams in shallow valleys. The LCA has similar characteristics to much of The Central Claylands.
- **The Northern Wolds:** This LCA includes land in the north western part of the District. It includes areas of relatively higher ground between 40-70m AOD. There are also a number of more marked ridges and valleys generally running in a north west /south east orientation. The ridges are separated by a number of valleys with streams including the headwaters of Alconbury Brook and Ellington Brook. The intervals between the ridges vary from between 5.5km to as little as 2km where the landform creates a greater sense of enclosure and rolling undulations.
- **The Graham Water:** The LCA is a small area focused on the reservoir and surrounding fringes. The landform encloses the reservoir that hosted the Diddlington Brook before it was dammed. The area is relatively self-contained from wider views.
- **The Southern Wolds:** The LCA wraps around Graham Water and extends to the A14 in the north and A1 to the east. The LCA includes a number of plateau areas and undulations but these are not typically as marked as in the Northern Wolds. The River Kym is the main watercourse that flows through Kimbolton eastwards to the Ouse in a broad valley c. 4km wide. Other secondary tributaries flow to the Ellington Brook to the north.
- **The Nene Valley:** This LCA is a very small LCA that forms the southern valley slopes and flood plain of the much larger Nene Valley that meandering through Northamptonshire to Peterborough and eventually to the Wash. The District boundary follows the course of the river from Elton to Alwalton. There are a few tributary streams that flow off the Northern Wolds to the Nene.

Biodiversity Designations

- 3.3 Figure 02 shows the national designations for bio-diversity including NNR's, RAMSAR, SSSI, SPA's, SAC's and Ancient Woodland. None of the designations have been 'buffered'. Consultation on any specific proposals may highlight constraints depending on the wildlife interest and designations affected. This could have a fairly modest impacts e.g. 50-100m offsets while in the case or RAMSAR sites this may have a greater impact e.g. if there were an it affected flight path so protected bird species. In addition the Great Fen Project and has been included together with the identified wider setting area. This area occupies a large part

of The Fens and smaller parts of both the Fen Margin LCA and Central Claylands LCAs. It is anticipated that turbine proposals would not be acceptable in the Great Fen Project Area and its Landscape and Visual Setting. Local Plan policy LP7 (Strategic Green Infrastructure Enhancement) and supporting text para 4.75 confirm the presumption against wind turbine development in these areas.

Heritage

- 3.4 Figure 03 illustrates a number of the main heritage designations. These include Registered Parks and Gardens (e.g. Elton Hall), Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas (which include numerous villages and some larger areas along the River Ouse and at Ramsey) and the Grade 1 and II* listed buildings which represent those assets of greatest heritage value. These two classes of listed building are likely to include the majority of the village churches and other major landmark buildings in the landscape as identified at para 2.12 in the Draft Revised SPD. Grade II listed buildings are also considered to be of national value but are not shown on the Figure due to the numbers involved. Grade II buildings should also be assessed as part of any proposal. Buffers have not been shown around these heritage assets as individual assessment would be required to determine the nature of any direct effects, or effects on the setting of the assets that may affect their significance as heritage assets.

Settlement

- 3.5 The pattern of settlement in the district includes a number of market towns, villages and individual properties. Proximity of settlement and in particular residential locations from WTD is an important constraint. In this study it is considered that a 'dominant effect' could occur up to 1km from a WTD where the turbines are between 100-129m to blade tip. The 1km distance indicates the likely outer extent of where a WTD could have an effect on residential amenity resulting in, *'an unpleasantly overwhelming and unavoidable presence in main views from a house or garden, (where) there is every likelihood that the property concerned would come to be widely regarded as an unattractive and thus unsatisfactory (but not necessarily uninhabitable) place to live.'*³ Clearly the specific circumstances e.g. localised screening or orientation could reduce this distance. A 2km offset identifies the distance where there are still likely to be significant impacts on visual amenity and the property could be in the 'prominent zone' of visual effect. These distances for the dominant and prominent zones for different heights turbine are shown in Table 8.

³ Enifer Downs (APP/X2220/A/08/2071880)

Existing Turbines within Huntingdonshire

3.6 The current situation within Huntingdonshire has been assessed in terms of:

- Schemes either constructed or consented but not yet built
- Schemes 'in planning' – based on an application having been submitted or at appeal

The turbines are shown on Figure 04. Figure 01 also shows the pattern of WTD in the District and illustrates the position of many of the turbines on the local ridges within the District. Figures 01 and 04 also show the turbines outside the Huntingdonshire within a 10km offset of the HDC boundary (excluding those In Planning). The turbines outside HDC have been plotted based on information from RESTA the Department of Energy and Climate Change (<http://restats.decc.gov.uk/app/pub/map/map/>).

3.7 The schemes included in the constructed and / consented but not built status are identified in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Constructed and Consented schemes in Huntingdonshire as at 1.5.13

Site Name	Planning application ref	No. turbines	Proposed Tip Ht (To nearest m)
Ashfield, Meadow Rd, Gransden	1201268FUL	1	20
Birds Nest, Parkhall Road, Somersham	1200225FUL	1	20
Brook Farm, Ellington	1000887FUL	1	25
Church Farm, Ramsy Mereside	1200669FUL	1	46
Denton Lodge, The Old North Road, Denton	0702290FUL	1	15
Float Fish Farm, Milk and Water Drove, Farcet	0901252FUL	1	18
Glebe Farm, Spaldwick	1002042FUL	1	25
Hamerton Zoo Park, Hamerton	1200670FUL	2	46
Lakeside Lodge, Pidley	0803141FUL	1	19
Wooley Hill, Ellington	1001741FUL	4	130
Foxholes Farm, Leighton Bromswold	1201829FUL	1	34
The Retreat, Wistow	1201985FUL	1	21
Red Tile Wind Farm	0302827FUL	12	100
Mereside Farm, Ramsey Mereside	0101772FUL	1	34
Cotton Farm, Graveley Road, Offord Darcy	0802296FUL	8	125
Mill House, Old Weston	120148FUL	1	15
St Marys Road, Ramsey	0400031FUL	1	125
Three Fishes Farm, Warboys	1201034FUL	3	18
Tick Fen Farm, Warboys	1300084FUL	1	74
Tick Fen Farm, Warboys	1000119FUL	1	25
Tick Fen Farm, Warboys	1101601FUL	1	46
Tilbrook Grange, Tilbrook	1101420FUL	1	25
Wood Green Animal Shelter	1101886FUL	1	102

3.8 The schemes that are currently still 'in planning' or at appeal stage include the following schemes listed in Table 2. It should be noted that there may be other schemes 'In Planning' outside Huntingdonshire but these are not included in the list or analysis in GIS on Figures 04, 07 and 08.

Table 2: Schemes in Planning or appeal stage in Huntingdonshire as at 1.5.13

Site Name	Planning application ref	No. turbines	Proposed Tip Ht (To nearest m)
East Lodge Farm	1200688FUL	1	27
Land South West of RAF Molesworth	1200967FUL	6	126
Land at St Mary's Road, Ramsey	1101865FUL	4	127
Galley Hill Farm, Hemingford Grey	1201244FUL	1	45
Haddon Lodge Farm	1201841FUL	1	67
Littlebury Farm, Hemingford Abbots	1200313FUL	1	42
Common Barn, Rectory Lane, Southoe	1200803FUL	3	125
Catworth Lodge, Tilbrook	1300264FUL	1	46
West of Bicton Industrial Estate	1300512FUL	3	125

3.9 A review of the distribution of operational and consented wind turbine developments in Huntingdonshire identifies that the majority of the existing schemes are located either within the Fens and Fen Margin LCAs (e.g. Red Tile and Ramsey) to the north east of the district, in the southern part of the district in the South East Claylands (e.g. Cotton Farm and Wood Green) or on the higher ground of the Northern Wolds (e.g. Woolley Hill and Hamerton). The major proposed schemes would lead to further intensification of turbines in the Southern and Northern Wolds close to the A1 (Common Barn), A14 (Molesworth) and B645 (Bicton).

3.10 An analysis of the influence of operational and consented turbines has been carried out by illustrating two criteria, namely the 'Prominent Zone' and 'Conspicuous Zones'. For a turbine at a height of 100-129m to blade tip these distances are considered to be at 2km and 5km respectively. The distances increase or decrease with taller or smaller turbines, as shown in Table 3 below. The reduction in distances do not reflect a straight forward pro-rata reduction based on height alone since smaller turbines are relatively more detracting in the landscape

by virtue of the faster rotation speeds of a cycle of the turbine blade. The distances used below have been calibrated in the field using existing turbines.

Table 3 Distances representing Prominent and Conspicuous zones

Height of turbine	<30m	30-69m	70-99m	100-129m	130- c.150m
Prominent Zone	=/<750m	=/<1.5km	=<1.75km	< 2km	=/<2.5km
Conspicuous Zone	750m-1.5km	1-5-3km	1.75 -4km	2-5km	2.5- 6km

- 3.11 The rationale for these two distances is that they provide a reasonable basis for representing the likely extent of 'significant' (in EIA terms) landscape and visual effects that would result from wind turbines of each height in the Huntingdonshire landscape. These two categories/thresholds (i.e "prominent" and "conspicuous") have also been used by a range of comparable studies in England and Scotland over the last 10 years.
- 3.12 It is recognised that the actual landscape and visual effects would be locally limited by factors including landform, vegetation cover and built development. Furthermore, some factors e.g. landform would be more consistent in flatter LCAs such as the Fens but would vary in other LCAs where there is more variation in landform pattern e.g. Northern Wolds. In some cases areas of intervening high ground may provide localised partial or complete screening of turbines from some viewpoint locations. Conversely turbines on more prominent ridges may be more widely visible from other ridges or along and across valleys. Clearly the influence of any specific proposal needs to be assessed on a case by case basis. However, the use of Prominent and Conspicuous offsets provides a useful starting point to assess the likely range of influence of a proposal and therefore to also identify locations where significant effects may begin to overlap from more than one scheme. This would thus help identify locations where potential issues of cumulative landscape or visual impact might occur and should be carefully examined as part of any specific application or proposal. This effective "separation" distance of 10km (for a 100-129m turbine) is also comparable to the approach used in the Placing Renewables in the Eastern Region study (Arup) discussed in Section 2 above.
- 3.13 Based on the built and /or consented schemes the percentage cover of the LCAs within the Prominent and Conspicuous zones for all turbines in Huntingdonshire (as listed in Table 1

above) is shown in Table 4 below. The extent of the two zones is also illustrated graphically by Figure 05.

Table 4 Zones as % of Landscape Character Areas (excluding In Planning) – to nearest %

Landscape Character Area (LCA)	Total Area(km²)	Prominent Zone (%)	Conspicuous Zone (%)	Total (%) Prominent & Conspicuous Zones
The Fens	125	33	39	72
Fen Margin	117	11	39	50
Central Claylands	186	8	30	38
Ouse Valley	79	2	63	65
South East Claylands	116	25	41	66
Northern Wolds	188	12	35	47
Grafham Water	11	0	84	84
Southern Wolds	82	12	31	43
Nene Valley	7	0	0	0
TOTAL	913			

3.14 From Table 4 it can be seen that the LCAs with the highest proportion affected by the prominent zones are The Fens (33%) and the South East Claylands (25%). The coverage in The Fens is also partially due to the proximity of other schemes in the adjacent Fenland District e.g. Glassmoor. The influence in the conspicuous zone (NB calculated as the 'donut' shape excluding the inner prominent zone) is more widely distributed, a number of LCAs having a surprisingly high percentage e.g. Grafham Water and the Ouse Valley. This is a result of schemes in neighbouring LCAs and in the case of the Ouse Valley from schemes located on the adjacent higher ground in neighbouring LCAs. However, the figure for Grafham Water should be tempered by the relatively small size of the area and the fact that there is likely to be a degree of screening by landform to the north. Other areas experiencing a relative high coverage (>35%) are The Fens, Fen Margin, South East Claylands and Northern Wolds. The Central Claylands has coverage of 30% despite not having any turbines in the areas. This is again due to the influence from schemes close by but in adjacent LCAs. However it must be noted that there are also further potential "landscape constraints" in the Central Claylands LCA – examples being the "orchard dominated landscape" in the east, and the "existing ancient woodland sites" in the north west, both mentioned in the SPD (Chapter 5).

- 3.15 Figure 06 (which combines some of the constraints illustrated in Figures 02-03 with the Prominent and Conspicuous Zones) provides an indication as to where there may be areas of remaining capacity for WTD in the Huntingdonshire. It should be remembered that there will be other site specific constraints to consider e.g. the presence of settlement together with a range of other issues as set out in the Huntingdonshire District Council’s “Wind Turbine Developments – A Guidance Note for Applicants and Agents.” (revised version June 2013)
- 3.16 By including all the schemes still in planning or at appeal (within Huntingdonshire) in the spatial analysis the areas within the Prominent and Conspicuous zones will increase. Should all current applications be approved or allowed at appeal the situation is shown in Table 5 below and also in Figure 07.

Table 5 - Zones as % of Landscape Character Areas (including In Planning) – to nearest %

Landscape Character Area (LCA)	Total Area (km²)	Prominent Zone (%)	Conspicuous Zone (%)	Total (%) Prominent & Conspicuous Zones
The Fens	125	34	39	73
Fen Margin	117	13	40	53
Central Claylands	186	8	30	38
Ouse Valley	79	12	64	76
South East Claylands	116	26	41	68
Northern Wolds	188	31	44	76
Grafham Water	11	21	79	100
Southern Wolds	82	30	58	87
Nene Valley	7	0	18	18
TOTAL	913			

- 3.17 Based on the above findings it can be seen that the LCA’s with the highest proportion of the prominent zone are The Fens (34%), Northern Wolds (31%), Southern Wolds (30%) and South East Claylands (26%). The influence of the conspicuous zone is more widely distributed; with the two LCAs most affected being the Ouse Valley and Grafham Water as a result of schemes in adjacent LCAs. It is important to note that this scenario is based on all schemes being approved. The reality will vary in time and as any new schemes are brought forward.
- 3.18 The combination of a number of the constraints together with the prominent and conspicuous zones is shown in Figure 08. This provides an indication as to where there may be areas of

remaining capacity if all the schemes were approved or allowed. The situation will vary over time and should be subject to an assessment at the point of each application. The current cumulative situation should also be read alongside the capacity ranges for each LCA as set out in the Draft Revised SPD for each grouping of turbines.

4 CRITERIA TO GUIDE THE ASSESSMENT OF CUMULATIVE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

- 4.1 A number of criteria are set out below to guide the acceptability of WTD in cumulative landscape and visual terms. Non-compliance with the cumulative landscape and visual criteria should not necessarily preclude turbine development. However, they will form an important part of the assessment of the capacity of the landscape to accept the proposed development. All the environmental factors should be carefully evaluated and then balanced by the decision maker against the requirements to contribute to national targets for renewable energy generation and the benefits of reducing carbon consumption. The guidelines should also always be considered in conjunction with a detailed study of the site and its surroundings, particularly in terms of landform, vegetation and structures that may provide visual mitigation of the cumulative landscape and visual impacts.

CUMULATIVE LANDSCAPE IMPACTS

- 4.2 The Scottish Natural Heritage Document, 'Assessing the cumulative impact of onshore wind energy developments' (2012) identifies at para 48 and 49 that cumulative landscape effects can impact on either the physical fabric or character of the landscape, or any special values attached to it.

Cumulative effects on the physical fabric of the landscape arise when two or more developments affect landscape components such as woodland, dykes, rural roads or hedgerows. Although this may not significantly affect the landscape character, the cumulative effect on these components may be significant – for example, where the last remnants of former shelterbelts are completely removed by two or more developments.

Cumulative effects on landscape character arise when two or more developments introduce new features into the landscape. In this way, they can change the landscape character to such an extent that they create a different landscape character type, in a similar way to large scale afforestation. That change need not be adverse; some derelict or degraded landscapes may be enhanced as a result of such a change in landscape character.

Windfarms may also have a cumulative effect on the character of landscapes that are recognised to be of special value. These landscapes may be recognised as being rare, unusual, highly distinctive or the best or most representative example in a given area. This recognition may take the form of national or local designations (for example,

National Scenic Areas or Special Landscape Areas), citations in development plans, community plans or other documents, or be less formally recognised, such as Search Areas for Wild Land.

- 4.3 While there can be landscape effects on the physical fabric it is less likely to be significant in cumulative terms due the separation distances between most turbine proposals. Most significant cumulative landscape effects will be on landscape character. Chapter 14 of the Draft Revised SPD identifies a number of factors that should be considered in relation to the cumulative effect of wind turbine developments. The cumulative effect relates to the combined impact of separate wind turbine developments on a landscape. Factors to be considered in relation to Huntingdonshire District include the effects on the following: Scale and enclosure, landform and topography, settlement pattern, landmarks and visible built structures, skyline and visual connections with adjacent landscapes. They can also include the more perceptual qualities that include a measure of value and tranquillity. A number of turbine schemes including those of differing size and number could have an adverse cumulative effect on the underlying characteristics of the landscape area.
- 4.4 Huntingdonshire now has wind turbine developments that currently impact on the character of its landscapes and this effect will increase as other consented schemes are built e.g. at Woolley Hill near Ellington. Section 3 above provides an analysis of the extent of the LCAs affected by turbines within the Prominent and Conspicuous Zones. The Draft Revised SPD also provides an indication of the capacity for further wind turbines at the 100-140m range with regard to each LCA.
- 4.5 Landscapes that are identified in the Draft Revised SPD as being relatively more sensitive to the changes brought about by wind turbine development (including differing group sizes) have less capacity to accept new wind turbine development without an adverse effect on the key characteristics of the landscape. The capacity in any area for additional turbines will depend on the existing situation in terms of built and consented schemes, the number and location of the turbines proposed and the key characteristics of the landscape. The greater landscape effects will usually be within the Prominent Zone with other significant effects also likely within the Conspicuous Zone. In a more sensitive landscape effects beyond the Conspicuous Zone may also be significant where WTD would form part of a repeated pattern throughout an LCA and which could become a key characteristic. The approach taken in this study is to recommend that more sensitive landscapes/LCAs should have a smaller part of their total land area within the influence of WTD. This approach is to identify criteria to safeguard and protect the LCAs from an excessive level of WTD. This will allow scope for WTD in each LCA but provide an indicative threshold to restrict this to an appropriate level for each LCA based on its sensitivity and capacity. Indicative thresholds of capacity are proposed below

in Table 6 to allow for some further wind turbine development in the district but also to protect the underlying key characteristics of the landscape character types.

- 4.6 The principle of retaining a proportion of each LCA outside of the conspicuous zone would ensure that there are areas where the influence of WTD is less marked as a major feature in the landscape and not a key characteristic. This approach should apply to all landscapes including those with relatively higher capacity. For example in the Fens the large scale, flat landscape and geometric field pattern can be seen as relatively suitable for WTD. However, the openness, large skies and sense of remoteness and tranquillity is also valued and it is considered appropriate to have areas that retain these characteristics relatively unaffected. This principle has been used in other studies such as South Pennine Study (Julie Martin Associates - 2010) and Fenland Wind Turbine Development Guidance (TLP 2009). The approach also provides a relatively straight forward tool in GIS to calculate and compare coverage or current versus potential coverage. Another advantage of this approach is that if a scheme is located close to the boundary of a neighbouring LCA with a lower threshold then this will have a noticeable effect on the capacity for the neighbouring LCA to accommodate further turbines. This approach allows for cross LCA boundary impacts which can be a particular feature of WTD. This is the case for the Ouse Valley which already has experienced an effect from three other schemes outside its LCA boundaries. Furthermore, if no "undeveloped" areas are retained then landscape character over a whole LCA will be changed, and wind turbine development could become a defining characteristic of the LCA. This is contrary to one of the main objectives of the SPD which seeks to guide development to locations which will avoid effects on this character changing scale.

Table 6 - Proposed Thresholds of Capacity for each Landscape Character Type

NB "Current" numbers relate to constructed and consented schemes only

LCA	Total Area(km ²)	Current Prominent Zone (%)	Proposed Prominent Capacity threshold (%)	Conspicuous Zone (%)	Proposed Conspicuous Capacity threshold (%)	Current combined Prominent and Conspicuous Zone %	Total Proposed Prominent and conspicuous threshold (%)
The Fens	125	33	25	39	50	72	75
Fen Margin	117	11	15	39	45	50	60
Central Claylands	186	8	30	30	45	38	75
Ouse Valley	79	2	5	63	50	65	60
South East Claylands	116	25	25	41	50	66	75
Northern Wolds	188	12	10	35	40	47	50
Grafham Water	11	0	5	84	50	84	55
Southern Wolds	82	12	25	31	50	43	75
Nene Valley	7	0	5	0	25	0	30
TOTAL	913						

4.7 Table 6 above shows that the Fens LCA is already in excess of it's the proposed threshold of 25% being in the Prominent Zone. This is in part the influence of the Great Fen Project in effectively creating an additional constraint in the north west of the Fens and Fen Margin LCAs. This would indicate that that the optimum way that new turbine development could be accommodated within The Fens LCA without significant cumulative landscape impacts (subject to other material constraints) would be locating new turbines close to existing turbine developments where the character has already been impacted upon. The Prominent Zone threshold has also been crossed in Northern Wolds which has a lower % threshold on account of the relatively higher landscape sensitivity. Within the South East Claylands the Prominent threshold has just been reached. The Conspicuous Zone thresholds have to date only been crossed in the Ouse Valley and Grafham Water as a result of WTCD in adjacent LCAs.

However, the existing coverage of the Conspicuous Zone is getting close to the proposed thresholds in the Fen Margin, South East Claylands and Northern Wolds.

- 4.8 The above approach also identifies areas where there is still capacity in landscape character terms for further development. The LCA with the most potential is the Central Claylands where there are no turbines schemes currently consented. In addition the SPD identifies the scope for up to more than one scheme at medium and large scale groupings in this LCA. There is capacity also for a medium scale group in the Southern Wolds, though there are currently schemes "in planning" that would affect this LCA.

Suggested thresholds and criteria

- 4.9 The percentage figures given in this section should not be seen as absolute thresholds that preclude development. However, they provide a guide as to when the cumulative landscape effects would be crossing a line where the underlying key characteristics would begin to be unbalanced due to the cumulative influence of WTD. There will usually be areas of land within each LCA where localised screening and vegetation cover may also play a role. However from more open viewpoints the influence of WTD would be more readily identified in the landscape.
- 4.10 **The Fens** LCA should not exceed 25% of its area being within the 'Prominent' zone or 75% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. There are already areas where WTD already exerts some significant cumulative effects e.g. north and east of Ramsey. This is compounded by the variety of turbine heights, models, rotation speeds and group sizes. This threshold allows for the absence of turbines within the Great Fen Project Area and its identified setting.
- 4.11 **The Fen Margin** LCA should not exceed 15% of its area being within the 'Prominent' zone or 60% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. The lower threshold compared to The Fens reflects the transitory and contrasting character of the LCA. The LCA has a narrow form and the rising ground is visually more sensitive than the adjacent Fens with some local 'hills' (e.g. Fox Hole Hill, near Warboys) being landmarks. In addition the presence of the Great Fen Project Area and its Landscape and Visual Setting within the LCA the area reduces its capacity.
- 4.12 **The Central Claylands** LCA should not exceed 30% of its area being within the 'Prominent' zone or 75% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. This LCA is identified as having the highest relative capacity in the District by the Draft Revised SPD. There are currently no turbine schemes in the LCA and the SPD indicates scope for WTD. However, there are a number of constraints including the wooded character of the sub area to the north west, orchards to the east and a number of listed buildings and small settlements that would need to be given due consideration and suitable protection.

- 4.13 **The Ouse Valley** LCA should not exceed 5% of its area being within the 'Prominent' zone or 60% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. The LCA is of particular importance for recreation and biodiversity with a number of designated biodiversity habitats and conservation areas. The narrow sinuous and low lying nature of the LCA also means that it will be affected by turbine developments in adjacent LCAs. In view of the operational and consented schemes in the adjacent LCAs there may be limited opportunity for WTD in this LCA.
- 4.14 The **South East Claylands** LCA should not exceed 25% of its area being within the 'Prominent' zone or 75% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. The LCA is already host for Cotton Farm wind farm and a single turbine at Wood Green. More sensitive parts of the LCA include the more undulating and wooded part of the area notably to the south.
- 4.15 The **Northern Wolds** LCA should not exceed 10% of its area being within 'Prominent' zone or 50% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. This LCA is identified in the Draft Revised SPD as a highly valued landscape. It is considered to be more sensitive due to its unspoilt character and the undulating landform of ridge and valley, (see Figure 01) which would potentially be undermined by inappropriate WTD. The lower prominent % threshold is provided to ensure the key characteristics of the area are retained. The natural pattern of ridges is a key characteristic of the LCA and care should be taken to avoid cumulative WTD that either follows a ridgeline or is visible on adjacent ridges or locations where there are higher levels of intervisibility.
- 4.16 **Grafham Water** LCA should not exceed 5% of its area being within the 'Prominent' zone or 55% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. The area is focused around Grafham Water which occupies the majority of the surface area and hence restricts opportunities for turbines. The Draft Revised SPD indicates that there is limited scope for WTD in this LCA. Furthermore, development of other schemes in the adjacent Southern Wolds may potentially preclude any turbines in the LCA.
- 4.17 The **Southern Wolds** LCA should not exceed 25% of its area being within the 'Prominent' zone) or 75% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. Parts of the LCA have been identified as more sensitive to cumulative development including the central ridge that divides the valleys of the Kym and Ellington Brook. Significant cumulative effects could occur from a number of single turbines, groups or combinations of sizes particularly where there is intervisibility on adjacent ridges.

- 4.18 **Nene Valley** LCA should not exceed 5% of its area being within the 'Prominent' zone or 30% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. This is a very narrow LCA of high sensitivity close to the River Nene and there is very limited scope for WTD in this area.

Alternative approaches to criteria for assessing Cumulate Landscape Effects

- 4.19 Consideration was also given to the use of different offsets (to those shown in Table 3 above) for Prominent and Conspicuous zones applied to each of the LCAs to highlight their relative sensitivity. This would have involved potentially greater offsets for more sensitive LCAs. While this approach has some merit it would result in more complex modelling in GIS on crossing LCA boundaries and the potential for inaccuracies in the GIS analysis. It may also be the case that while one LCA may be more sensitive, site specific features on the ground (e.g. woodland) may locally contain the impact on the landscape in the more sensitive LCAs. In addition there might also be a more gradual change of character at the LCA boundary rather than a clear cut change so that the change in sensitivity may also be more gradual. In any event the varying % thresholds should accommodate the variations in sensitivity at a strategic scale.
- 4.20 Another more technically accurate approach would be to plot the Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV's) of all built, consisted and in planning schemes. This would identify areas where schemes are e.g. 'hidden' by landform. However, this approach would be subject to obtaining the data on all schemes which would be more difficult. It may also require additional and complex GIS mapping to show the localised screening effects. Furthermore, some smaller schemes may not have a computer based ZVT available. For these practical reasons it is not recommended to follow this approach.
- 4.21 A further option is to provide a simple distance between turbine proposals. A10km separation zone was used in the "**Placing Renewables in the East of England**" Arup study done for EERA (referred to in Section 2 above) with a 15km separation suggested for more sensitive locations. This greater distance may readily apply to the Northern Wolds which is indicated to be more sensitive. However this method takes no account of the current locations of existing operational and consented schemes which may already be inconsistent with this approach. Likewise the Arup study was based on a NCA scale approach and did not include the more local variations in the landscape as identified in the HDC LCAs. For these reasons the approach is not recommended.

CUMULATIVE VISUAL EFFECTS

Assessing Turbine Visibility

4.22 PPS22 Companion guide highlights the importance of identifying the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI), otherwise known as a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), for a turbine development. A Zone of Theoretical Visibility is the area from which a turbine of a given height could be seen on a very clear day, based on the landform of the area. Dependent on the approach taken the ZTV can also allow for major intervening features such as settlement, built forms and major woodland. However localised screening is not typically included. The guidance on ZTVs in the 'Visual Representation of Windfarms: Good Practice Guidance' (Scottish Natural Heritage-2006) recommends the following Zones of Theoretical Visibility extents for different sizes of turbines:

- Turbine up to 50m – ZTV 15km
- Turbine 51-70m – ZTV 20km
- Turbine 71-85m – ZTV 25km
- Turbine 86-100m – ZTV 30km
- Turbine 101-130m – ZTV 35km

4.23 Although turbines are theoretically visible over these distances, their visual impact is likely to decrease with distance from the turbine location. The Scottish Executive's document PAN45: Renewable Energy Technologies, although now superseded indicated a range of distances from turbine development and descriptions of the diminishing magnitude of the visual impact. This guidance is not specific about the heights of turbines that this applies to, which can be significant given the variation in ZTVs illustrated above. However, through use of the guidance in PAN45 and our own field evaluation work, an assessment has been made of the typical magnitude of visual impact of existing turbines within Huntingdonshire District. This has resulted in an additional category of visual impact i.e. dominant being included compared to PAN45. The category relates to closer distances to reflect situations where a turbine is in very close proximity and may have an overpowering effect on the viewer e.g. from a public right of way or residential location. The following Table 7, indicates the typical likely visual impacts used in this study for the 100-129m turbine height band at different distances from the turbine development.

Table 7 - Categories of Magnitude for Cumulative Visual Impact of Turbines

Distance from turbines	Magnitude of impact	Description
Within 1km	Dominant	Turbines form the principle element of the view and may overpower the viewer
1-2km	Prominent	Turbines form a very large element of the view, commanding and controlling the view
2-5km	Conspicuous	Turbines form a large element of the view, standing out from the surroundings and forming

		an unmistakable feature within the panorama.
5-15km	Apparent	Turbines form a medium element of the view, noticeable in panoramas, clearly visible and catching the eye.
15-30km	Inconspicuous	Turbines form a small element of the view, that is visible but not distinct or obvious on first glance or in overcast conditions
Over 30km	Negligible	Turbines form a very small element of the view, barely visible in clear conditions

4.24 It should be noted that these definitions apply where there are open or partial views of a wind turbine development. These bandings are intended to indicate the approximate point at which the visual effect of a turbine moves from one category to the next. They should therefore not be interpreted too rigidly and there will often be a transition. Equally there may be locations where due to the orientation of the viewer or nature of the view e.g. a framed view that the turbines may appear more visible than distance may otherwise indicate. Factors such as weather conditions will influence the relative visibility at any given time. In addition a level of professional judgement will be required to reflect the individual circumstances of each site.

4.25 In order to allow for alternative sizes of turbine – both larger and smaller, the bandings of visual impact have been varied as shown in Table 8 below. The distances have been calibrated in the field by visiting a number of existing wind turbine developments within Huntingdonshire and adjacent authorities within a 10km buffer from the District boundary. The schemes have been examined from a number of public viewpoints at varying distances from the developments and their impacts assessed against the descriptions identified above. As set out in Section 3 above the distances are not based on a direct pro-rata comparison with height. This is due to the relatively greater visual effect of faster rotation speeds of shorter blades on smaller turbines. Also at the lower end of turbine height, most notably <30m, the screening and relative scale of other features in the landscape e.g. trees and woodland may reduce the extent of visual effects.

Table 8 - Visual Impacts of Turbines Extrapolated for Different Turbine Heights
(rounded to closest 100m at < 1km and then to nearest 500m)

Magnitude of impact					
Height of turbine	<30m	30-69m	70-99m	100-129m	130-c.150m
Dominant	<400m	<600m	<800m	<1km	<1.2km
Prominent	<750m	<1.5km	<1.75km	< 2km	<2.5km
Conspicuous	750m- 1.5km	1-5-3km	1.75 -4km	2-5km	2.5- 6km
Apparent	1.5km-3km	3-8km	4 -12km	5-15km	6-18km
Inconspicuous	3-5km	8-16km	12-24km	15-30km	18-37km
Negligible	Over 5km	Over 16km	Over 24km	Over 30km	Over 37km

4.26 The SNH report "Assessing the cumulative impact of onshore wind energy developments" (SNH) 2012 identifies 3 types of cumulative visual impact. These are:

- Combined/simultaneous impact - occurs where the observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint, without moving his or her head, which is considered to be equal to a 90 degree arc of view. This includes for the main focus of view (central 50 degree arc) and peripheral vision in the same view.
- Successive/repetitive impact - occurs where the observer is able to see two or more windfarms from one viewpoint but has to move his or her head to do so, considered to be a 180-360 degree arc of view
- Sequential impact - occurs when the observer has to move to another viewpoint to see other developments or a different view of the same development e.g. traveling along a road

4.27 Figures 05-06 illustrate the current situation in Huntingdonshire in terms of cumulative impact. The coloured circles illustrate the Prominent and Conspicuous Zones of visibility for existing and consented turbine developments. Where these circles begin to overlap there is likely to be a significant cumulative visual impact for certain locations.

4.28 Where the Prominent Zones of visibility overlap (e.g. at 4km separation between two 100m to blade tip turbines), they are both likely to be easily read in the same view from many locations. As such they are likely to demonstrate a significant cumulative impact from a number of locations and are less likely to be considered acceptable in visual terms. One exception may be if they form a relatively modest extension to an existing turbine development and are read in the same group. This is less likely to be acceptable if the

additional turbines are of a different height, spacing or design. Where the Conspicuous Zones of visibility overlap (e.g. at 10km separation between two 100m to blade tip turbines) this may also result in some significant cumulative visual impact. These impacts could have the potential for combined or successive impacts.

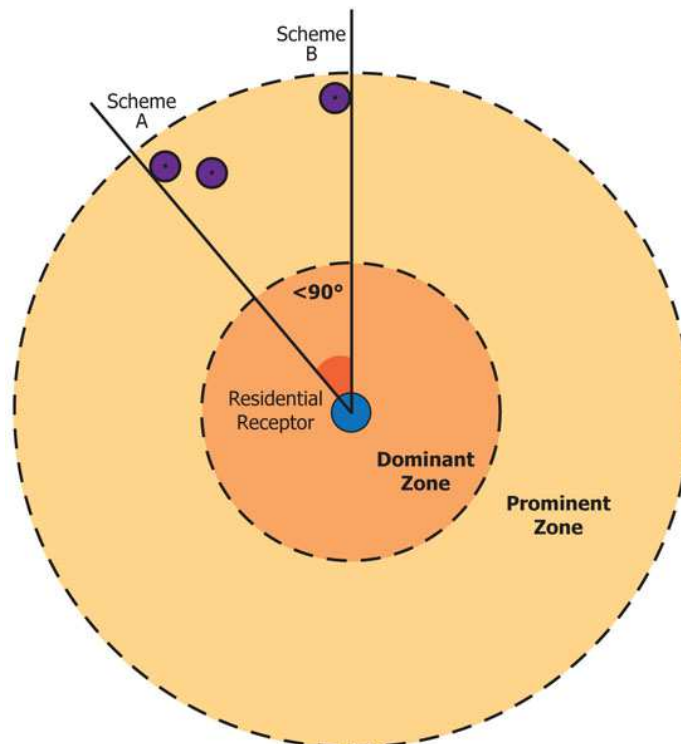
- 4.29 In order to minimise Combined/Simultaneous impacts and Successive/Repetitive impacts it is considered desirable to limit the extent of turbine visibility within the field of view. This will help to prevent residential properties and settlements becoming unduly affected by the cumulative impact of wind turbines and avoid the potential effect of living within or near a windfarm landscape. As a result criteria have been recommended to help assess the impacts on sensitive receptors at fixed points, most notably residential properties.
- 4.30 In terms of sequential cumulative visual impact this may apply for a number of types of receptors. Users of the main roads in the District, a number of which run north-south (A1M) and east-west (A14) through Huntingdonshire and the main line railway already experience an effect from a number of turbine sites. On these journeys there may be some notable magnitude effects. Despite the speed of travel these receptors may be considered to be of moderate sensitivity as they represent the way in which many people appreciate the landscape. Users of strategic recreational routes, other rights of way, and recreation facilities with a focus on the landscape, are likely to have a high sensitivity to change due to the slower mode of travel and greater focus on expectations from the experience. This would also be the case for users of minor roads enjoying the countryside, a proportion of whom will be pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians with an interest in the landscape.

Guideline thresholds and criteria

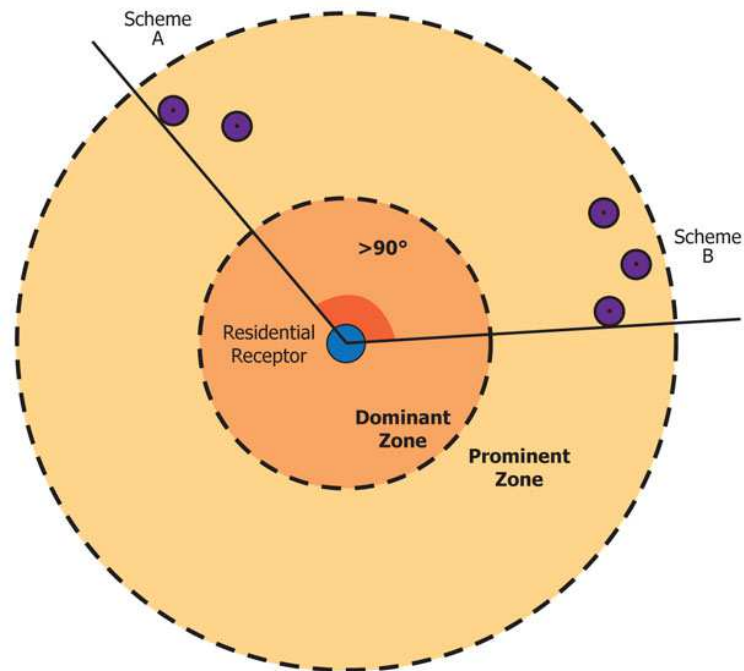
- 4.31 Proposals for wind turbine development where there is an overlap of Prominent Zones are unlikely to be acceptable in cumulative visual terms unless local factors substantially counteract any significant cumulative effects. An exception (and subject to meeting other criteria) may be where a proposed turbine or group are designed as a logical extension of an existing group using turbines of similar size and design.
- 4.32 Proposals for wind turbine development where there is an overlap of Conspicuous Zones cumulative effects will need to be carefully considered with regard the cumulative effect. Any significant impacts should be included in the overall significance of effect and these should be considered in turn by the decision maker in carrying out the planning balance.
- 4.33 Proposals should avoid situations where cumulative effects on residential locations would result in more than 90° of the field of view from any part of a property (including the garden) being occupied by wind turbines within the Prominent Zone of the turbines. The angle should

be measured as the aggregate arc (to outer blades) of all turbines visible from the property and extend to a distance equivalent to the Prominent Zone for each turbine. The calculation should include any single turbines or groups of turbines and the Prominent Zone distance measured from the façade/s of the property facing the turbines, (see Sketches 01 and 02 below). Intervening local screening may mitigate the cumulative effects and these moderating factors should be considered on a case by case basis. Proposed WTD within the Dominant Zones should be subject to more detailed evaluation in respect of the potential effects on residential amenity in addition to any cumulative effects within and beyond the Dominant Zone.

Sketch 01 (Not to Scale)
Within guideline for cumulative visual effect

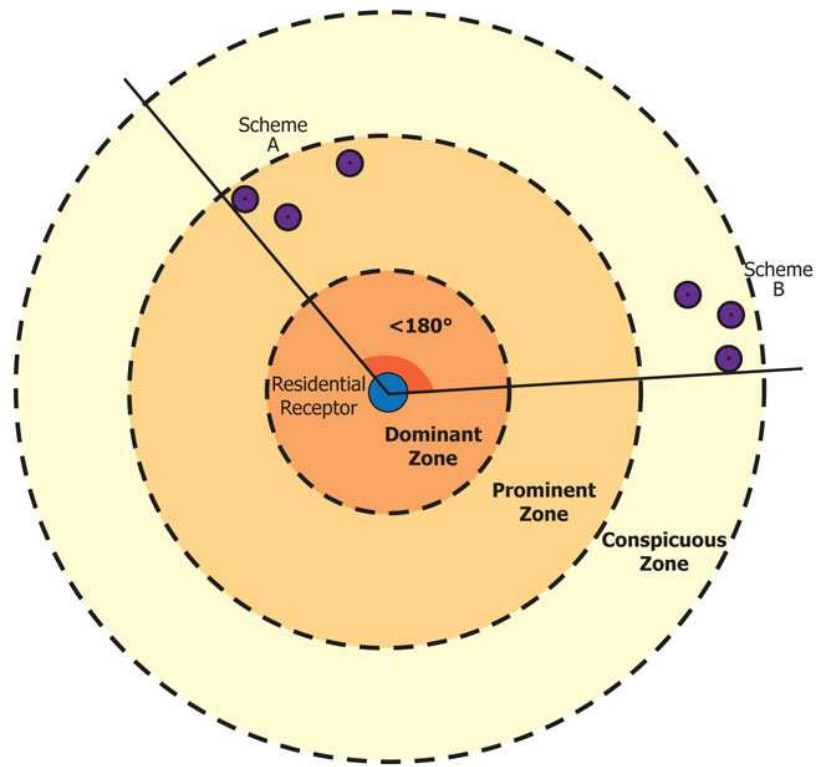


Sketch 02 (Not to Scale)
Outside guideline for cumulative visual effect

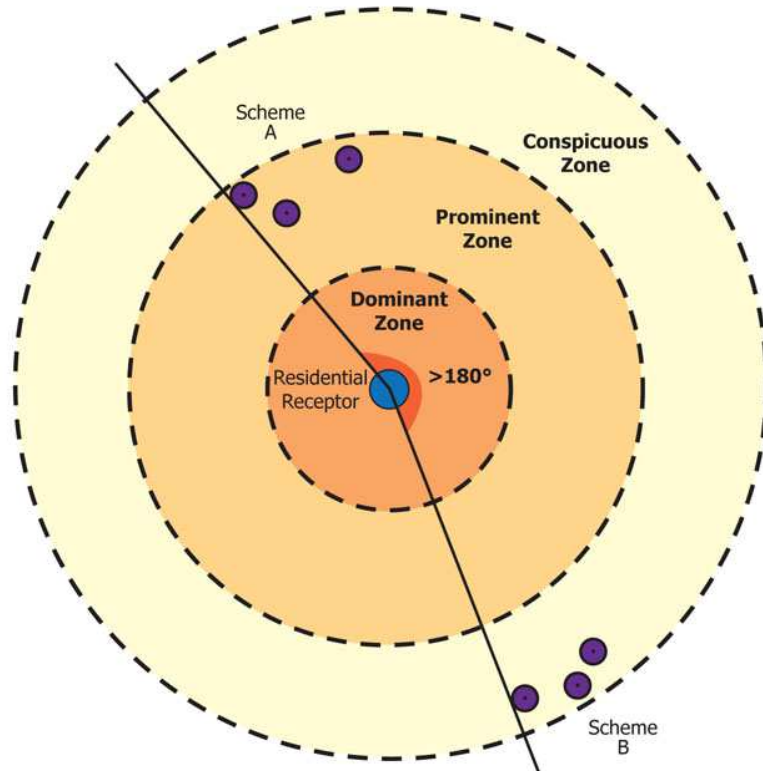


- 4.34 Cumulative effects on residential locations should avoid situations where more than 180° of the field of view from any part of a property (including the garden) is occupied by wind turbines within either the Prominent or the Conspicuous Zone of the turbines. The angle should be measured as the aggregate arc (to outer blades) of all turbines visible from the property and extend to distance equivalent to the Prominent Zone for each turbine. The calculation should include any single turbines or groups of turbines and the zone distance should be measured from the façade/s of the property facing the turbines (see Sketches 03 and 04 below). Intervening local screening may mitigate the cumulative effects and these moderating factors should be considered on a case by case basis. Again proposed WTD within the Dominant Zones should be subject to more detailed evaluation in respect of the potential effects on residential amenity in addition to any cumulative effects within and beyond the Dominant Zone.

Sketch 03 (Not to Scale)
Within guideline for cumulative visual effect



Sketch 04 (Not to Scale)
Outside guideline for cumulative visual effect



- 4.35 Proposals for wind turbine development should be considered in relation to the sequential visibility of turbine development when experienced along all classes of public highways, railway lines and recreational routes. Cumulative visual assessment should be based on factors including the magnitude of the change, sensitivity of viewer, likely extent and duration of the impact and character of the route including screening and impacts on viewpoints along the route. For more guidance and the level of information required see Section 5.

Mitigation of cumulative effects

- 4.36 All turbines within a group should ideally be of the same appearance and size to create visual harmony. This will apply to 'extension' of existing sites or proposals which are visually read as part of an existing group.
- 4.37 Mitigation including landscape proposals, enhancement of existing features of biodiversity interest, and the creation of habitats within the site (as NPPF para 118) should be included as part of any application. This should be within the red line or blue line of applications. Off-site planting should also be considered where practical, in order to mitigate visual impacts over a wider area. This could be achieved via a legal agreement or through a Community Trust. Such proposals should be in keeping with the landscape character and strategy for landscape management and provide a legacy to the local environment during and beyond the life of the scheme.

5 GUIDANCE TO APPLICANTS FOR UNDERTAKING CUMULATIVE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS AND HDC FOR ASSESSING APPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The criteria and guidance set out in Section 4 above should initially be applied at the Pre Application, Screening and Scoping Opinion stages, and then in greater detail if the scheme progresses to a full Planning Application and supporting Environmental Statement.
- 5.2 The requirement for, and geographical extent of, a cumulative assessment shall be established at the pre application stage and agreed as part of the scoping process. This should include identification of all the relevant schemes to be considered and the radius for the cumulative assessment to be used. Schemes that are either constructed, approved, or have been formally registered as an application will normally form the basis of schemes to be assessed. For schemes with turbines at 100m+ this may be required to extend to up to 30km radius.
- 5.3 The cumulative landscape and visual assessments will need to be reviewed as part of the decision making process, alongside the full revised SPD and the contents of the planning application and EIA including other parts of the LVIA sections of the ES.
- 5.4 Environmental Statements should provide detailed assessments of cumulative landscape and visual impacts for the particular scheme following the approach as set out in Section 5 of PPS 22 Companion Guide, SNH report 'Assessing the cumulative impact of onshore wind energy developments' (SNH) March 2012, and the latest version (3rd edition) of the "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment," Landscape Institute and IEMA (April 2013). Environmental Statements (usually in their LVIA section) should also consider and address the relevant further information and guidance criteria listed in the Wind Power SPD (or successor documents) for each LCA in the district.
- 5.5 Section 5 of the PPS 22 Companion Guide provides guidance on the assessment of landscape and visual impact issues relating to individual development proposals, and also cumulative effects as set out below.

5.21 Several areas in England are experiencing much interest from renewable energy developers and cumulative effects have become a factor in the determination of applications.

5.22 Cumulative landscape effects and visual effects should be considered separately. The former refers to effects of a proposed development on the landscape fabric, character and quality and so concerns the degree to which renewable energy development becomes a significant or defining characteristic of the landscape. Cumulative visual effects concern the

degree to which renewable energy development becomes a feature in particular views (or sequences of views), and the effect this has upon the people experiencing those views.

5.23 Cumulative effects may arise where two or more of the same type of renewable energy development are visible from the same point, or are visible shortly after each other along the same journey. Hence, it should not be assumed that, just because no other sites are visible from the proposed development site, the proposal will not create any cumulative effects

5.24 Cumulative impact assessments undertaken to date in the UK relate mainly to wind farms, and have generally been concentrated in Scotland and Wales. Bodies such as Scottish Natural Heritage have developed considerable experience in dealing with these issues and have prepared several volumes of good practice guidance for their own and wider use. In England, the following key points (derived from the Scottish guidance) may assist in assessing cumulative effects:

- a base plan of all existing windfarms, consented developments and applications received should be produced, showing all such schemes within a defined radius of the centre of the proposal under consideration;*
- for those existing or proposed windfarms within a defined radius of the proposal under consideration, a plan showing cumulative zones of visual influence (ZVIs) should be prepared. This plan should clearly identify the ZVI of each windfarm, and identify those areas from where one or more windfarms are likely to be seen;*
- the base plan and plan of cumulative ZVIs should reflect local circumstances – for example, the areas covered should take into account the extent to which factors such as the topography and the likely visibility of proposals in prevailing meteorological conditions may vary;*
- the map of cumulative ZVIs should be used to identify appropriate locations for visual impact studies. These will need to include locations for simultaneous visibility assessments, where two or more schemes are visible from a fixed viewpoint without the need for an observer to turn their head, and repetitive visibility assessments, where the observer is able to see two or more schemes but only if they turn around;*
- sequential effects on visibility occur when an observer moves through a landscape and sees two or more schemes. Common routes through a landscape (e.g. major roads; long distance paths or cycle routes) should be identified, as 'journey scenarios' appropriate for assessment;*

- *photomontages should be prepared showing all existing and consented turbines, and those for which planning applications have been submitted, in addition to the proposal under consideration. The viewpoints used should be those identified using the maps of cumulative ZVIs. The photomontages should be annotated to include the dimensions of the existing turbines, the distance from the viewpoint to the different schemes, the arc of view and the format and focal length of the camera used; and,*

- *at the most detailed level, description and assessment of cumulative effects may include the following landscape issues: scale of development in relation to landscape character or designations; sense of distance; existing focal points in the landscape; skylining (where additional development along a skyline appears disproportionately dominant); sense of remoteness or wildness*

APPENDIX 1

Examples of Approaches to Cumulative Effects by Local Authorities

East Durham Limestone and Tees Plan - North East Regional Assembly (Arup 2008)

- A1.1 This uses scenarios of potential development for cumulative landscape impacts. While the scenario approach is supported by SNH in their 2102 guidance it is not favoured as it can be seen as giving a potential amber/green light to the selected scenarios locations. The study also uses some of Fenland DC approach on Cumulative Visual effects such as percentage fields of view occupied by development from settlement and individual properties.

Rugby: Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy - White consultants (2011)

- A1.2 This study also uses the scenario approach to including a range of options of different scales of WTD in different areas within the district to assess the likely effects. While, this may be a useful applied theoretical approach it may seem to indicate more suitable sites and while useful internally may be less helpful in the public realm due to the conclusion drawn and preference inferred as to suitability on certain sites and scenarios. This may disadvantage other potential schemes not included as a selected scenario.

South Pennines – Julie Martin Associates (2010)

- A1.3 This includes some useful principles. It suggests different spacing of wind turbine schemes based on the LCA type and its relative sensitivity. These vary from 6-12km for large schemes or 3-5km if an LCA or site is more appropriate. This reflects the same principal included in the Ove Arup Report "Placing Renewables in the East of England."

Perth and Kinross

- A1.4 Indicates a requirement for a 40km separation between wind turbine developments unless they can be shown to not have significant adverse effects. This appears to be potentially be a rather restrictive an approach unless supported by evidence of the sensitivity of the landscape character areas involved.

Central Beds Draft SPD (2012/13)

- A1.5 This identifies 5km as the distance of likely greatest cumulative effect. It states that the scale of the landscape in Central Bedfordshire would be unlikely to successfully integrate two schemes within 10-15km of each other. This authority shares NCA 88 (Bedfordshire and

Cambridgeshire Claylands) with HDC. It appears that the Draft SPD sets a lower threshold of adverse cumulative harm than HDC.

Fenland DC – Wind Turbine Guidance (2009)

- A1.6 This study was produced for a local authority that was beginning to experience some concerns over cumulative impacts. The report covers a wide range of criteria including some for cumulative landscape and visual effects. The study was subject to public consultation and forms part of the Local Plan evidence base. The study has been tested at Public Inquiry in the context of planning applications for WTD and was afforded 'substantial weight' in the Inspectors report for the Burnt Housed Farm and Floods Ferry appeals (APP /D0515/A/10/2123739 and APP /D0515/A/10/2131194) the latter scheme being dismissed on the basis of cumulative visual effects. The study includes thresholds for acceptable effects on landscape character to assess prominent and conspicuous effects (2km and 5km distances) and thresholds for residential angles of view from cumulative visual effects. This authority shares NCA 46 (The Fens) with HDC.

Aberdeen (2005)

- A1.7 This study uses the 2km and 5km distances to represent the likely prominent and conspicuous zones of visual effect on the area around proposed turbines as set out in SNH's document PAN 45.

South Lanarkshire - Ironside Farrar (2010)

- A1.8 This study describes different types of cumulative impact rather than setting specific limits or thresholds and therefore would focus more on the effects of a specific application.

Angus Wind Farms Assessment - Ironside Farrar (2008)

- A1.9 This study includes reference to 'sacrificial areas' as the location to concentrate turbines. This appears to be an approach that had also be used in other parts of Europe. The suitability of this approach in other areas would depend on the character of the landscape involved and the presence of other constraints including the presence and number of receptors.

Examples of Inspector Decisions

Introduction

- A2.1 All cases should be judged on their own merits and the circumstances that exist specific to each site, so it is sometimes difficult to see complete consistency in these various decisions. However, the following case studies set out aspects of decisions made by inspectors and the Secretary of State that could be helpful in informing principles and criteria for future decision making in relation to cumulative effects. This approach to 'benchmarking' from other comparable schemes is supported by National Policy Statements EN1 and EN3.

Burnthouse Farm and Flood's Ferry Farm

APP/D0515/A/10/2123739 and APP/D0515/A/10/2131194

Inspector's Decision (26 April 2011)

- A2.2 The inspectors report allowed the two appeals one for 3 wind turbines of 100m (to blade tip) at Burnthouse Farm and 9 wind turbines of 110.5m height (to blade tip) at Flood's Ferry Farm. However, the approval of the Flood's Ferry development was over turned by the Secretary of State and he dismissed the appeal. One of the main issues considered was the effect on landscape character and the visual effects on the local receptors, with particular reference to cumulative effects. Despite the identification of significant cumulative and adverse impacts, this was weighed in the balance with the need to meet national targets for renewable energy and the capacity of the Drained Fen landscape within Fenland District as being suitable for wind farms. The main wind turbine developments considered for cumulative effects were: the two wind farm developments of Burnthouse Farm and Flood's Ferry Farm, which at their closest would be approximately 1.3kms apart; the existing wind turbines at Ransonmoor (approximately 2.6kms apart from Flood's Ferry Farm and approximately 4kms apart from Burnthouse Farm); the proposed Boardinghouse Wind Farm (approximately 2.3kms apart from Flood's Ferry Farm and approximately 3.8kms apart from Burnthouse Farm); and the existing Glassmoor Wind Farm (approximately 6.6kms apart from Flood's Ferry Farm and approximately 4.9kms apart from Burnthouse Farm). The key aspects of the decision making are set out below.

- A2.3 The need to establish whether cumulative visual and landscape impacts would be sufficient that they would cause harm to the public interest, as opposed to the EIA approach of determining whether the proposal would cause significant cumulative impact.
- A2.4 Challenge to the assumption that if the proposals result in a big change, that these should be regarded as adverse impacts.
- A2.5 Significant landscape impacts would occur at a local scale level as a result of the cumulative effect of existing and the proposed schemes.
- A2.6 The proposed Flood Ferry Farm wind turbines would be seen successively and sequentially with the wind turbines at Ransonmoor. The proposed wind turbines would be approximately 2.6kms and more away from the wind turbines at Ransonmoor. This was considered sufficient for the inspector to conclude that this would contribute substantially to an environment in which wind turbines would seem to surround and encroach, creating significant adverse cumulative visual impacts.
- A2.7 At a visual receptor location just beyond 2km, the successive or sequential effect of the two wind farms was also considered to create a significant and adverse cumulative impact.
- A2.8 Burnthouse Farm and Flood's Ferry Farm wind turbines should still be regarded as being prominent, despite being set within a wide and open landscape with big skies.
- A2.9 The proximity of the proposed Flood's Ferry Farm wind turbines to the presence of existing and other proposed wind turbines was sufficient to be considered as having materially harmful cumulative visual effects.

Secretary of State's Decision (6 July 2011)

- A2.10 The Secretary of State confirmed that it was relevant to consider whether any cumulative visual and landscape impacts would be sufficient to cause harm to the public interest.
- A2.11 Whilst the proposed developments would have a significant landscape impact at a local level, the Secretary of State concluded that cumulative landscape impact did not constitute a reason for refusing either of the appeals.
- A2.12 The Secretary of State agreed with the Inspector that the Flood's Ferry Farm proposal in combination with other schemes would create an adverse cumulative visual impact over a sizeable area and gave significant weight to the principle material harm this would give rise to on the surrounding area. This weight was such that it caused the Secretary of State to overturn the Inspector's decision and dismiss the Floods Ferry proposal.

General Principles of Application

A2.13 At distances of 1.3kms to 2.6kms between WTDs of c. 100-110m (to blade tip) despite being in a landscape that has some inherent capacity for WTD, cumulative effects are likely to result in unacceptable landscape and visual harm.

Monkwith Wind Farm, Roos, East Yorks

APP/E2001/A/10/2130670

Inspector's Decision (7 January 2011)

- A2.14 The inspector dismissed the appeal on the basis of harm to landscape and visual amenity resulting from the cumulative effects of the proposed development when seen in the context of three other permitted wind farms. The landscape character of the proposed wind turbines in Holderness is typically open comprising relatively large scale agricultural farmland with low hedges and few trees. There are several settlements and isolated farms or dwellings with the closest properties being approximately 700 to 800m from the closest proposed wind turbine. The three approved wind farms included: Burton Pidsea (3 turbines at 135m height to blade tip); Tedder Hill (3 turbines at 111m height to blade tip); and Sunderland Farm, Roos (9 turbines at 126.5m height to blade tip).
- A2.15 The consented Roos (Sunderland Farm) Wind Farm is located centrally between the other two wind farms approximately 2.2kms and 2.3kms, respectively, to the nearest wind turbines and was successfully appealed at the time, following the inspector's decision that the proposals would not result in an unacceptable 'wind farm landscape' but would form an acceptable 'landscape with wind farms'.
- A2.16 Monkwith Wind Farm was proposed to the north-east of these linear arranged wind farms with the nearest wind turbines separated by a distance of approximately: 5.8kms to Burton Pidsea; 2.4kms to Tedder Hill; and 3.7kms to Roos (Sunderland Farm).
- A2.17 The Inspector considered that a significant cumulative effect would occur with the addition of a fourth wind farm in relatively close proximity to the existing three wind farms and would be a greater effect than 'reinforcement' but less than a 'transformative' influence. The decision was also influenced by the incursion of the wind farm sub-type into a landscape character type that is narrow, open and exposed, higher than the adjacent landscape character type and more undulating and that was less affected by previous wind farm applications.
- A2.18 The inspector considered that the addition of the proposed 3 turbines to the approved 15 turbines would, from certain locations, extend the cumulative effects over a significantly larger area. The inspector determined that cumulative visual effects experienced sequentially over time, by moving within the effected landscape, would not necessarily be of any greater

influence to that experienced in one fixed location. It was considered that the relatively close proximity of the four wind farms would create cumulative harm in a confined localised context as well as over a wider area as a repeated visual effect that would dominate the receptor's experience. However in contrast, the inspector considered this not to be a sufficiently high cumulative effect to create an overbearing or overwhelming impact on residential amenity.

General Principles of Application

- A2.19 A small number of wind farms at a distance of 2.2kms to 2.3kms apart set within an open, relatively large scaled agricultural landscape with limited enclosure potentially would be considered as forming a 'landscape with wind farms'. In this context this was not considered to result in unacceptable harm. However, additional wind farms at a similar distance or slightly greater, where this also affects a relatively more sensitive landscape character with limited influence from wind farm development, may be considered as an unacceptable harm. Sequential visual effects can also contribute to the cumulative harm from receptors.

Nun Wood, Beds, Bucks and Northants

[APP/K0235/A/11/2149434](#), [APP/H2835/A/11/2149437](#) & [AAP/Y0435/A/10/2140401](#)

Inspector's Decision (15 November 2011)

- A2.20 Three appeals were considered for a single windfarm development for the erection of 12 wind turbines 125m high (to blade tip) near Bozeat, which straddled three separate districts requiring three separate planning applications. The inspector allowed the appeals and granted permission for the proposed development. The decision was challenged and the Inspectorate decided not to defend the decision. A new appeal is to be heard in June 2013. The main issues from the 2011 appeal related to effects on landscape and visual amenity. Cumulative effects were also addressed particularly in conjunction with the existing wind farm at Petsoe End to the south where the closest wind turbines would be approximately 6kms from the Nun Wood proposal. The inspector considered that there was sufficient visual separation of the two wind farms not to result in a 'wind farm landscape' being created. He identified that at a distance of approximately 3km the visual receptor would be able to recognise a clear and distinct separation. From approximately 6km there would be many wind turbines visible from some locations, and of sufficient number to create significant cumulative visual effects, but not sufficiently harmful to warrant refusal.
- A2.21 The wind turbines were proposed to be located in three different landscape character areas, including: a plateau landscape of rolling and gently sloping landform, medium scale arable and pastoral farmland, enclosed by woodland and hedgerows; high elevated and undulating

landform, open fields and limited woodland cover, but also with some enclosure; and an elevated, undulating, large scaled farmland with some woodland. The range of LCAs was in part a function of the site being at the junction of three separate landscape character studies.

General Principles of Application

- A2.22 A separation of 6kms between two wind farms (both at 125m height) was not seen as creating unacceptable cumulative harm in this context, despite the potential for significant cumulative effects having been identified.
- A2.23 A distance of 6kms apart in a relatively elevated landscape of undulating or rolling farmland with some enclosure, would be sufficiently distant not to create a 'wind farm landscape' from the two schemes.

Spaldington, East Yorks

APP/E2001/A/10/2137617 & APP/E2001/A/10/2139965

Inspector's Decision (29 September 2011)

- A2.24 The conjoined inquiry considered two appeals for two separate refused planning applications for wind farms. Spaldington Airfield scheme incorporating five wind turbines of 126m height (to blade tip) was allowed and planning permission granted, whilst the Spaldington Common (Ivy House Farm) scheme that proposed seven wind turbines of 126.5m height (to blade tip) was dismissed on the basis of unacceptable harm to living conditions, both in terms of visual dominance and noise disturbance. The closest distance of the nearest turbines of the two proposed developments was approximately 2kms.
- A2.25 The main issues were based on the individual and cumulative effects on various factors, including the visual impact from residential properties, landscape character and public views.
- A2.26 The parties agreed to apply the approach taken to visual amenity effects on residential properties used at Enifer Downs inquiry (APP/X2220/A/08/2071880) and also supported by the Secretary of State at Burnthouse Farm / Floods Ferry conjoined inquiry (see above). This is colloquially known as the 'Lavender Test' and considers unacceptable harm on residential amenity which stated '*when turbines are present in such number, size and proximity that they represent an unpleasantly overwhelming and unavoidable presence in main views from a house or garden, there is every likelihood that the property concerned would come to be widely regarded as unattractive and thus unsatisfactory (but not necessarily uninhabitable) place to live. It is not in the public interest to create such living conditions where they did not exist before.*'

- A2.27 Whilst the inspector considered there to be significant harm to views on residential properties that would have occurred as a result of the Common scheme, the cumulative effect of the two schemes (visual degree of separation varying between 2.8 to 3.8kms), was deemed not to create any additional significant and unacceptable impacts on residential amenity. The settlement of Spaldington lies centrally between the two proposed wind farms, with inspector recognising that this could create the impression of being situated within a wind farm. However, on reviewing the evidence, he felt that there were limited circumstances where the two developments would be experienced together.
- A2.28 Other wind farms were considered for cumulative effect in the Environmental Statements for the two schemes, the closest of which were as follows: Sixpenny Wood Wind farm (proposed at the time of the inquiry at approximately 5kms to the nearest Spaldington Common turbine and approximately 6.4kms to the nearest Spaldington Airfield turbine); the operational Loftsome Bridge Wind Farm (approximately 7.5kms to the nearest Spaldington Common turbine and approximately 5.3kms to the nearest Spaldington Airfield turbine); and Rusholme Wind Farm (consented at the time of the inquiry at approximately 8.2kms to the nearest Spaldington Common turbine and approximately 7kms to the nearest Spaldington Airfield turbine). None of these wind farms were referred to by the inspector in relationship to cumulative effects on landscape and visual amenity.
- A2.29 Both developments were proposed in a large scale and low lying almost most flat landscape with no landscape designations.
- A2.30 The inspector considered that the greatest visual effects occurred within 2 to 3kms of either site. The context of the landscape character in which the wind farms were being proposed i.e. a large scaled landscape and expansive skies formed an important consideration in concluding the landscape's ability to accommodate the proposed developments either individually or cumulatively and for the key characteristics of its large scale, openness and flat topography to remain the most dominant features. Consequently, the proposals could be considered as forming a 'landscape with wind turbines' rather than a 'wind farm landscape' and whilst resulting in significant change to the character of the local landscape, would not result in unacceptable harm.
- A2.31 With regard to public visual impact, in coming to his conclusion, the inspector considered occupants of a car and pedestrians to be of equally high sensitivity. However, whilst the cumulative effect was considered to be significant, the proposed developments would not be sufficiently unacceptable as to justify dismissal.

General Principles of Application

- A2.32 A separation of 2kms between wind farms was considered to be acceptable in relation to views from residential properties. However, it is likely that at least in part this was based on local variations including screening and that a different outcome may have occurred with different local circumstances.
- A2.33 Wind farms separated by 5kms or more apart in this landscape character are unlikely to be considered as leading to significant cumulative landscape and visual impacts based on the schemes present at the time of the decision.

Chiplow (Bagthorpe) and Jack's Lane (Stanhoe), Norfolk

APP/V2635/A/11/2154590 & APP/V2635/A/11/2158966

Inspector's Decision (24 May 2012)

- A2.36 Two appeals heard by the inspector were for five wind turbines of 100m (to blade tip) at the Chiplow site and the erection of six wind turbines of 126.5m (to blade tip) at the Jack's Lane site. Both appeals were allowed and planning permission granted.
- A2.37 The main issues related to five aspects which included the individual and cumulative effects on landscape and views.
- A2.38 The inspector referred to the landscape study produced by Land Use Consultants in 2003 that provides guidance on the capacity of the landscape to accommodate wind turbine development and inform choices about the location of such developments. In particular, whilst the study fell short of defining suitable areas, the inspector considered it useful to the decision making process that the study defined the criteria to be employed and the size of turbines that would be appropriate within different character areas.
- A2.39 The Jack's Lane turbines were proposed within a Plateau Farmland landscape character area and the Chiplow turbines in a Rolling Open Farmland landscape character areas. The Plateau Farmland landscape displays a strikingly flat landform, wide open skies and large arable fields, with long distance panoramic views. The Rolling Open Farmland is a medium to large scale landscape with strong sense of openness, with wide open skies and medium to large scaled arable fields over a gently rising and falling landform. Both areas were identified in the LUC study as having a high capacity to accommodate turbine groups of two to twelve, the former having a 'limited scope' to accommodate cumulative wind turbine developments and the latter having 'scope' for cumulative development. The inspector highlighted the tension that exists within the LUC study resulting from its recommendations to have wind turbine groups sufficiently distanced from settlements to prevent 'a feeling of dominance' whilst avoiding

wind turbines in locations where there is a strong sense of remoteness. Nevertheless, the inspector identified the value of providing such strategic studies in guiding development, when there was a clear logical approach applied to landscape capacity and group sizes.

- A2.40 Both parties agreed that there would be cumulative landscape and visual effects. The proposed wind farms would be typically experienced as visually distinct and well separated developments about 2.5kms apart. 2.5kms was also used as the basis of determining the extent to which significant impact on the landscape would occur for individual wind farm impacts. In some longer distance views, the wind farms would potentially be seen closer together, but with limited additional effect to that experienced as a single development. The most significant cumulative effect was identified between the two developments, where both would be experienced together from a small number of viewpoints. However, they would not be seen together in the same visual context and only occupy narrow angles of view. The inspector considered that at no point would the sequential effect give the viewer the sense that the view was dominated by both groups of wind turbines. The separation distance of the two wind farms was sufficient not to be considered to form a 'single windfarm landscape type'

General Principles of Application

- A2.41 The benefit to Inspectors for local planning authorities in preparing strategic studies which define the number, size and location of wind turbines that can be accommodated within any given landscape character type/area and the criteria to be used in assessing effects.
- A2.42 Wind turbines of between 100m to 126.5m to blade tip height set at 2.5kms apart or more within open, flat or gently rolling landscape, with open and expansive outlooks could be considered acceptable. Less than 2.5kms apart, acceptability would significantly depend on local characteristics and features and the extent to which the wind turbines of different schemes would be seen together or sequentially experienced.

Bartmoor Wind Farm, Moorsyde Wind Farm and Toft Hill Wind Farm

[APP/2935/A/08/2078347](#), [APP/2935/A/08/2079520](#) & [APP/2935/A/08/2077474](#)

Inspector's Decision (19 October 2009)

- A2.45 The inquiry considered three appeals for separate wind farm proposals within a similar locality. The Bartmoor development proposed six turbines at a height of 110.5m (to blade tip), the Moorsyde Wind Farm proposed seven wind turbines at a height of 110m (to blade tip), and the Toft Hill development proposed seven wind turbines at a height of 122m (to blade

tip). The appeal for Barmoor was allowed and planning permission granted, whilst Moorsyde Wind Farm and Toft Hill appeals were dismissed.

- A2.46 One of the main issues common to all three appeals was considered to be cumulative landscape and visual effects of the proposed wind farms. The inspector predominantly relied on guidance provided by the Scottish Natural Heritage's 'Cumulative Effect on Windfarms' and the Regional Spatial Strategy policy 41 which identified the South and West Berwick-upon-Tweed Broad Area of Least Constraint (BALC) as having the capacity to accommodate wind energy development of up to 20-25 turbines. This defines the principle of a threshold beyond which the presence of wind farms in a given area become unacceptable. As wind farms start to coalesce as they become located closer to each other, a point is reached when they become 'perceived as a key landscape characteristic'.
- A2.47 In addition to the three proposed wind farm schemes, the existing wind farm at Black Hill and the following permitted wind turbine developments were considered: Drone Hill, Border Precision, Wandylaw and Middlemoor. The further wind farm proposal of West Ancroft was considered, which at the time of the inquiry had been validated as a planning application but yet to be determined. The inspector considered this to be a critical inclusion, with the resulting effect of all four wind farms proposals creating an unacceptable level of harm as cumulative effect on the landscape and would exceed the limit of 20-25 turbines provided as the guided limit for wind turbines for the BALC. The inspector judged that this would also occur with the specific combination of the three wind farms of Barmoor, Moorsyde and West Ancroft. In both cases the inspector considered the proposed combinations would have exceeded a 'threshold of unacceptable change' and created a 'wind farm landscape'.
- A2.48 The inspector also judged that the distance between the wind farms was sufficient in the triple combination of Barmoor, Moorsyde and Toft Hill and within each double combination that the 'threshold of unacceptable change' would not be passed and predominantly could be considered as being a 'landscape with occasional wind farms'. The only exception was the double combination of Moorsyde and West Ancroft, which would be so close as to give the impression of a single wind farm of fifteen turbines and form a sufficient cumulative effect as to have exceeded the 'threshold of unacceptable change'.
- A2.49 Cumulative visual effects would similarly be affected with: the four wind farm combination; the triple combination of Moorsyde, Toft Hill and West Ancroft; and the double combination of Moorsyde and West Ancroft would create an unacceptable change. All other combinations were judged not to create an unacceptable visual effect.

Secretary of State's Decision (20 January 2010)

- A2.50 The Secretary of State supported the inspector's conclusions, other than specific aspects not relating to cumulative landscape and visual effects, and agreed with her recommendations to allow the appeal for Barmoor and dismiss the appeals for Moorsyde and Toft Hill.

Land at Hill Farm, Tallentire

APP/G0908/A/10/2131842

Inspector's Decision (4 February 2011)

- A2.51 The appeal was allowed and permission granted for the erection of 6 wind turbines of 100m height (to blade tip) on a site near Cockermouth. The individual and cumulative effect of the proposed wind turbines on the character and appearance of the area was one of two main issues covered by the Inspector's Decision.
- A2.52 The inquiry highlighted that there had been a number of windfarm developments that were operational and had been consented, particularly in the region around Workington. The effect of these wind farms is accentuated by a constrained area of search, due to the presence of the Lake District National Park and the Solway Coast AONB. This has created a linear arrangement of wind farms running north-eastwards to Carlisle, with the proposed Tallentire wind farm filling a gap between wind farms around Workington and the Wharrels Hill wind farm. However, the inspector considered there was only a perception of over-concentration, which in reality was not sufficiently evident on the ground. He noted that whilst multiple wind farm developments would be visible to a varying degree from many locations, the landscape remained the dominant feature and could still be described as a 'landscape with wind farms' rather than a 'wind farm landscape'.
- A2.53 The distance of separation of the wind farms within a transitional landscape between the limestone highlands and lowland, composed of ridge and valley and of medium to large scale, was sufficient that sequential views did not become unacceptably dominated by wind turbines. The distance between existing and consented wind turbines and the proposed Tallentire wind farm at their closest are as follows: around Workington to the south-west (Flimby 3 wind turbines approximately 7.4kms apart; Siddick, Oldside and Vordian 18 wind turbines approximately 10.5kms apart; and Winscales and Winscales Moor 18 wind turbines approximately 10.5kms apart); to the east (Wharrels Hill 8 wind turbines approximately 4.8kms apart; and High Pow 3 wind turbines 13kms apart); to the north (Hellrigg 4 wind turbines approximately 13kms apart); and offshore to the west (Robin Rigg 60 wind turbines 19.5kms apart).

General Principles of Application

- A2.54 Despite the number of operational and consented wind farms, so long as there is sufficient distance between the wind farms and actual experience on the ground, cumulative effects will not always be unacceptable to landscape character, so long as it can be demonstrated that the other key characteristics of the landscape remain as the dominant features and it does not become a wind farm landscape.

- A2.55 The location and number of wind turbines illustrated on a plan does not necessarily mean there is an over-concentration and that the most important aspect is the experience evidenced in reality.
- A2.56 Distances of 7.4kms, 10.5kms and 13kms in an open, medium to large scale landscape of ridge and valley landform could in this context be acceptable.

References

Aberdeenshire Council, 2005, *Guidance for Assessing Wind Energy Developments*

Central Bedfordshire Council, 2013, *Renewable Energy Guidance – Wind (Consultation draft)*

Coates Associates, 2007, *Cumbria Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Document Part 2 Landscape and Visual Considerations*

Cumbria County Council, Allerdale Borough Council, Carlisle City Council, Copeland Borough Council, Eden District Council, Lake District National Park Authority and South Lakeland District Council, 2007, *Cumbria Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Document Part 1*

East of England Regional Assembly, 2008, *Placing Renewables in the East of England*

Entec UK Limited, 2008, *Review of Guidance on the Assessment of Cumulative Impacts of Onshore Windfarms – Phase 1 Report*

Fenland District Council, *Wind Turbine Development Guidance 2009*

Horner + MacLennan and Envision, 2006, *Visual Representation of Windfarms Good Practice Guidance*

Huntingdonshire District Council, 2006, *Supplementary Planning Document: Wind Power*

Ironside Farrar, 2008, *Angus Council Landscape Capacity and Cumulative Impacts Study*

Ironside Farrar, 2010, *South Lanarkshire Spatial Framework and Landscape Capacity for Windfarms*

Julie Martin Associates, 2010, *South Pennines Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy Development*

LUC (for Breckland Council and King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council), 2003, *Wind Turbine Development: Landscape Assessment, Evaluation and Guidance*

North East Regional Assembly/Ove Arup, 2006, *Wind Farm Development and Landscape Capacity Studies: Knowesgate and Harwood Forest*

ODPM, 2004, *Planning for Renewable Energy: A Companion Guide to PPS22*

Ove Arup & Partners Ltd, 2006, *TAN 8 Annex D Study of Strategic Search Areas E and F: South Wales Valleys*

Ove Arup & Partners Ltd, 2008, *East of England Regional Assembly, Placing Renewables in the East of England, Final Report*

Ove Arup & Partners Ltd, 2008, *North East Regional Assembly, Wind Farm Development and Landscape Capacity Studies: East Durham Limestone and Tees Plain, Final Report*

Ove Arup & Partners Ltd, 2009, *Association of North East Councils Wind Farm Development and Landscape Capacity Studies: East Durham Limestone & Tees Plain Addendum*

Perth & Kinross Council, 2005, *Supplementary Planning Guidance for Wind Energy Proposals*

Scottish Executive, 2002, *PAN45: Renewable Energy Technologies*

Scottish Natural Heritage, 2005, *Cumulative Effect of Windfarms, v2*

Scottish Natural Heritage, 2012, *Assessing the Cumulative Effect of Onshore Wind Energy Developments*

Scottish Natural Heritage, 2012 *Strategic Locational Guidance for onshore Wind farms in respect of the Natural Heritage Policy statement no. 02/02*

Scottish Natural Heritage, 2012 *Siting and Design of Small Scale Wind Turbines of between 15-50metres in height*

Scottish Natural Heritage, 2009 *Commissioned Report No. 385 Landscape capacity studies in Scotland – a review and guide to good practice*

South Holland District Council, 2004, *Supplementary Planning Guidance on Wind Energy*

TCPA, 2005, *Planning for Wind Energy*

The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2003, *Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity*

The Landscape Partnership, 2013, *Guideline 3 – Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts*

University of Newcastle (for SNH), 2002, *Visual Assessment of Windfarms: Best Practice*

White Consultants, 2011, *Rugby Borough Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy Developments*

Glossary

*Conservation Area** – Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Cumulative impact – The combined effect of all developments when taken together, both present and those in the future.

Fall over distance – The height of the turbine to the tip of the blade. Also known as the topple height.

Intervisibility – The extent to which one area can see another and vice versa

*Landscape Capacity*** – The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without unacceptable adverse effects on its character. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change being proposed.

*Landscape Character*** – The distinct and recognizable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, and how this is perceived by people. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. It creates the particular sense of place of different areas of the landscape.

Landscape Character Area – A unique geographic area with a consistent character and identity, defined by geology, landform, soils, vegetation, landuse, settlement and field pattern.

*Landscape Character Assessment**** – An umbrella term for description, classification and analysis of landscape.

*Landscape Character Type*** – A landscape type will have broadly similar patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, landuse, settlement and field pattern discernable in maps and field survey records.

*Landscape Quality*** – About the physical state of the landscape and its intactness, from visual, functional and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place.

*Landscape Sensitivity*** – The extent to which a landscape can accept change of a particular type and scale without adverse effects on its character.

*Landscape Value*** – The relative value or importance attached to a landscape (often as a basis for designation or recognition), which expresses national or local consensus, because of its quality, special qualities including perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wilderness, cultural associations or other conservation issues.

*Listed Building** – A building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II* or II with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building, and any buildings or permanent structures (e.g. wells within its curtilage). English Heritage is responsible for designating buildings for listing in England.

Microgeneration – Small scale production of heat and/or electricity from low carbon sources.

*Mitigation*** – Measures, including any process, activity or design to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for adverse landscape and visual impacts of a development project.

Planning Advice Note (PAN) – Scottish planning document providing advice on good practice and other relevant information.

*Ramsar Site** – Sites designated under the European Ramsar Convention to protect wetlands that are of international importance, particularly as waterfowl habitats.

*Registered Park and Garden** – A park or garden of special historic interest. Graded I (highest quality), II* or II. Designated by English Heritage.

*Renewable Energy** – Renewable energy is energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment, for example from the wind, water flow, tides or the sun.

*Scheduled Monument** – Nationally important monuments usually archaeological remains, that enjoy greater protection against inappropriate development through the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

Shadow flicker – Under certain combinations of geographical position and time of day, the sun may pass behind the rotors of a wind turbine and cast a shadow over neighbouring properties. When the blades rotate, the shadow flicks on and off.

*Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** – A site identified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) as an area of special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features

*Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)** - A site designated under the European Community Habitats Directive, to protect internationally important natural habitats and species.

*Special Protection Area (SPA)** – Sites classified under the European Community Directive on Wild Birds to protect internationally important bird species.

*Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** – A Supplementary Planning Document is a Local Development Document that may cover a range of issues, thematic or site specific, and provides further detail of policies and proposals in a 'parent' Development Plan Document.

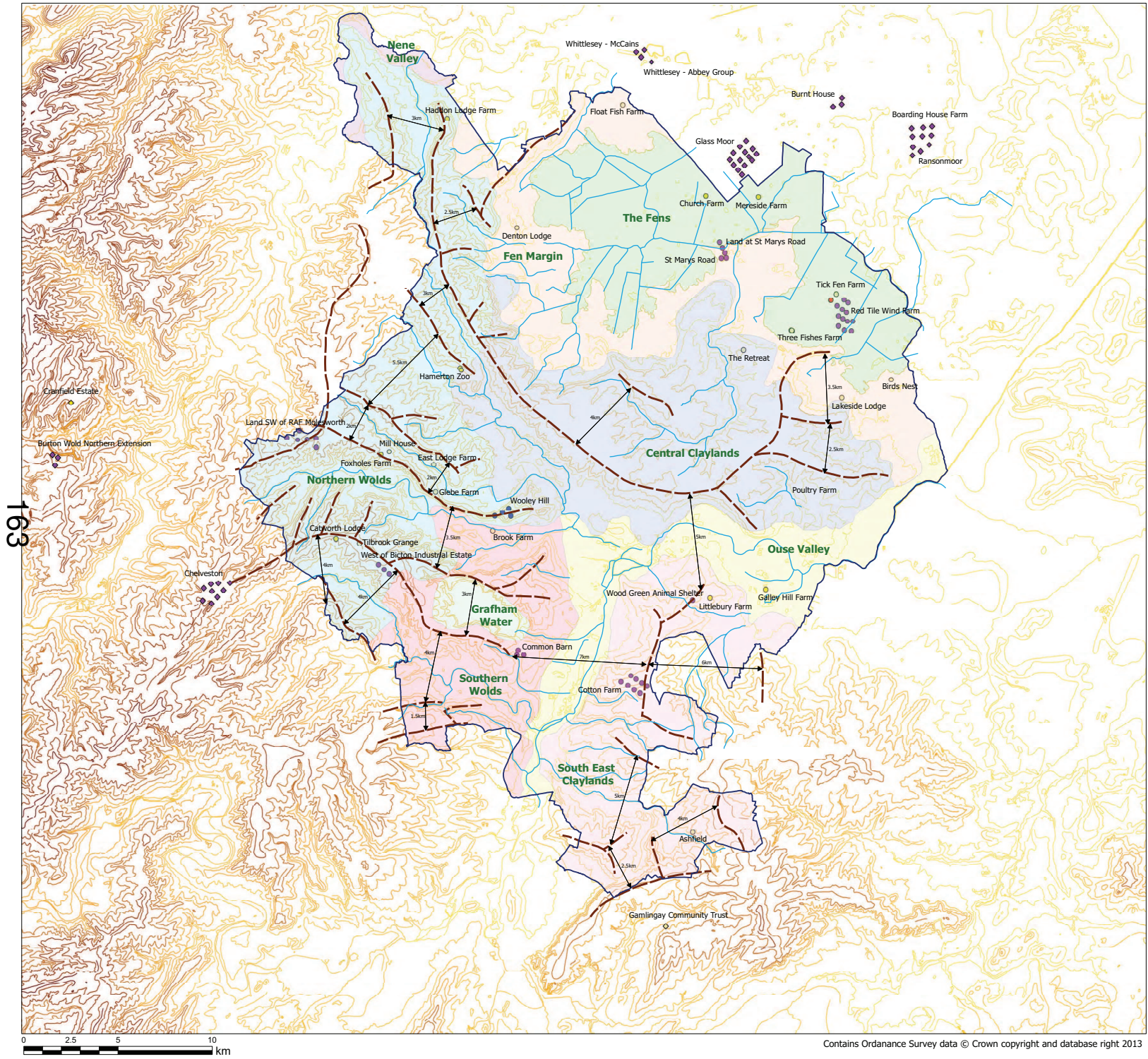
Threshold – A specified level beyond which impacts are likely to be unacceptable.

Typology – The classification of items into groups to allow their assessment.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) – Also known as a Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI), Visual Envelope Map (VEM) and Viewshed. This represents the area over which a development can theoretically be seen, based on digital terrain data.

* = as defined in the Glossary of Planning Terms on the Planning Portal website

** = as defined in the Glossary section of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2nd edition, The Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2002



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2013

Key

- District Boundary
 - Watercourses
 - Ridgelines
- Character**
- Central Claylands
 - Fen Margin
 - Grafham Water
 - Nene Valley
 - Northern Wolds
 - Ouse Valley
 - South East Claylands
 - Southern Wolds
 - The Fens

Wind turbines

TurbineHt

- <30m
- 30 - 69m
- 70 - 99m
- 100 - 129m
- 130 - c.150m

Neighbouring Existing & Proposed Turbines

- <30m
- 30 - 69m
- 70 - 99m
- 100 - 129m
- 130 - c.150m

Contours

- 3 - 20m
- 20 - 40m
- 40 - 60m
- 60 - 80m
- 80 - 100m
- 100 - 120m

Project **HDC Wind Turbine Study**

Drawing Title
Topography, Watercourses and Landscape Charatcer Areas

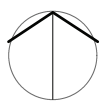
Drawing Number **Figure 01**

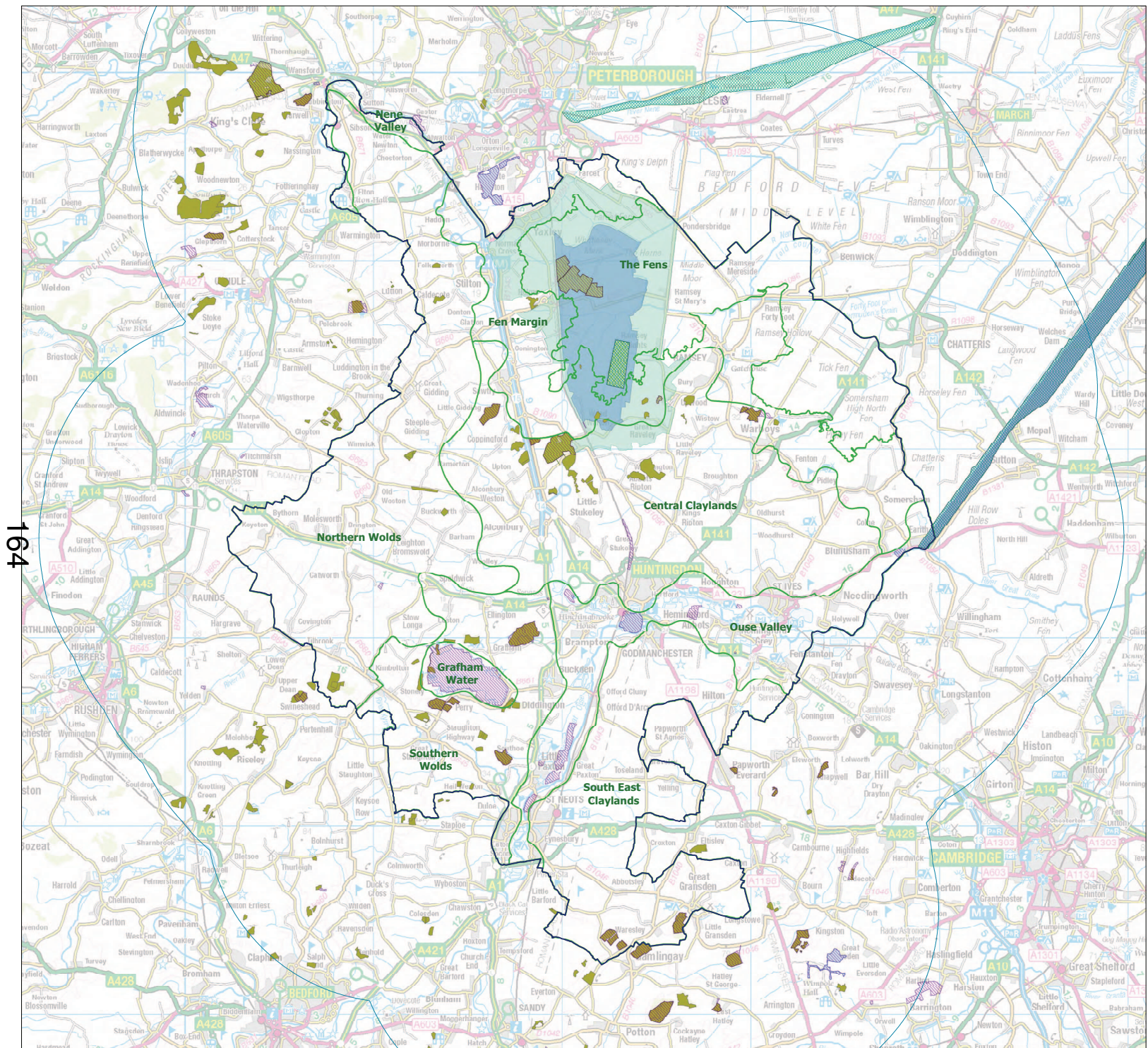
Scale **1:100,000 @ A1**

Date **May 2013**

Drawn **GF**

Checked **JB**





164

- Key**
- District Boundary
 - 10km Buffer of District Boundary
 - Landscape Character Areas
 - RAMSAR
 - SSSI
 - National Nature Reserves
 - Special Area of Conservation
 - Special Protection Area
 - Ancient Woodland
 - Great Fen Project Area
 - Great Fen Setting



Project **HDC Wind Turbine Study**

Drawing Title **National Biodiversity Designations**

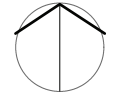
Drawing Number **Figure 02**

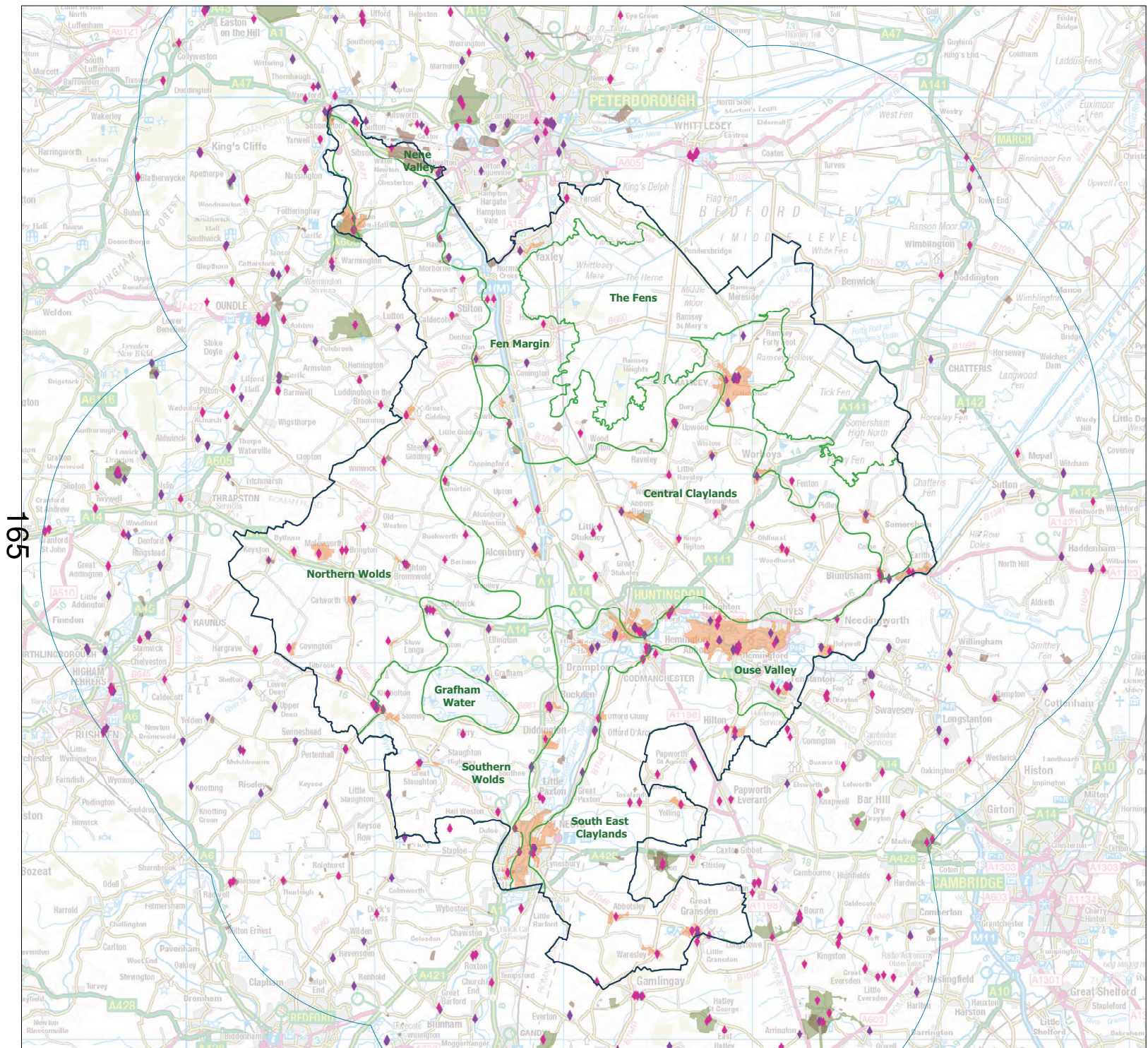
Scale **1:100,000 @ A1**

Date **May 2013**









Drawn **GF**

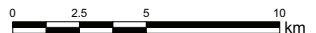
Checked **JB**





165

- Key**
-  District Boundary
 -  10km Buffer of District Boundary
 -  Landscape Character Areas
 -  Listed Buildings - Grade I
 -  Listed Buildings - Grade II*
 -  Conservation Areas
 -  Scheduled Monuments
 -  Registered Parks and Gardens



Project **HDC Wind Turbine Study**

Drawing Title **Cultural Heritage**

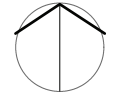
Drawing Number **Figure 03**

Scale **1:100,000 @ A1**

Date **May 2013**

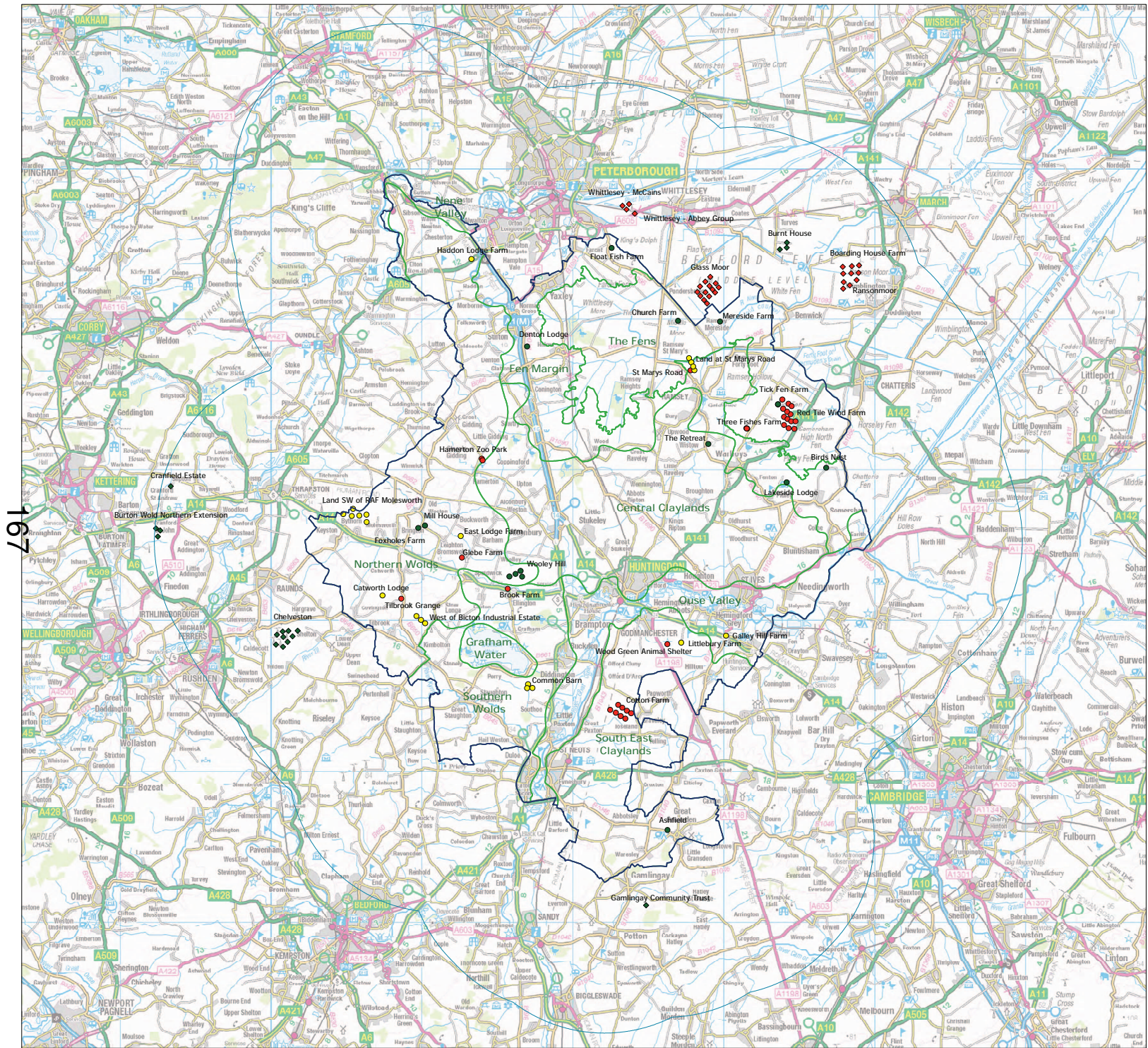
Drawn **GF**

Checked **JB**



Contains or is based upon English Heritage's National Heritage List for England data © English Heritage
 Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2013

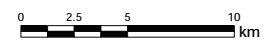
This page is intentionally left blank



167

Key

- District Boundary
- 10km Buffer of District Boundary
- Neighbouring District Wind Turbines**
- Operational
- Consented
- HDC Wind Turbines**
- Operational
- Consented
- In Planning
- Landscape Character Areas



Project **HDC Wind Turbine Study**

Drawing Title **Existing Wind Turbine Schemes Including Those 'In Planning'**

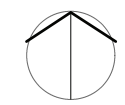
Drawing Number **Figure 04**

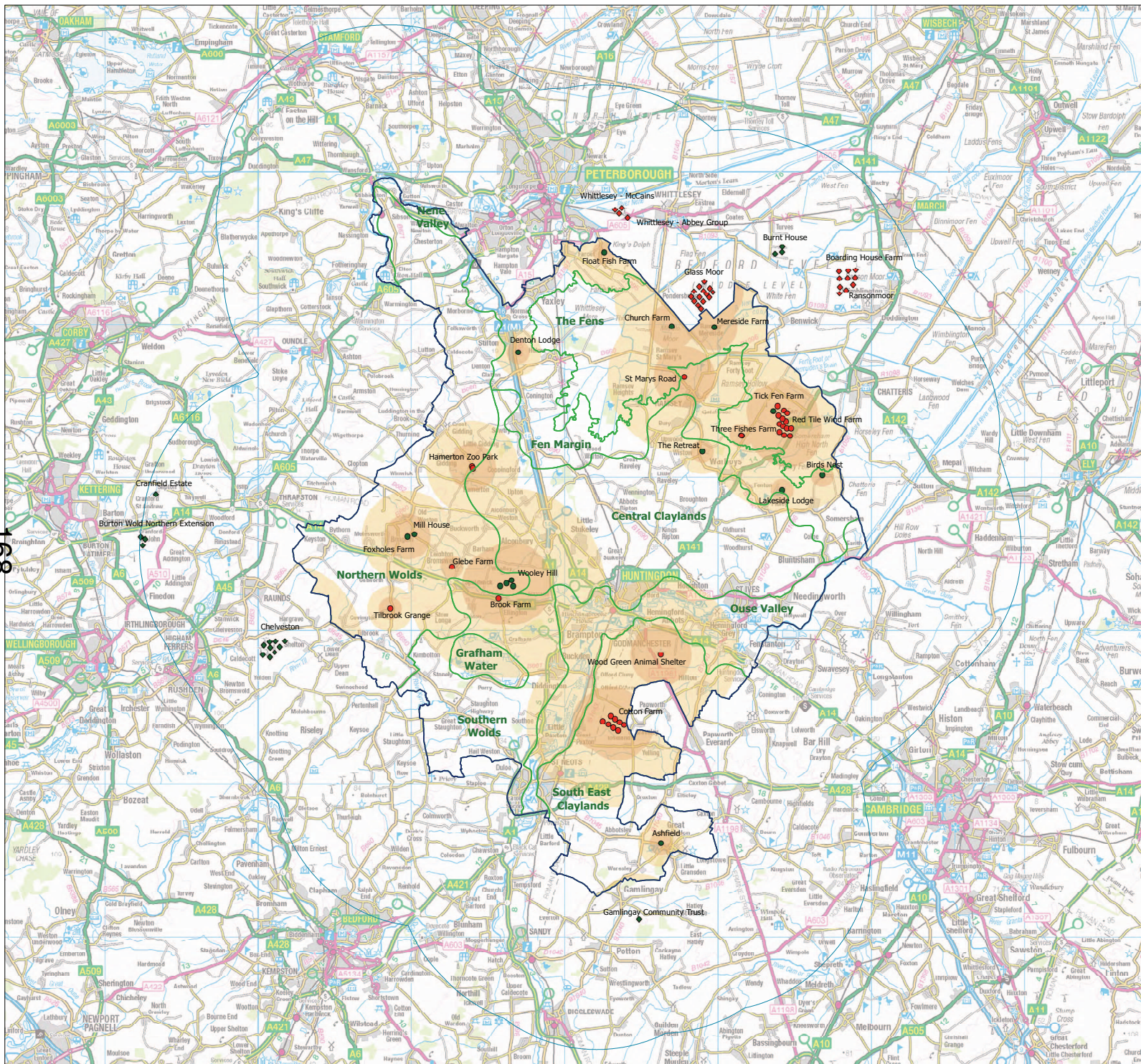
Scale **1:125,000 @ A1**

Date **May 2013**

Drawn **GF**

Checked **JB**





Key

- District Boundary
- 10km Buffer of District Boundary
- Neighbouring District Wind Turbines**
 - Operational
 - Consented
- HDC Wind Turbines**
 - Operational
 - Consented
- Prominent Zone
- Conspicuous Zone
- Landscape Character Areas



Project **HDC Wind Turbine Study**

Drawing Title **Prominent and Conspicuous Zones (Current Schemes)**

Drawing Number **Figure 05**

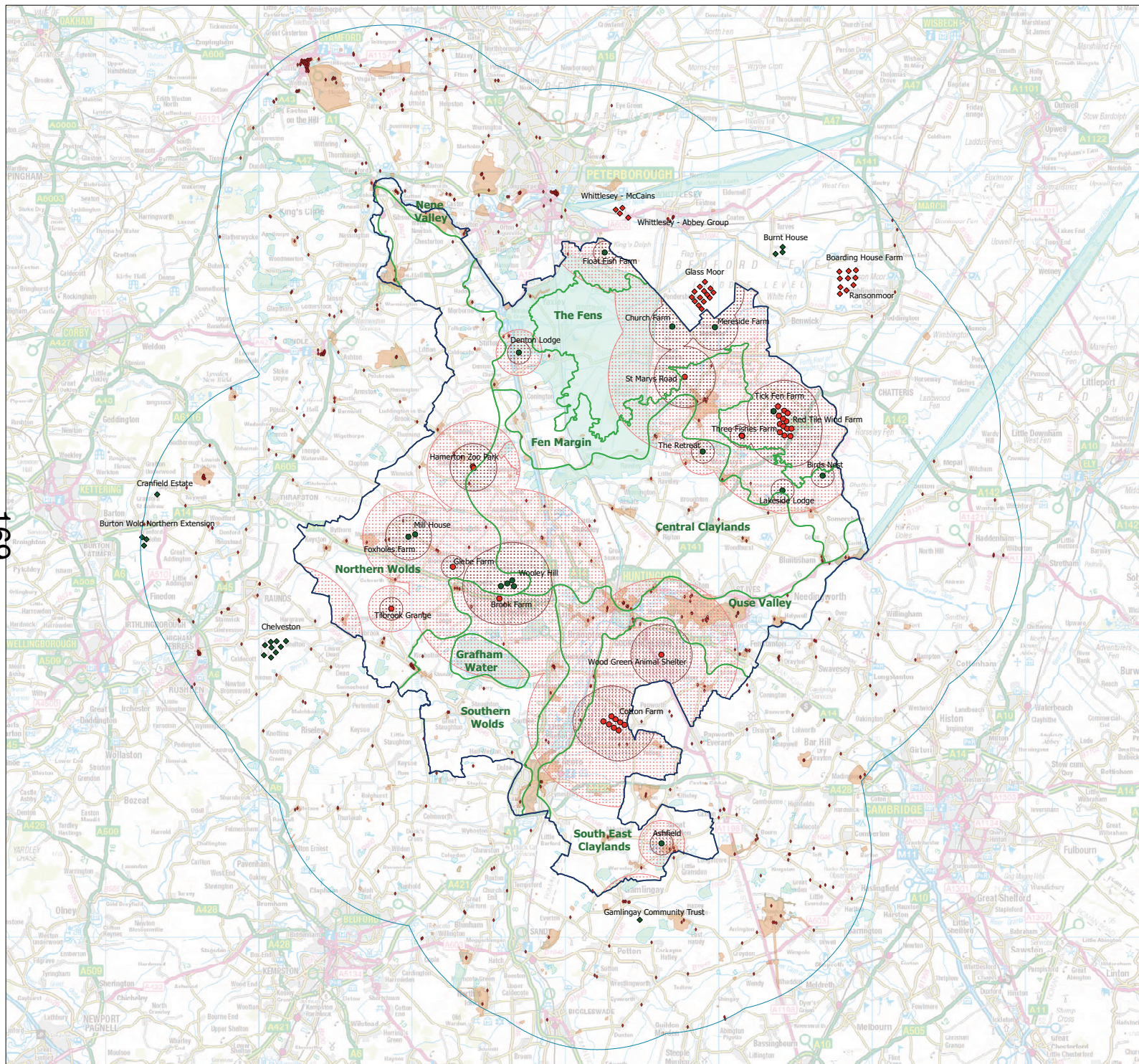
Scale **1:125,000 @ A1**

Date **May 2013**

Drawn **GF**

Checked **JB**





Key

- District Boundary
- 10km Buffer of District Boundary

Neighbouring District Wind Turbines

- Operational
- Consented

HDC Wind Turbines

- Operational
- Consented

Constraint Zones

- Prominent Zone
- Conspicuous Zone
- Landscape Character Areas
- Wildlife Constraints
- Heritage Constraints

Listed Buildings Grades I & II*



Project **HDC Wind Turbine Study**

Drawing Title **Prominent & Conspicuous Zones and Combined Constraints (Current Schemes)**

Drawing Number **Figure 06**

Scale **1:125,000 @ A1**

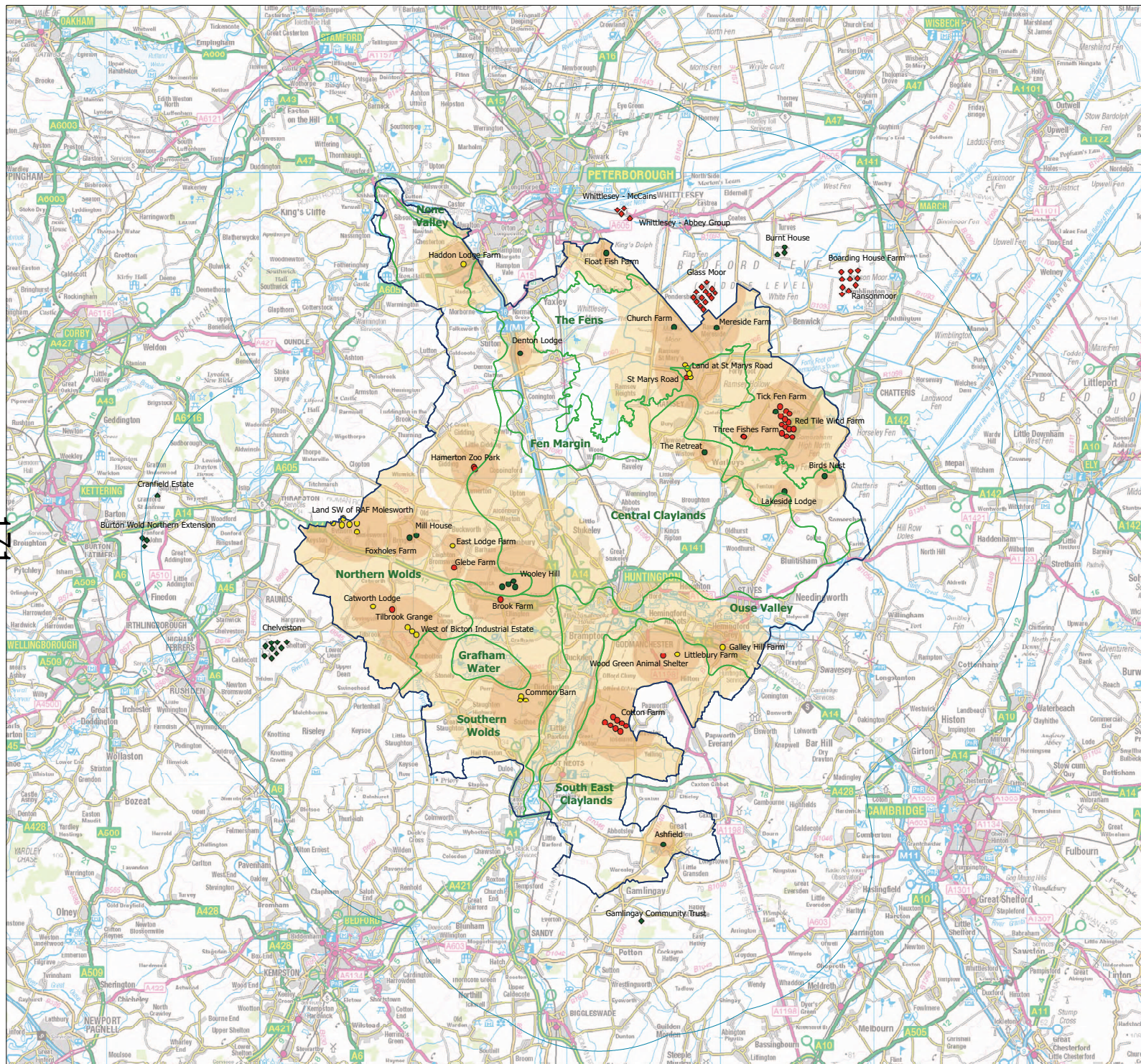
Date **May 2013**

Drawn **GF**

Checked **JB**



This page is intentionally left blank



- Key**
- District Boundary
 - 10km Buffer of District Boundary
- Neighbouring District Wind Turbines**
- ◆ Operational
 - ◆ Consented
- HDC Wind Turbines**
- Operational
 - Consented
 - In Planning
- Prominent Zone
- Conspicuous Zone
- Landscape Character Areas



Project HDC Wind Turbine Study

Drawing Title Prominent & Conspicuous Zones (Current and Potential Schemes)

Drawing Number Figure 07

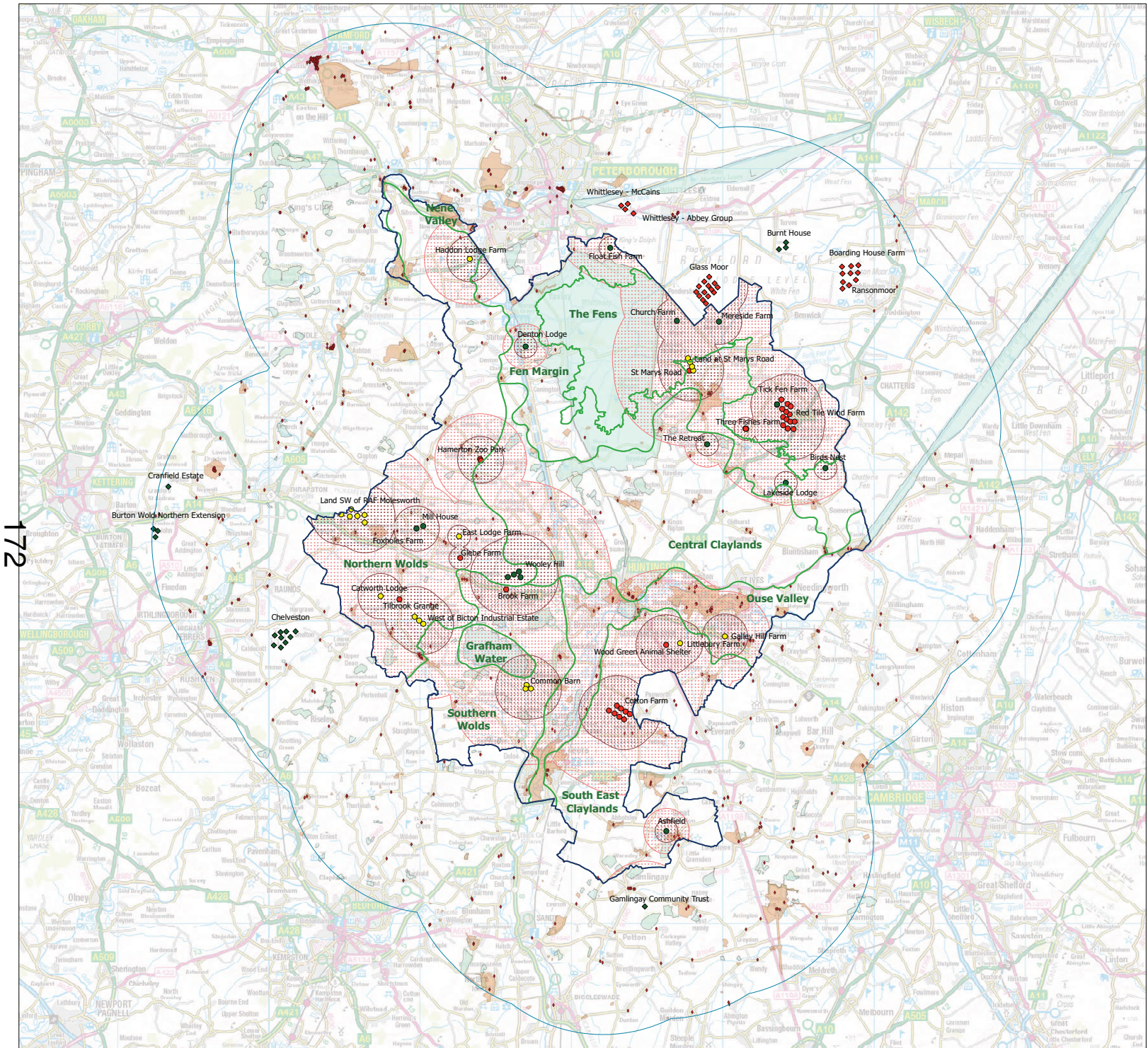
Scale 1:125,000 @ A1

Date May 2013

Drawn GF

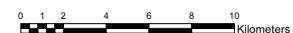
Checked JB





172

- Key**
- District Boundary
 - 10km Buffer of District Boundary
 - Neighbouring District Wind Turbines**
 - Operational
 - Consented
 - HDC Wind Turbines**
 - Operational
 - Consented
 - In Planning
 - Prominent Zone
 - Conspicuous Zone
 - Landscape Character Areas
 - Wildlife Constraints
 - Heritage Constraints
 - Listed Buildings Grades I & II*



Project **HDC Wind Turbine Study**

Drawing Title **Prominent & Conspicuous Zones and Constraints (Current and Potential Schemes)**

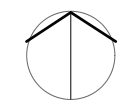
Drawing Number **Figure 08**

Scale **1:125,000 @ A1**

Date **May 2013**

Drawn **GF**

Checked **JB**



**LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY TO WIND TURBINE DEVELOPMENT DRAFT REVISED
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being))**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 At its meeting held on 9th July 2013, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) considered a report by the Planning Service Manager (Policy) seeking approval of the Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development Supplementary Planning Document and the endorsement of supporting technical evidence.

2. THE PANEL'S DISCUSSIONS

2.1 The Draft Revised Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been updated to take into account the publication of new national policy guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the methodological approach undertaken to assess landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development since 2005. It further attempts to provide some guidance on the siting and design of smaller scale wind turbines and clarifies the evidence base which underpins the document. To strengthen further the evidence base for the SPD, an additional piece of work has been commissioned by the Planning Department on the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire, which details all operational and consented wind turbine developments in the District together with those awaiting determination. **The Panel regards this as an important piece of work and proposes that it should be subject to separate public consultation. This will give it extra weight and will strengthen the support it gives to the SPD making it better able to withstand the rigours of an appeal. Members therefore suggest that recommendation 5.3 of the report should be amended in this respect.**

2.2 The Panel has received a letter from a member of the Molesworth Action Group expressing concerns over various aspects of the SPD namely in relation to the perception that the guidance on wind turbine developments has been relaxed, the separation distances between developments and the definition of the term "historic village". The issues raised have been discussed by the Panel and a written response will be made.

2.3 Referring to the NPPF, the Panel has commented upon the omission of the terms "adverse visual impact" and "material harm" from the SPD. Whilst implied references appear within the Draft Local Plan to 2036 and the former Core Strategy, **the Panel is of the view that explicit reference to the terms "adverse visual impact" and "material harm" should be incorporated within the planning policy framework.**

2.4 Concerns remain over the group sizes proposed within the SPD. The Panel is not satisfied that the group sizes have been satisfactorily justified, particularly when considering the District's unique landscape characteristics. The Panel has reiterated the view that the SPD should not include the proposed upper limit for large groups of wind turbines. Members echo their comments made in January

2013, when the draft revised SPD was considered prior to public consultation, that the specification of an upper limit will provide developers with an indication of the level of development they could expect to receive approval for, and in some cases, they might expect to exceed that level. It is felt that the SPD should be strengthened to provide more rigidity in this respect. Whilst it is acknowledged that the previous Land Use Consultants Study was used to inform the existing and the revised SPD group sizes, it is felt that this report was based on areas which had differing landscape characteristics to those of Huntingdonshire. Table 1 of the SPD provides a summary of potential capacity for wind turbine developments, which indicates that there is at best moderate capacity for large groups and some of these are limited to groups of 13-15. Furthermore, Table 6 shows that some areas of the District are reaching saturation point. In addition, conditions placed on existing developments severely restrict further development. Members argue that if capacity for turbines at the upper end of the large group size is so restricted the large group size should not be set at 24. **It is recommended that further work is undertaken significantly to revise downwards the size of the groups.**

2.5 Members are concerned over the absence of a separation distance from the draft revised SPD and suggest that a minimum distance of 2km is introduced. It is felt that this should either be included within the draft Local Plan or the SPD itself. **It is suggested that Officers should be requested to produce terms for such a policy for approval by Members.**

2.6 The Panel supports the need for the Council to have in place an SPD for wind turbine developments. Referring to the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire, it is evident that the District is meeting the challenge set by the Government and is reaching saturation point in certain landscape character areas. There appear to be fewer wind turbine developments in neighbouring local authority areas.

2.7 The Panel is aware that the Department for Communities and Local Government is shortly due to produce guidance on wind turbine developments. The impact of this announcement is not yet known but it will need to be taken into account.

2.8 The Panel has commended Officers for the production of a high quality, objective and comprehensive report.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The Cabinet is invited to take into account the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) as part of its deliberations on the report by the Planning Service Manager (Policy).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Minutes and Reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) held on 9th July 2013.

Contact Officer: Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer
☎ 01480 388006
✉ Habbiba.Ali@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan Economic Development Manager

1. INTRODUCTION

Supporting economic growth is a key focus for the Council as detailed in adopted Leadership Direction Document.

- 1.1 The council's current Local Economic Strategy expires in 2015 and was produced before the proposed redevelopment of the Alconbury airfield, the allocation of Enterprise Zone status and before the onset of the current and prolonged recession. A local economic strategy is vital to a district facing significant growth pressures and for this reason, and to support the production of the new Local Plan, the council requires a revised, evidence based economic strategy.
- 1.3 During 2012 a full local economic assessment was undertaken in order to provide the evidence base for the new economic strategy and contribute to the evidence base for the new Local Plan. This assessment also serves as a comprehensive base-line profile of the district in advance of significant anticipated developments.

2. CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED BY ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

- 2.1 The key challenges identified by the economic assessment are:
 - The proportion of the population who are of working age in Huntingdonshire is reducing.
 - Huntingdonshire has a number of strategic development plans. However, development will not just 'happen'. A targeted approach, which differentiates the Huntingdonshire 'offer' is needed.
 - There is a polarisation in the business base of Huntingdonshire in terms of the size of enterprise as well as a tendency towards more traditional industry sectors.

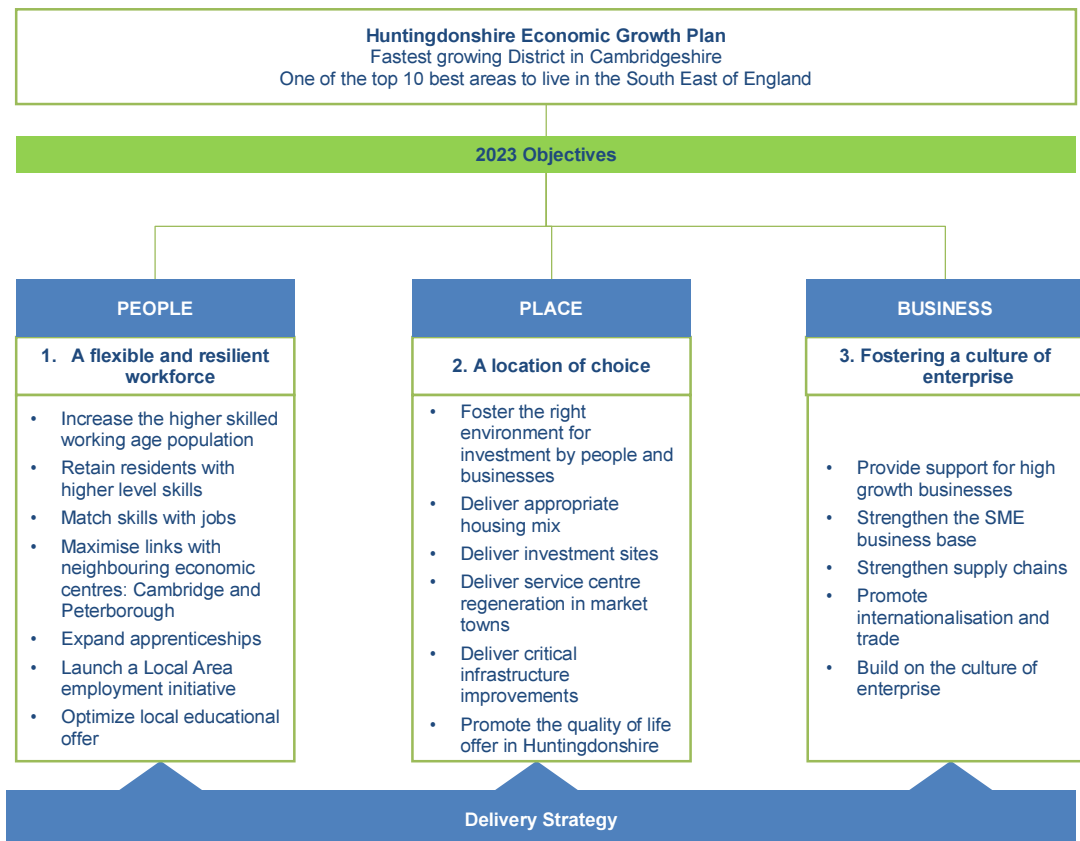
3. ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT ACTION PRIORITIES

- 3.1 Eight action priorities emerged from the economic assessment are summarised in the table below:
 - **Improve the match of skills to future job growth** - improve links between employers and education providers
 - **Rebalancing the population structure** - delivering sufficient residential development to encourage in-migration and of a quality that would appeal to higher skilled residents. Simultaneously create new and sustainable

- employment opportunities on strategic employment sites
- **Raising Huntingdonshire’s profile** - the need to determine the districts comparative advantage, it’s ‘offer’ or uniqueness
- **Unlock infrastructure constraints** - utility, transport, digital and appropriate commercial provision for growth industries.
- **Maximise the impact of strategic sites** such as Alconbury Weald while minimizing the impact of displacement and supporting those companies that will be displaced from the site during development.
- **Build on business strengths** - support business start-ups and SMEs to grow the micro and small business base whilst encouraging inward investment to address the lack of medium sized businesses in the economy.
- **Diversify the economy** - introduce sector based business development strategies focusing on the professional and scientific sectors
- **Develop public sector governance** structures to facilitate economic growth

4. HUNTINGDONSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH PLAN 2013-2023

4.1 The strategy for addressing these action priorities is set out within the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013 – 2023 (A copy of the Plan is appended hereto). The Plan sets out a vision for Huntingdonshire and 2023 Objectives which fall into three main streams or themes of work. These are represented below:



4.2 An overview of the delivery programme with some key actions is provided below. This gives a broad indication of the proposed phasing of delivery actions.

	People	Place	Business
Short Term Delivery Actions (1-3 years)	<p>District wide approach to careers advice and apprenticeships</p> <p>Enterprise Strategy for young people</p> <p>Marketing programme To attract high skilled working families</p> <p>Promotion of Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) in education</p>	<p>Targeted promotion to high value sectors</p> <p>Re-launch Developer's Forum</p> <p>Investment Portfolio (inward investment promotion)</p> <p>Internationalisation programme (Export promotion)</p> <p>Delivery of strategic development including Alconbury Enterprise Zone, Huntingdon West, St Neot's and key service centres</p>	<p>Links with Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Dragons Den competition</p> <p>Improve relationship between the Council and business</p> <p>Link schools with employers</p>
Medium Term Delivery Actions (3-5 years)	<p>Local Area Skills initiative (Oxmoor – Alconbury)</p> <p>Community Organising</p> <p>Visitor Economy Strategy</p> <p>University capability</p>	<p>SME business accommodation</p> <p>Links with Cambridge University</p> <p>Delivery of strategic development including Alconbury Enterprise Zone, Huntingdon West, St Neot's and key service centres</p>	<p>High growth SME programme</p> <p>Supply Chain Strategy</p> <p>Business mentoring/coaching</p> <p>Innovation and R&D in manufacturing</p>
Longer Term Delivery Actions (5-10 years)	<p>Community Budgeting in areas of high need</p>	<p>Critical infrastructure</p> <p>Housing targets, with additional demand from Alconbury Enterprise Zone</p> <p>Delivery of strategic development including Alconbury Enterprise Zone, Huntingdon West, St Neot's and key service centres</p>	<p>Huntingdonshire Alumni Network</p>

4.3 A more detailed breakdown of the above will form the basis of an economic development service delivery plan.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This is an aspirational but deliverable strategy. Delivery will require closer and more joined up working across services internally and with partners externally, a process which is already well underway.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 That Cabinet approve the content of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013 – 2023.

Contact Officer: Sue Bedlow, Economic Development Manager
☎ 01480 387096

Draft
Huntingdonshire District Council
Huntingdonshire Economic
Growth Plan 2013 – 2023



Contents

Foreword	2
Executive Summary	4
Huntingdonshire's Economic Growth Potential	6
The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan	12
Huntingdonshire in 2023	22
Measuring Success	26

Foreword

Huntingdonshire: ‘Going for Growth’

Huntingdonshire is a great place to live, work and invest. By 2023 it will be one of the best places to live in the South East of England. Huntingdonshire will ‘go for growth’.



Jason Ablewhite
Executive Leader
Huntingdonshire District Council

In the last 10 years, 8,000 new jobs have been created in Huntingdonshire across a range of different industries. The house building industry remains healthy, with more homes being built in Huntingdonshire than in all other areas in Cambridgeshire. New business accommodation has also been built, in the context of a very difficult development market.

Our well educated workforce lives and works locally and also travels further afield to Cambridge, Peterborough and London.

Our strong, stable economy has rallied the recession. However, we know we have more work to do. We want Huntingdonshire to be one of the most attractive places to live, work and invest in the South East of England and to do that we need a vision for economic growth.

We have worked hard throughout 2012 to prepare our plan, which sets out our vision:

“By 2023, Huntingdonshire will be the fastest growing District in Cambridgeshire and one of the top 10 best places to live in the South East of England.”

This Economic Growth Plan is about ambition. It is about working to a common goal and a shared purpose. Huntingdonshire has a clear plan for the future. I am pleased to present the Huntingdonshire Growth Plan.

A strong, growing economy, which is also stable is needed to achieve our vision. The Huntingdonshire economy must be supported by skilled people, strong sectors, vibrant service centres and strategic development sites, which together will support the growth and development of the economy in the next decade and beyond.

The only way we can achieve our vision is by working together. I look forward to working with our partners, residents and business community to make this District an exemplary place to live, work and to invest. Together, let’s ‘go for growth!’

July 2013

By 2023, Huntingdonshire will be the fastest growing District in Cambridgeshire and one of the top 10 best places to live in the South East of England.

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The UK economy has experienced a deep, long recession. The fabric of the UK economy has changed as a result. There are fewer private sector investors in the marketplace and less public money available to stimulate economic growth. The government's austerity programme has reduced the amount of public funding available for economic development and the result is an increasingly competitive global market.

However, Huntingdonshire's economy remains strong and stable, having suffered less and recovered quicker from the recession than other areas of the country. The evidence points to a number of opportunities to 'go for growth' and to further develop the economy of Huntingdonshire. Huntingdonshire is:

- An attractive place to live, with a strong and relatively affordable housing market;
- Well connected, with excellent road and rail links and significant plans for improving highways and rail infrastructure further;
- Economically stable, with a strong small business sector and many well established companies;
- Home to a well educated, highly skilled population, with a high proportion of residents in managerial and professional occupations;
- Well placed to create new jobs and deliver economic growth, with key growth opportunities, such as Alconbury Weald and new development continuing apace in strategic locations such as St Neots; and
- Continuing to deliver housing growth ahead of schedule.

Huntingdonshire has a number of strategic opportunities that can facilitate economic growth. However, there are a number of structural challenges within the economy that must be resolved if Huntingdonshire is to compete for and win investment, attract and retain talent and create the number of new jobs that economic forecasts suggest is possible.

These challenges include:

- 1. People.** The proportion of the population who are of working age in Huntingdonshire is reducing. This means that there are fewer economically active people living in the District.
- 2. Place.** Huntingdonshire has planned a number of key strategic developments. However, development will not just 'happen'. A targeted approach, which differentiates the Huntingdonshire 'offer' is needed.
- 3. Business.** There is a polarisation in the business base of Huntingdonshire and a tendency towards more traditional industry sectors.

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

This Economic Growth Plan has been written in response to the strengths and challenges of Huntingdonshire's economy. It has been written at a time of great economic uncertainty. However, the evidence gathered has demonstrated that it is clear that Huntingdonshire, with the right strategy in place, shows the potential to adapt successfully to the changes in the UK economy and build its profile and competitive position, in order to compete for investment, talent and jobs.

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan is 'going for growth'. The Plan aims to deliver economic growth by focusing on achieving a set of key ambitions, the '2023 Objectives':

1. To create a flexible and resilient workforce.
2. To make Huntingdonshire a location of choice.
3. To foster a culture of enterprise.

Delivery

The Huntingdonshire Growth Plan will deliver its strategy over the next 10 years via the following framework themes:

- People;
- Place; and
- Business.



Huntingdonshire's economy remains strong and stable, having suffered less and recovered quicker from the recession than other areas of the country. The evidence points to a number of opportunities to 'go for growth' and to further develop the economy of Huntingdonshire.

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

Huntingdonshire's Economic Growth Potential

Huntingdonshire: 'The People'

Huntingdonshire is the largest District by population in Cambridgeshire. New Census data suggests that the population increased by an additional 1,300 more than estimated in the East of England Forecasting Model (the forecasting model for the East of England, which projects economic, demographic and housing trends). This suggests that future population growth may also exceed expectations. If this faster than anticipated population growth continues, it could lead to improved economic outcomes for Huntingdonshire.

Huntingdonshire's population is skilled and highly motivated. The proportion of the population with higher level qualifications is high and the unemployment rate is lower than in many other Districts in Cambridgeshire.

Huntingdonshire residents have benefited from increasingly higher salaries in recent years, with the salaries of people who both live and work in Huntingdonshire increasing to closer match those of Cambridge City.

Huntingdonshire residents are entrepreneurial and a significant proportion of the population is self employed. Residents also have excellent qualifications and many are employed in managerial and professional occupations.

Many Huntingdonshire residents work within the District, a substantial number also travel to well paid jobs in Cambridge City and many travel further afield to work in London. The planned new rail improvements will decrease the travel time to London further and key strategic development areas such as Huntingdon West, St Neots and Alconbury Weald will benefit as a result.

The recession caused the Huntingdonshire economy to contract and unemployment levels did rise as a result. However, the economy of Huntingdonshire has returned to pre-recession levels very quickly, which shows that the population and local economy are resilient and able to withstand economic shocks.

Huntingdonshire's population is well placed to contribute to and benefit from future economic growth. The population of strategic development areas such as St Neots, is already increasing. The framework for economic growth is set to deliver substantial new development over the next 10 years.

However, there are key issues that must be addressed if Huntingdonshire population is to benefit from the potential for economic growth and if it is to compete in the ever increasingly competitive environment of Cambridgeshire.

The primary issue is that the proportion of the population of working age in Huntingdonshire is contracting. The population is ageing, economic activity rates are declining and recent figures suggest better qualified residents may be moving out of the District.

For this reason, it is important that there is a significant boost in new housing development. Housing appropriate to attract those with higher level skills who are economically active is important for the future prosperity of the district, alongside other initiatives to increase the provision of affordable housing as identified in the strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Meanwhile there are also areas of deprivation within the District, which are experiencing increasing issues with barriers to employment, accessing public services and housing. It is important that residents within less affluent areas are able to participate equitably in the economy and that they are able to share the benefits of economic growth.

Timing is critical. It is imperative that these issues are addressed early through the delivery of the Huntingdonshire Growth Plan. This is so the Huntingdonshire economy can achieve its potential and that, most importantly, the benefits of economic growth can be spread across the District fairly and equally for all residents.



Huntingdonshire's population is well placed to contribute to and benefit from future economic growth. The population of strategic development areas such as St Neots, is already increasing. The framework for economic growth is set to deliver substantial new development over the next 10 years.



Huntingdonshire: 'The Place'

Huntingdonshire is strategically located within the London/Stansted/Cambridge/Peterborough growth area. It is the largest district by area within Cambridgeshire and is well connected by road and rail to the rest of the UK.

The economy of Huntingdonshire is closely linked to Cambridgeshire and in terms of out-commuting, the District looks particularly to Cambridge and Peterborough. The recently completed guided bus-way to Cambridge has improved access through key Cambridgeshire employment corridors. With regards to rail links, Huntingdon and St Neots are currently connected with London Kings Cross by a frequent 50 minute rail service.

Huntingdonshire is an attractive place to live, featuring a network of market towns, including Huntingdon, St Ives, St Neots and Ramsey and key natural assets, including the river, the Great Ouse. Huntingdon is the primary service centre and an important employment area. However, St Neots is the largest centre by population in the District and is also home to an established business base, with a number of major employers and a specialism in manufacturing.

The housing market in Huntingdonshire is relatively affordable and buoyant and has remained so throughout the recession. There are established business parks in Huntingdonshire, with Huntingdon and St Neots hosting the bulk of the commercial accommodation in the District.

Huntingdonshire 'the place' will look very different in years to come. Three of Huntingdonshire's market towns and their environs are set to grow, with ambitious plans over the next 20 years to build new homes and create new job opportunities.

Development is already underway in areas such as St Neots. It has also commenced at Alconbury Weald where the key growth catalyst is to create a new Enterprise Campus.

Although there is considerable growth potential in Huntingdonshire, it is by no means a given that this growth will occur. This Economic Growth Plan recognises the economic potential of Huntingdonshire and provides the framework for Huntingdonshire to develop as a location of choice, marketing itself as an investment location and selling its proposition to the investment marketplace.



It is critically important that Huntingdonshire leverages its strategic location to develop closer links with partners across the sub region. Cambridge City is a globally recognised leader in the knowledge economy, with high value sectors contributing substantially to the local economy. The potential for further growth is clear and Huntingdonshire's proximity to this key growth pole is seen as a major opportunity to develop complementary sector specialisms, supply chains and business accommodation.

Critical infrastructure is also required to unlock growth. Road and rail improvements must be delivered and perhaps most importantly, digital connectivity must be maximised if the District is to achieve its full potential and become a destination of choice to live, work, visit and to invest.

Huntingdonshire is strategically located within the London/Stansted/Cambridge/Peterborough growth area. It is the largest district by area within Cambridgeshire and is well connected to the rest of the UK by road and rail.

Huntingdonshire: 'The Business'

Huntingdonshire has a strong, stable, established business base. Once established, businesses survive well and many businesses are aged 5 years and over. There are a number of key employers in Huntingdonshire, which employ upwards of 200 people. This includes Huntingdon Life Sciences, which is a global player in the life science sector, employing highly skilled people and supporting an established supply chain base.

The majority of the business base of Huntingdonshire consists of small to medium enterprises, a high proportion of which employ between 0 and 4 people. Many of these businesses are owned by residents working in skilled trades occupations.

The business base of Huntingdonshire was hit by the recession, with unemployment increasing early on in the recessionary cycle. This suggests that the impact was felt by the private sector, rather than by losses in the public sector, which came later. The quick recovery of the economy to pre recession levels points to a resilience within the private sector and therefore the business base of Huntingdonshire.

Although the manufacturing sector has contracted in recent years, in line with national trends, it remains important to the Huntingdonshire economy and the latest figures available suggest that 13.7% of employment in the District remains geared towards manufacturing. However, Huntingdonshire's business base is diversifying, with the number of business units operating in the professional and scientific sector increasing considerably in recent years, as well as an increase in employment in the financial and professional services sector.

St Neots is home to a well established network of businesses, many of which employ substantial numbers and are focused on the manufacturing sector or are part of well established supply chains.

There is a key opportunity for these businesses to explore new markets, develop trade and investment capability, invest in R&D and continue to advance working practices to adapt to an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Alconbury Enterprise Campus, one of the Government's new 'breed' of Enterprise Zones, is a strategic development site that will act as a key investment proposition for the next 2 decades. It is a vast site, in one ownership, with the potential to act as an economic growth catalyst. The enterprise Campus has the capacity to accommodate 8,000 new jobs. It could also have an added value effect of creating new jobs throughout the District. If the new jobs accommodated on the Enterprise Campus are focused in target sectors, there is the potential to generate additional employment of 4,600 elsewhere in Huntingdonshire. This is a total of 12,600 jobs over and above the East of England Forecasting Model baseline.

It is a positive sign that the first occupier on the Enterprise Campus is a 'clean tech' company, an advanced, high value business in a growing sector. There is clear potential for growing businesses at Alconbury Weald, bringing in new investment and to benefit from the proximity to the major knowledge and investment hub of Cambridge.





Although the Huntingdonshire economy recovered quickly from recession and there are clearly genuine economic growth opportunities, to ensure resilience in the future and to grow the business base of the District, a number of areas must be addressed in order to capitalise on future economic growth.

These include:

- **Building on business strengths.** Small businesses must be supported to grow and established businesses must be encouraged to invest in technology, processes and research and development;
- **Prioritising industry sectors.** The sector profile of Huntingdonshire must be diversified to include a greater range of businesses that can provide additional 'value' to the economy. Building closer links with Cambridge City and exploring new, high value sectors, including green technology and renewables is a key opportunity for accelerated growth; and
- **Delivering economic growth.** Ensuring that critical infrastructure is delivered to support economic growth, including improvements to the A14, rail improvements, superfast broadband and site specific infrastructure, such as at Alconbury Enterprise Campus.

Huntingdonshire has a strong, stable, established business base. Once established, businesses survive well and many businesses are aged 5 years and over.

The majority of the business base of Huntingdonshire consists of small to medium enterprises, a high proportion of which employ between 0 and 4 people.



The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

Huntingdonshire: Going for Growth

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan is informed by a set of guiding principles, which have been identified through consultation and which ensure that the Plan is as ambitious as possible, whilst also being deliverable.

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

This Economic Growth Plan has been prepared by Huntingdonshire District Council and has been informed by the needs and aspirations of local businesses, residents and key public sector partners, including the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership. This strategy is owned by Huntingdonshire District Council and sets out how the Vision for Huntingdonshire to 'go for growth' will be achieved.

The Vision

The Vision for the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan is that:

'By 2023, Huntingdonshire will be the fastest growing District in Cambridgeshire and one of the top 10 best places to live in the South East of England.'

The Vision for Huntingdonshire is simple. Achieving the vision will be challenging. It will require all partners to work together, across boundaries, in order to ensure that Huntingdonshire realises its growth potential.

The Evidence Base

This Economic Growth Plan has been informed by a Local Economic Assessment (LEA) for Huntingdonshire District, which presents an analysis of:

- The structure of the local economy;
- The historic and future predicted trends in key sectors of the economy; and
- The implications of these trends on the people and businesses that interact within the local economy.

This Economic Growth Plan has also contributed to the preparation of a new Local Plan for Huntingdonshire; the new Development Planning Document for the District.

The Guiding Principles

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan is informed by a set of guiding principles, which have been identified through consultation and which ensure that the Plan is as ambitious as possible, whilst also being deliverable. The guiding principles are as follows:

- The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan will play to the strengths of the District and focus on its key assets;
- The approach of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan is open and non-protectionist. Closer links with the Cambridge economy and working in partnership across the County are key growth opportunities; and
- The Huntingdonshire 'offer' will complement other areas, however its offer will also be distinctive and will raise the profile of the District as an investment location.



Achieving the Vision

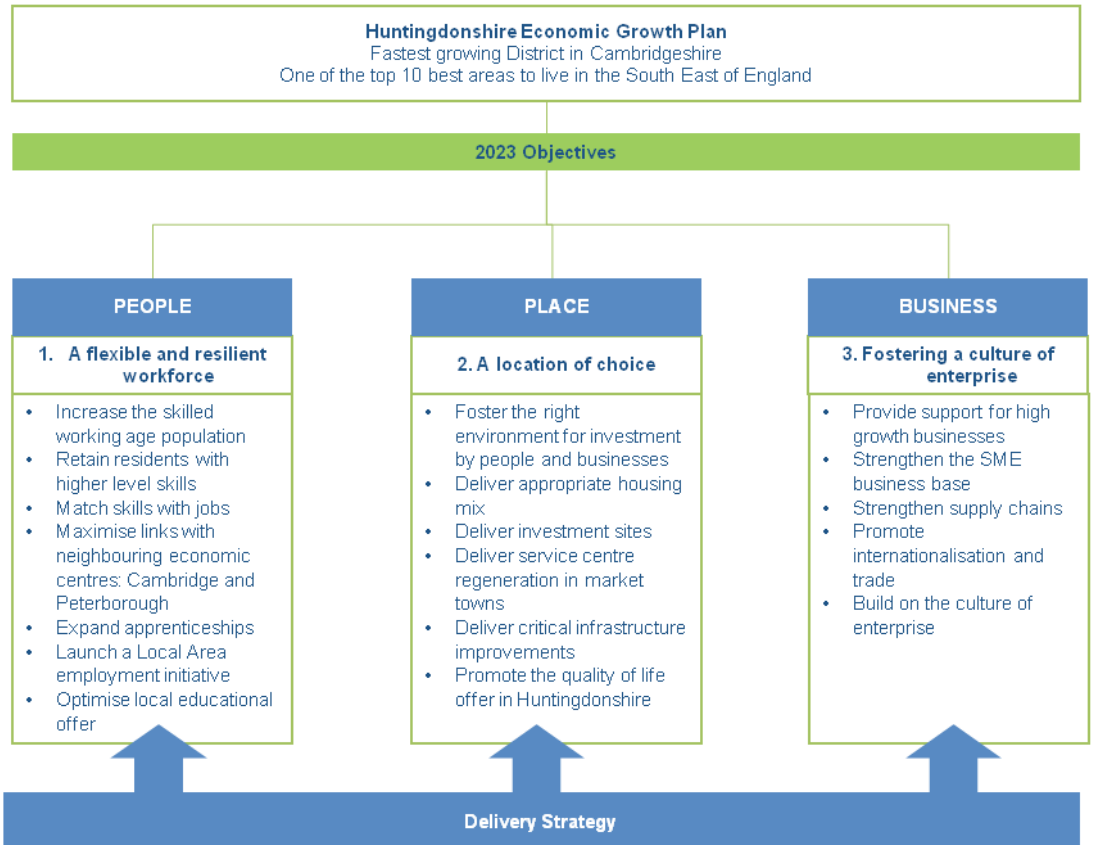
In order to unlock the true potential of Huntingdonshire’s ‘going for growth’ vision, the District will achieve three key ‘2023 Objectives’:

- | 2023 Objectives |
|---|
| 1. We will build a flexible and resilient workforce , by attracting skilled, working people into Huntingdonshire to meet the needs of business and by supporting all existing Huntingdonshire communities so that they can benefit from economic growth. |
| 2. Huntingdonshire will be a location of choice . By fostering the right environment for investment, by people and business, Huntingdonshire will take its place in the top 10 best places to live in the South East of England by 2023. |
| 3. We will foster a culture of enterprise , by supporting the existing business base, encouraging investment from businesses in high value sectors into the District and by encouraging entrepreneurship at an early age. |

Delivery of these three key ‘2023 Objectives’ will be achieved through a partnership approach to investment and will be underpinned by a detailed delivery strategy.

Achieving the 2023 Objectives

The following diagram sets out the components of each of the ‘2023 Objectives’:



Delivery

Making this Economic Growth Plan a success and delivering the 2023 Objectives will require all partners to work together. This strategy will be delivered under the umbrella of three framework themes:

- **People.** Partnerships working on this theme will focus on understanding and responding to the development of the workforce;
- **Place.** A co-ordinated inward investment strategy, aiming to raise the profile of Huntingdonshire, deliver strategic development and attract and retain investment in the District, thereby creating new, sustainable jobs; and
- **Business.** A network of businesses, and partners focused on growing the existing business base in the District and helping to make it more competitive.

Partnership Working

Partnership working is not new in Huntingdonshire. It is a well established practice and the framework for delivering this Growth Plan will build upon and strengthen existing relationships across the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership. These partnerships will include, inter alia:

- Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership;
- Education providers;
- Chambers of Commerce;
- Huntingdonshire Manufacturing Association;
- Cambridgeshire County Council;
- Greater Cambridge and Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership; and
- Private sector partners and their representative groups.



2023 Objective – People: a Flexible and Resilient Workforce

The Call to Action

Huntingdonshire’s population is larger than any other District in Cambridgeshire and is projected to grow to 209,000 by 2036. Its population is skilled, healthy and productive. The unemployment rate and the proportion of the population claiming benefits is lower in Huntingdonshire than the UK average. The way that the economy recovered from recession was driven by an increase in productivity, which shows positive signs in respect of the productivity levels of the local labour force.

However, the proportion of the population of working age in Huntingdonshire is contracting. This strategy seeks to address the contraction in the workforce by implementing a set of projects that will encourage new people to live in Huntingdonshire, as well as connecting people who live in Huntingdonshire who are not economically active with the benefits of economic growth and new job opportunities.

Creating a Flexible and Resilient Workforce

This is the first key pillar of the Huntingdonshire Growth Plan. The interventions set out in the following table help to fulfil this fundamental requirement and also act as ways of differentiating Huntingdonshire and producing opportunities to accelerate economic growth.

The 2023 People Objective: to create a flexible and resilient workforce will focus on the following key areas:

2023 Objective	Key areas of focus
People: A Flexible and Resilient Workforce	Increase the working age population in Huntingdonshire by attracting new people to live in the District.
	Retain residents with higher level skills, in order to maintain the excellent skills levels of the workforce.
	Work with schools and employers to ensure that the future skills needs of the Huntingdonshire economy are met and that local people can benefit from opportunities.
	Maximise links with the Cambridge economy and with other GCGP districts, in order to encourage further up skilling of the workforce and to share the benefits of economic growth.
	Launch a Local Area Initiative, to create a better connection between employment opportunities and residents in areas of deprivation and high unemployment.

Huntingdonshire’s population is larger than any other District in Cambridgeshire. Its population is skilled, healthy and productive.



The 2023 People Objective: to create a flexible and resilient workforce in Huntingdonshire will be achieved through the following interventions:

Ambitions	Delivery Actions	Delivery Theme
Increase the working age population	Prioritise the delivery of new homes, including new housing development at Alconbury Enterprise Zone, with a priority placed on quality family homes, in order to attract new working families to live in Huntingdonshire.	Place
	Deliver Alconbury Enterprise Zone in a 'high growth' scenario, accommodating up to 8,000 additional jobs in target sectors, with the potential to create an additional 4,600 jobs elsewhere in Huntingdonshire, in order to accelerate economic growth and bring investment into the District.	Place
	Deliver proposed development in Huntingdon West, St Neots and St Ives and support the regeneration of these key service centres, in order to improve the quality of life offer of Huntingdonshire, to encourage in-migration and to provide services to a growing population.	Place
	Deliver critical infrastructure improvements, including improvements to the A14, planned rail improvements and super fast broadband, in order to improve the quality of life offer of Huntingdonshire, to encourage in-migration and to provide the infrastructure to support a growing population.	Place
	Launch a marketing programme, in order to attract high-skilled, working families to relocate to Huntingdonshire.	Place
Retain residents with higher level skills	Develop university-level qualification capability in Huntingdonshire, with the aim of establishing a partnership between an already established university and a local education provider, in order to encourage people to study in Huntingdonshire. This will retain young people of university age in the District to study and provide local opportunities for mature students to study locally.	People
	Launch Huntingdonshire alumni network, a virtual network of people originating from Huntingdonshire, who can work together with partners promote the area as a place to live, work, visit and invest.	Business
	Prioritise high value sectors for investment in Huntingdonshire, particularly advanced manufacturing, chemicals, health and care and green technologies, in order to provide high value employment opportunities for a skilled workforce.	Place
	Promote innovation and R&D within the existing business base, with a particular focus on the manufacturing sector, in order to increase the productivity of the sector and support its competitiveness.	Business
Match skills with jobs	Identify and promote the skills needs of the current and future business base, by working with schools, employers and private sector recruitment agencies, in order to proactively develop the labour market in Huntingdonshire.	Business
	Develop a District-wide approach to early stage careers advice and apprenticeships, in order to prepare young people for the labour market, matching skills with future jobs within the business base and thereby encouraging young people to stay in the District as they reach working age.	People
	Develop 14-19 capability and vocational training.	
Maximise links with Cambridge City	Work closely with Cambridge University, particularly in respect of R&D and spin-outs, to encourage mutual exchange of knowledge and ideas and to potentially provide more affordable accommodation at Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus for spin-out companies.	Place
	Promote the studying of STEM subjects at school, so as to encourage qualifications in subjects that will lead to employment in high value sectors.	People
	Work closely with Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, in order to grow links between the business base in Huntingdonshire and Cambridge, potentially identifying opportunities to grow supply chains and facilitate two way investment.	Business
Launch a Local Area Employment Initiative	Explore the opportunities for community budgeting in deprived areas, so as to join together support for employment and skills development in areas of high unemployment, to create a neighbourhood 'offer', in order to connect local people better with employment opportunities.	People
	Adopt a community organising approach for Huntingdonshire, particularly in areas of high deprivation, in order to empower local communities and nurture community leaders.	People

2023 Objective – Place: Huntingdonshire – a Location of Choice



The economic potential of Huntingdonshire is clear. The profile of Huntingdonshire as a location to live, work and invest must be distinct enough to capture this economic potential.

The Call to Action

Huntingdonshire is an attractive place to live. Well connected to the rest of Cambridgeshire, London and the rest of the UK and home to many market towns, it also remains a relatively affordable location, particularly when compared with Cambridge City.

The economic potential of Huntingdonshire is clear. However, the profile of Huntingdonshire as a location to live, work and invest must be distinct enough to capture this economic potential.

Making Huntingdonshire a Location of Choice

This Economic Growth Plan seeks to promote Huntingdonshire as a place to visit, live, work and invest in order to make a significant contribution to the delivery of the vision and to ensure that in 2023, Huntingdonshire is one of the top 10 places to live in the South East of England.

This is the second key pillar of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan. Delivering this objective will transform the way that Huntingdonshire looks and is viewed by potential investors, as well as those looking to move into the District. It will also provide the platform to accommodate future economic growth potential, as well as putting steps in place so that the 'offer' of Huntingdonshire is communicated to potential residents, investors and visitors on a global scale.

The 2023 Place Objective: to make Huntingdonshire a location of choice will focus on the following key areas:

2023 Objective	Key areas of focus
Place: a Destination of Choice	Foster the right environment for investment by delivering strategic development in Huntingdonshire, making a success of Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus and improving key service centres in market towns.
	Unlock economic growth potential by delivering critical infrastructure to support the economic growth potential of Huntingdonshire, including improvements to the A14, rail improvements and digital connectivity, in the form of superfast broadband.
	Improve and promote the profile of Huntingdonshire as a place to visit, live, work and invest, by promoting the attractiveness of the District as an investment location to key partners, potential investors and residents looking to relocate.



The 2023 Place Objective: Huntingdonshire – a location of choice will be achieved through the following interventions:

Ambitions	Delivery Actions	Delivery Theme
Foster the right environment for investment	Promote Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus as a key inward investment location and employment driver. Adopt a target sector model, with the aim of contributing an additional 8,000 new jobs in target sectors as a result of the delivery of the Enterprise Campus.	Place
	Deliver new mixed use development, including new homes, business accommodation, retail and leisure space, new strategic open space and other recreation opportunities in defined spatial planning areas, including Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus, Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area (Huntingdon, West Brampton and Godmanchester) and St Neots Spatial Planning Area. Seek to deliver this development through a network of developer partners.	Place
	Co-ordinate a programme of regeneration in service centres as part of a physical regeneration programme to complement the Local Area Initiative. Deliver this regeneration through partnerships with the public sector and also through an approach focused on community ownership and empowerment.	Place
	Deliver housing targets as set out in the high growth scenario option of the emerging Local Plan, including additional new homes at Alconbury, owing to additional demand from the successful delivery of the Enterprise Campus.	Place
	Launch a community organising initiative, focused on fostering local leadership and community cohesion, particularly in more deprived areas.	People
	Re-launch the developer’s forum, with representation from housebuilders and commercial developers active in Huntingdonshire.	Place
Unlock economic growth potential	Deliver improvements to the A14, by playing an active role in securing approval from central government to deliver a revised scheme. These improvements will support further economic growth in Huntingdonshire by improving connectivity, helping small to medium businesses to move goods and people in and out of the District quickly and easily and the improvements will also help to unlock the development potential of Huntingdonshire West, delivering new homes and mixed use development.	Place
	Deliver strategic rail improvements, particularly at Huntingdon and St Neots, in order to support the ambitious development plans in those areas and further improve the profile of Huntingdonshire as a place to live, work and invest.	Place
	Deliver superfast broadband across Huntingdonshire District, by working in partnership with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough councils to deliver the Connecting Cambridgeshire programme, thereby supporting further economic growth and giving comfort to potential investors in terms of future connectivity.	Place
Improve and promote the profile Huntingdonshire as a place to visit, live, work and invest	Prepare a Visitor Economy Strategy, working with the LEP and Cambridgeshire County Council, in order to raise the profile of Huntingdonshire as a place to visit and to complement the marketing campaign encouraging working families to relocate to the District.	People
	Prepare an investment Portfolio, incorporating Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus, key strategic development sites across the District and sector-based inward investment strategies for sectors including health and care, advanced manufacturing and green technologies.	Place
	Launch a Huntingdonshire Alumni Network of key business leaders, community champions, leaders and political figures. This network could be called upon to provide insight into Huntingdonshire for potential investors and can be used as a sounding board to prepare and promote the Huntingdonshire Investment Portfolio.	Place

2023 Objective – Business: Fostering a Culture of Enterprise

This Economic Growth Plan will build on the strengths of the business base in Huntingdonshire, in order to create a more resilient economy that can capture future economic growth potential.

The Call to Action

Huntingdonshire is home to a well established business base, with businesses operating in key locations across the District. Key employers include Huntingdon Life Sciences and Solo Cup Europe, each with upwards of 450 staff, but the majority of businesses in the District employ between 0 and 4 people.

However; there remains a polarisation in the business base a need for businesses to adopt more advanced techniques and break into new markets in order to survive as well as to grow.

Fostering a Culture of Enterprise

This Economic Growth Plan will build on the strengths of the business base in Huntingdonshire, in order to create a more resilient economy that can capture future economic growth potential. In this, the third pillar of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan, partners will work together to attract new investment into Huntingdonshire, to invest in high value sectors, to grow supply chains and to bring schools and employers closer together to foster a culture of enterprise across the District.

In addition to supporting and growing the business base, Huntingdonshire District Council will seek to improve the way it works with businesses, paying particular attention to procurement practices and the experience of businesses in working with the council.

The 2023 Business Objective: fostering a culture of enterprise will focus on the following key areas:

2023 Objective	Key areas of focus
Business: Fostering a Culture of Enterprise	Strengthen the SME business base, by proactively engaging with SMEs across a range of sectors with growth potential, to accelerate business growth.
	Strengthen supply chains, by mapping current supply chains and identifying opportunities to grow and develop these in the future.
	Promote internationalisation, by working with existing businesses in Huntingdonshire to encourage them to leverage new trade and investment opportunities.
	Build on the culture of enterprise in Huntingdonshire, by bringing schools and employers closer together and encouraging greater entrepreneurship across a range of sectors.



The 2023 Business Objective: fostering a culture of enterprise will be achieved through the following interventions:

Ambitions	Delivery Actions	Delivery Themes
Strengthen the SME business base	Launch a high growth business support programme, to provide support across industry sectors for businesses with growth capacity. Support to include mentoring, coaching and supply chain development opportunities, delivered by businesses, to Huntingdonshire businesses, with the aim of providing a kick-start to businesses with the potential to grow and create new employment opportunities.	Business
	Encourage support for SMEs by engaging larger employers in Huntingdonshire with the SME business base to provide mentoring / coaching opportunities, thereby creating an inclusive business network and opportunities for business growth, new job creation and supply chain development.	Business
	Ensure that appropriate business accommodation is delivered to meet demand from SMEs in respect of future business investment, by launching a developer's forum and encouraging two way dialogue between Huntingdonshire, the LEP and developers, thereby mapping current and future demand for business accommodation and SMEs.	Place
	Review the relationship between Huntingdonshire District Council and businesses, particularly in respect of the planning applications process, as well as conducting a review of corporate procurement processes.	Business
Strengthen supply chains	Map Huntingdonshire's supply chains, in relation to manufacturing, advanced manufacturing, chemicals, bioscience, pharmaceuticals, health and care, green technologies, professional services, tourism/visitor economy, so as to understand how supply chains function in Huntingdonshire and spot linkages, opportunities and gaps.	Business
	Prepare supply chain development strategy, prioritising sectors that show potential for growth and development through the mapping process. Reflect in the Huntingdonshire Investment Portfolio, to be prepared as part of the 'location of choice' theme.	Business
Promote internationalisation	Launch an internationalisation programme, in order to develop trade and investment capability within the existing business base in Huntingdonshire and to inform the preparation of a Huntingdonshire Investment Portfolio, to be prepared as part of the 'location of choice' theme.	Place
	By working with Urban & Civic, the owners of Alconbury Weald and the LEP, Huntingdonshire Council to promote Alconbury nationally and internationally as the primary inward investment location in Huntingdonshire, in order to prioritise international investment.	Place
Build on the culture of enterprise	Co-ordinate enterprise development in schools at a District level, through the preparation and implementation of an enterprise strategy, focused on encouraging enterprising behaviour in children and young adults.	People
	Bringing schools and employers closer together, by linking partners in this theme, providing opportunities for businesses to mentor and coach schools and schoolchildren, encouraging enterprising behaviour from an early age.	Business
	Re-launch a Huntingdonshire 'Dragons Den', in order to generate interest in entrepreneurship and encourage schools, residents and employers to take part in the programme.	Business

Huntingdonshire in 2023

Delivering the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

The 10 Year Delivery Programme

This Economic Growth Plan sets out the 10 year Vision for Huntingdonshire. Achievement of the Vision hinges upon the successful delivery of the '2023 Objectives' through a range of ambitious interventions.

In order for Huntingdonshire to 'go for growth', this Economic Growth Plan presents a phased programme of delivery which builds momentum in the short, medium and long term and will provide evidence of economic development and growth that will be visible and real to residents, businesses and potential investors. The phased programme is presented below, according to short term actions (1-3 years), medium term actions (3-5 years) and longer term actions (5 years+):

	People	Place	Business
Short Term Delivery Actions	District wide approach to careers advice and apprenticeships. Enterprise Strategy – young people. Working families marketing programme. Promotion of STEM subjects.	High value sectors. Developer's Forum. Huntingdonshire Investment Portfolio. Internationalisation programme. Delivery of strategic development, including Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus, Huntingdon West, St Neots and key service centres.	Links with Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce. Dragons Den competition. Improve relationship between the Council and business. Link schools with employers.
Medium Term Delivery Actions	Local Area Initiative. Community Organising. Visitor Economy Strategy. University capability.	SME business accommodation. Links with Cambridge University. Delivery of strategic development, including Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus, Huntingdon West, St Neots and key service centres.	High growth SME programme. Supply Chain Strategy. Business mentoring/coaching. Innovation and R&D in manufacturing.
Longer Term Delivery Actions	Community Budgeting in areas of high need.	Critical infrastructure. Housing targets, with additional demand from Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus. Delivery of strategic development, including Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus, Huntingdon West, St Neots and key service centres.	Huntingdonshire Alumni Network.

In order for Huntingdonshire to 'go for growth', this Economic Growth Plan presents a phased programme of delivery which builds momentum in the short, medium and long term and will provide evidence of economic development and growth that will be visible and real to residents, businesses and potential investors.

Huntingdonshire in 2023

Huntingdonshire: Going for Growth

Huntingdonshire is 'going for growth'. The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan will:

- Build on the strengths of Huntingdonshire;
- Build resilience within the economy;
- Unlock the economic potential of the District; and
- Share the benefits of economic growth throughout the Huntingdonshire population.

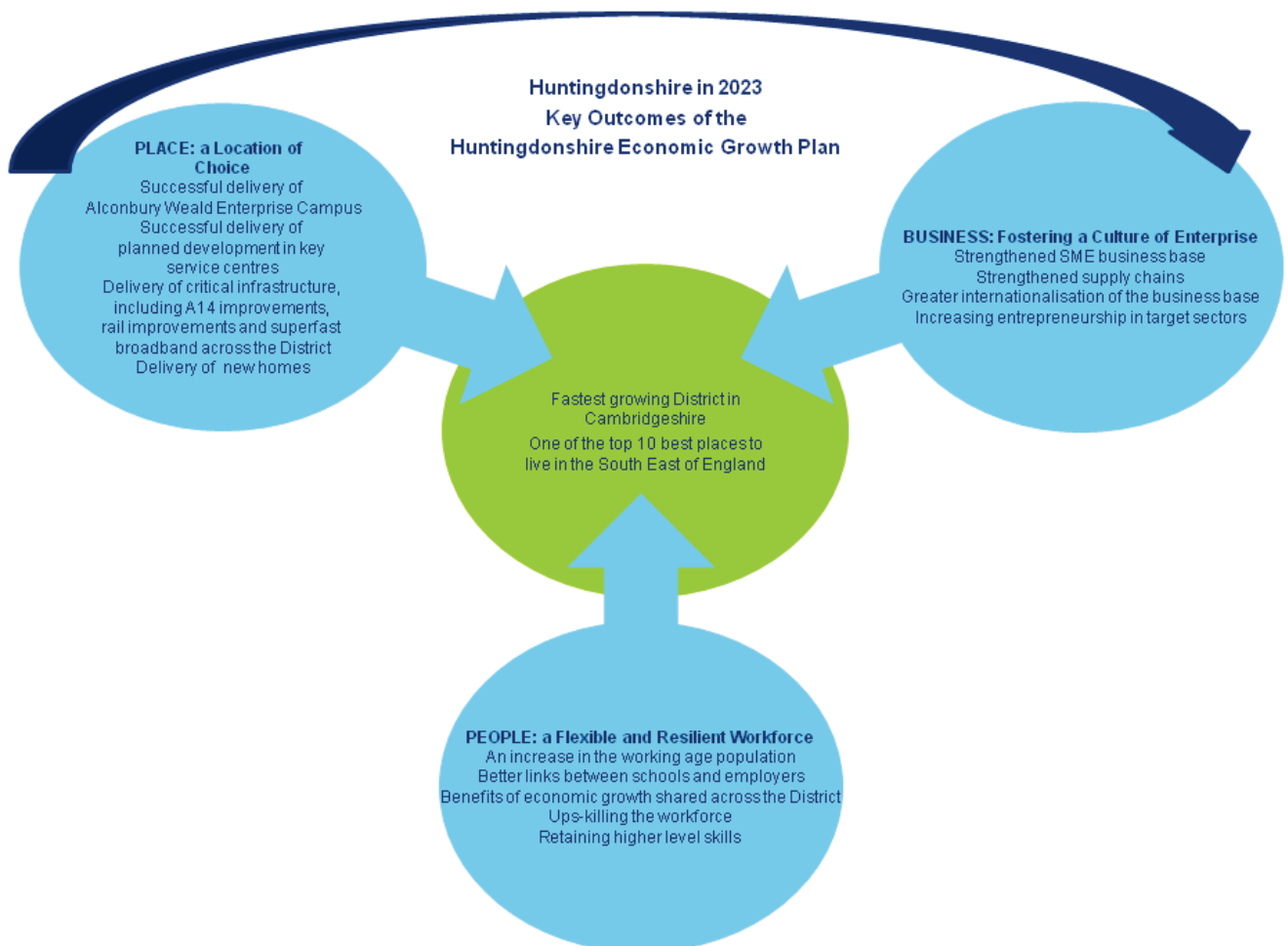
In 2023, Huntingdonshire will be a different place. The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan will have been delivered successfully. Huntingdonshire will be the fastest growing District in Cambridgeshire and one of the top 10 best places to live in the South East of England.

New jobs will have been created, new homes will have been built and Huntingdonshire will have built on its strengths to become a location of choice to live, work and invest.

Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus will have delivered a significant amount of new development and strategic development schemes at Huntingdon West and St Neots will be almost complete. Service centre regeneration in market towns will also be underway and the District will have raised its profile and built on its strengths to become an even more attractive place to live. The working age population will have increased in proportion to the rest of the population and the business base will be starting to shift, with small businesses growing and moving into new markets, as well as working more efficiently and effectively with local supply chains.

Public sector partners and private sector investors will have worked together over a decade to deliver transformational goals across the three 2023 Objectives – People, Place and Business.

The following diagram illustrates the outcomes that will be achieved through working with partners to deliver the 2023 Objectives.





Measuring Success

Achieving the Vision

Measuring the Success of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

The success of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan will be measured according to the following criteria:

1. **Statistical analysis** to assess on-going progress towards achieving the Vision.
2. **Monitoring progress** towards the delivery of actions within each 2023 Objective, by updating a delivery plan on a biannual basis.
3. **Regular engagement** with partners to gauge qualitative opinion on the progress towards achieving the Vision.

Statistical Analysis

The first part of the Vision, that Huntingdonshire will be the fastest growing District in Cambridgeshire by 2023, will be measured by per capita GVA growth. This is a measure of economic, scale, output and activity. GVA growth will be measured on a biennial basis and progress will be reported to partners and the Huntingdonshire resident and business community.

The second part of the Vision, that Huntingdonshire will be one of the top 10 places to live in the South East of England, will be measured according to a combination of factors, based upon a combination of quality of life factors. Progress will be tested biennially with a sample of Districts in the South East of England. The factors are as follows:



Monitoring Progress

The delivery plan which accompanies this Economic Growth Plan will be updated on a biannual basis by Huntingdonshire District Council and the update published in a public document, for consultation and comment.

Regular Engagement

A programme of regular engagement with partners, residents and businesses will be conducted in order to monitor progress towards achieving the Vision and in order to modify or shift the focus of the proposed interventions, where appropriate.

The delivery plan which accompanies this Economic Growth Plan will be updated on a biannual basis by Huntingdonshire District Council and the update published in a public document, for consultation and comment.

Notes

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH PLAN 2013-23
(Report by the Overview & Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being))**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 4th July 2013, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has reviewed the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan for 2013-23. This report summarises the Panel's discussions.

2. THE PANEL'S DELIBERATIONS

- 2.1 The Panel has recognised the importance of the Economic Growth Plan for the District and for the Council. Apart from its evidence base and its interrelationship with the Local Plan, it is recommended that the vision should replace the Council's existing vision in the Leadership Direction. However, before this is done it has been suggested that the Plan's vision should be amended to refer to Huntingdonshire becoming one of the best places to live in England.

- 2.2 Given the importance that is attached to the Plan, Members are of the view that the Council should make adequate resources available to ensure the actions associated with it can be delivered.

- 2.3 With regard to the contents of the Plan, it is recommended that

- reference is made to the District's infrastructure needs,
- contact details are clearly provided should interested parties wish to contact the Council about it,
- a more dynamic tone is adopted throughout, and
- a more explicit explanation is provided of the "trickle down" effect from economic activity centres to rural areas.

- 2.4 Comment has been made that once the Plan has been adopted, a marketing strategy should be produced to attract businesses to Huntingdonshire. The Economic Well-Being Panel has asked to see the marketing and implementation plans in due course.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Cabinet is invited to consider the discussions of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) as part of their deliberations on this item

Contact Officer: **A Roberts, Scrutiny and Review Manager**
☎ **01480 388015**
✉ Anthony.Roberts@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
(SOCIAL WELL BEING)**

2th July 2013

CABINET

18th July 2012

CCTV Operations - Shared Service Proposal

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek in principle approval for establishing a joint CCTV service with Cambridgeshire City Council and to delegate authority to the Head of Operations, in consultation with the Executive member for Healthy and Active Communities to establish a shared service, based in Huntingdon, on the basis of a detailed business case

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The CCTV service has been operating in Cambridge for 16 years and in Huntingdonshire since 1997. In Cambridge CCTV monitoring service in addition to the city's public space cameras monitors internal and commercial customer cameras. In addition it operates a lone worker and customer help line outside of normal working hours in relation to emergency housing repairs and other incidents.
- 2.2 In Huntingdonshire the CCTV service monitors the public space cameras and some cameras on Pathfinder and Eastfield Houses.
- 2.3 Successive reviews of Cambridge City Council's CCTV operations in 2008 and 2011 have confirmed the contribution of the local authority's provision of CCTV services to the overall community approach to reducing crime in Cambridge, and its contribution to community safety, particularly at night. Both reviews also resulted in restructured services that produced significant reductions in operating costs to the Council.
- 2.4 The stated objectives of the existing CCTV services in Cambridge are centred on creating confidence within the public perception of a safe environment by:
 - Protecting areas and premises used by the public.
 - Deterring and detecting crime.
 - Assisting in the identification of offenders leading to their arrest and successful prosecution.
 - Reducing anti-social behaviour and aggressive begging.
 - Reducing the fear of crime.
 - Encouraging better use of city facilities and attractions.
 - Maintaining and enhancing the commercial viability of the city and encouraging continued investment.
 - Encouraging the public to act responsibly in their own and in the

wider community to assist in the fight against crime and anti-social behaviour.

- Cooperating with stakeholders and other CCTV providers on a local, regional and national level to share best practice.

2.5 Huntingdonshire District Council has a purpose-built control centre, based in Eastfield House, Huntingdon. However, the CCTV budget was reduced in 2012/13 as part of the contribution to budget savings. Discussions with the Town councils in establishing a CCTV partnership resulted in agreement from the partners to provide funding to maintain a 24/7 service.

2.6 Fresh discussions began between the two authorities in October 2012, following an agreement by the two leaders of the councils to investigate the possibility of working more collaboratively. This report recognises the benefits and risks of a jointly managed CCTV service between Cambridge City Council and Huntingdonshire District Council and identifies areas for further detailed work.

3. The Case for a Shared Service

3.1 The current CCTV structure in Cambridge is lean and effective, and has an excellent reputation at both local and national level. While successive restructures of CCTV services in 2008 and 2011 have considerably reduced the costs of running the service, and integrated the Out of Hours service into its operations, further savings opportunities are limited.

3.2 Bringing together two neighbouring operations of a similar scale offers clear advantages to both CCC and HDC, and particularly in terms of:

- Greater resilience for managing combined CCTV and Out of Hours services
- Shared knowledge and experience from staff in both authorities
- Lower operating costs, particularly in the areas of staffing, communication and equipment costs;
- Increased opportunities to market and compete for additional business, in relation to external customers of CCTV and Out of Hours services.
- Increased opportunities to share a more efficient technical platform for exchanging data and images between the two authorities and with other agencies such as the Police and retail organisations;

Staffing costs

3.3 A joint group of officers have considered the potential for savings from implementing a shared service arrangement. It is possible to deliver significant reductions, in revenue costs by operating and managing both services from a single control room, either in Cambridge or in Huntingdon, under a single management structure, albeit a move to Huntingdonshire provides the highest level of savings. Savings will result from combining operations, through reductions in the overall

number of staff from the number required at present to operate in each authority.

- 3.4 The operation of a joint control room will necessitate one authority operating the service. Staff would transfer to the 'host' employer and would retain the terms and conditions of their original employer. A restructure would then be required to determine the structure of the shared service.
- 3.5 The staffing costs have been modelled to allow for different outcomes and assumptions about the composition of the shared service team and about the 'host' employer. The business case assumes that the combined service will consist of a mix of staff drawn from both authorities, and assumes a median level of staffing costs.

Other operating costs

- 3.6 Savings are also expected to accrue from a combined operation through reductions in overall communications costs, and the level of provision for repairs and renewals of equipment, on the assumption of a ten year cycle of renewals for most equipment. Further detailed work is continuing to identify the level of savings that may be achievable.
- 3.7 Some support costs (recharges) may need to be charged to the shared service where they are inextricably linked with the service, for example in relation to continuing support from senior management, back office processing of expenditure and accountancy to manage cost sharing arrangements. Further work is required to quantify these costs.
- 3.8 Transmission Costs. The transmission of the images and data between Cambridge and Huntingdon is required to operate a joint CCTV service. This is an additional cost associated with operating a shared service. More detailed work is being undertaken to determine the costs of transmitting images between the two councils, and for supporting existing communications systems such as the retail radio network in both authorities.
- 3.9 The Cambridgeshire Public Service Network (CPSN) is considered to provide the best solution but work is still continuing to establish the actual costs and timescales for achieving this. The CPSN is the favoured option because HDC is currently being connected to it as an authority and CCC will follow suit later this year.

Set-up costs

- 3.10 Both authorities will incur costs associated with the establishment of a shared network for communicating and transmitting CCTV images and data between authorities, and with configuring the CCTV control room to operate as a shared service.

- 3.11 Costs associated with staff relocation and potential redundancies will also be likely in establishing a single operational base, and the business case is based on an assumption of an average level of costs for these purposes. However, on current estimates the savings from moving to a shared service, £200k, will be sufficient to pay for the set-up costs by the end of the first year of operation.
- 3.12 Transfer of Undertakings (TUPE) A shared service will require the TUPE transfer of staff from one authority to the other. Once this has been completed an exercise will be required to restructure the existing services to provide an effective operating structure. This will be subject to consultation with staff. A selection is likely to be necessary which may result in staff being at risk of redundancy. As the employer the host authority will take the lead in managing the restructure process in liaison with the partner authority. The cost of any redundancies will vary depending on which members of staff are affected, and agreement will need to be reached about the basis for apportioning such costs. For modelling purposes the business case also assumes a median position for these costs.
- 3.13 The business case is summarised in Appendix 1.

4. Out of Hours Services

- 4.1 Cambridge City Council manages an Out of Hours service for housing and emergency planning. This service handles an average of 1500 calls per month (relating mainly to emergency housing repairs) and provision will need to be made in the new structure to continue this service unless a more cost effective alternative is available.
- 4.2 HDC initially manage the out of hours calls for emergency planning until the duty emergency planning officer is able to do so, but this is a small volume of calls in comparison with Cambridge.
- 4.3 It is proposed that a new shared service would continue to manage Out of Hours calls for both councils, and would be in a stronger position as a more resilient shared service, having the capacity to extend the business and generate additional income from external customers.

5. Governance

- 5.1 A joint service that already exists between both councils is the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) and it is considered that the governance arrangements for that service would be a broadly suitable model on which to base future joint CCTV services.
- 5.2 In respect of the HIA there are three councils governed by a Management Board consisting of a senior officer from all the partners. This Board considers a number of key areas as follows:-

- Approval of an annual business plan

- An operations protocol
- Strategic matters relating to the ongoing and longer term development of the Agency

The officer management board report back to the respective decision-making processes at each of the three councils. In the case of CCC this means that decisions are made by the Executive Councillor following committee scrutiny.

6. The Choice between Huntingdon and Cambridge

- 6.1 It is clear that a shared service will deliver savings for both authorities and to do this it is necessary to locate the control room in one location. There is a small marginal saving of about 10 to 15K per annum, initially, if the chosen location is Huntingdon. There are, however, four other reasons to choose Huntingdon related to resilience, working conditions, senior management capacity and potential for letting current office space.
- 6.2 On the matter of resilience there is a risk in relation to the siting of the control room in the basement of the Guildhall. In August 2012 serious flash floods occurred in Cambridge city centre and this resulted in the flooding of the basement with the service being temporarily inoperative. Measures have been taken to minimise this risk but the location of the Huntingdon control room is not subject to the same risks.
- 6.3 Whilst the control room at the Guildhall meets all relevant workplace requirements it is nevertheless a basement environment. The control room at Huntingdon is a modern purpose built facility that provides a better working environment, including better disabled access.
- 6.4 Officers have reviewed the management capacity needed to support a shared CCTV service at HDC and concluded that there is sufficient scope to do this. It is therefore proposed to transfer the day to day operational arrangements to HDC and this will reduce the amount of senior manager time required within Cambridge City Council which in turn will provide other opportunities for the authority.
- 6.5 A further consideration is the potential for letting part of the Cambridge CCTV office space to generate an income. The facility is close to other lettings and has a separate entrance. A review of office accommodation is currently underway and further work can be done to investigate this opportunity. Letting part of the basement would be complementary to letting other parts of the ground floor of the Guildhall.
- 6.6 It is therefore proposed that the service is transferred to HDC.

7. Key Principles

- 7.1 All staff will transfer to the host authority under TUPE on their existing terms and conditions, after which a consultation and restructure exercise will be carried out to staff and organise the new shared service.

- 7.2 The staffing structure will be consistent with delivering an effective service that is resilient to the demands of a wider and more complex network than each authority currently provides on its own.
- 7.3 A shared service will observe a high ethical standard and will safeguard and maintain each authority's commitment to its statutory responsibilities with regards to data security, data protection and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act.
- 7.4 Core equipment and infrastructure (e.g. the control room and its equipment) will be funded and replaced by the shared service.
- 7.5 HDC will provide support services to the shared service at a fair price.
- 7.6 That subject to final negotiation and the need for an annual adjustment to take account of residual recharges, the basis for apportioning the reduced costs of operating a shared service will be 50:50.
- 7.7 Set-up costs and future external income generated by the shared service will be shared equally between CCC and HDC.
- 7.8 CCC and HDC will retain ownership and responsibility for the assets and equipment deployed in their own districts (i.e. not control room equipment), and will need to retain an annual Repairs and Renewals budget sufficient to replace their own equipment and infrastructure.
- 7.9 Governance arrangements will be implemented that make senior officers accountable for managing the shared service.
- 7.10 Subject to the considerations set out in this report the shared service will commence operation on 1 April 2014.

8. Risks

- 8.1 Key risks for both Councils from establishing a Shared CCTV Service are:
- 8.2 Political reluctance by either authority to relocate its service to the other's base. This risk can be mitigated and managed by establishing robust governance arrangements and by establishing clear operating protocols for staff that address service priorities and standards of practice.
- 8.3 Staff unwillingness to be relocated resulting in loss of experienced operators and local knowledge from the joint service. Comprehensive consultation, communication, training and induction processes can reduce these risks.
- 8.4 The technical infrastructure cannot be maintained effectively and with resilience. Proper consideration of contingency arrangements and back-up systems will need to be integral to the set-up arrangements and costings.

- 8.5 For the authority that transfers its CCTV services, support service and other overhead costs will have to be absorbed by other Council services, to the extent that they cannot be reduced in the short term, once CCTV has transferred. These costs, including the provision of a Repairs and Renewals budget, will need to be properly quantified and built in to future budget plans
- 8.6 Currently funding is received from the town councils in the Huntingdonshire district and there is a risk that at the end of the 3 year agreement the Town Councils could cease funding. It will part of the role of the new service to consolidate the partnership with the Town Councils and reviews of the contributions will be made in line with any increased budget opportunities.

9. Next Steps

- 9.1 The next step will be to conclude negotiations on the cost sharing between the two authorities, especially in relation to residual recharges so that a full business case can be presented formally to both councils. This will then allow the proposal to be progressed through the normal decision making process at both councils.
- 9.2 Staff and union representatives will be informed of the proposed merger of the services and TUPE transfer and provided with a timetable for the work.
- 9.3 There will be full consultation arrangements with staff, Employment Council, Trade Unions, Social Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee and other key stakeholders.

10. Implications

Financial Implications

- 10.1 Implementing the recommendations in this report will deliver sustainable reductions in the cost of providing CCTV services in the two councils of approximately £200k. Agreement will be required on the particular arrangements for dealing with support service and other on-costs once CCTV has transferred, as these costs will either have to be absorbed by other Council services, shared between each authority, or reduced. There are additional revenue implications for both authorities of transmitting CCTV data and images through the Cambridgeshire Public Service Network (CPSN). Capital costs will be incurred in new shared services and the necessary funding sources will need to be identified and factored into the Business Case dependent on the asset to be replaced. A financial summary is set out in Appendix A with a summary of the costs in Appendix 2.

Staffing Implications

- 10.2 The recommendations set out in this report have implications for staffing structures that will be subject to detailed consultation with the

Unions and the staff affected. While every effort will be made to minimise the need for redundancies, there may be a need in both authorities as a result of establishing a shared service.

Equal Opportunities Implications

- 10.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been part completed on this strategy but cannot be completed until the final staffing structure is known.

Environmental Implications

- 10.4 In terms of the climate change impact of these proposals, there may be some limited reductions in electricity consumption from operating from a single shared location. There may conversely be environmental implications from additional fuel costs by staff travelling to their new base.

Consultation

- 10.5 There will need to be consultation with a range of key stakeholders, including the Executive member, Opposition Spokespersons, Chief Officers Management Team, service representatives in relation to Community Safety and existing CCTV services. Officers responsible for CCTV within Cambridgeshire Police will also be consulted. Views will need to be sought from commercial and retail interests in Cambridge, Huntingdon and Cambridgeshire, including those interests specifically concerned with anti-crime initiatives.

Community Safety

- 10.6 This proposal is intended to have a positive impact on Community Safety as it will increase service resilience.

11. CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1 It is clear that there is a business case for the joining up of the two services which will deliver in excess of £200k of savings once the set up costs have been met. Also the business case for basing the joint service at Huntingdon provides the highest saving dependant on which authorities staff are successful in the application process following restructuring.

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 To seek in-principle agreement for establishing a joint CCTV service with Cambridge City Council, and to delegate authority to the Head of Operations, in consultation with the Executive member for Healthy and Active Communities to establish a shared service, based in Huntingdon, on the basis of a detailed business case.

Contact Officer: Eric Kendall, Head of Operations

☎ 01480 388635

APPENDIX 1**Summary of Shared Service Costs - Cambridge City Council and Huntingdonshire District Council**

Notes	Current (Existing) Costs				Shared Service Based at:	
	Cambridge £	Huntingdon £	Total £		Cambridge £	Huntingdon £
				Expenditure		
1	263,000	181,000	444,000	Total Employee Costs	344,000	344,000
2	10,000	3,500	13,500	Total Premises Costs	9,500	9,500
	800	0	800	Total Transport Costs	500	500
3	100,000	66,000	166,000	Total Supplies & Services Costs (excluding R & R)	165,000	162,000
4	92,000	120,000	212,000	Total Recharges	212,000	212,000
	58,500	0	58,500	R&R Contributions		
	0	77,000	77,000	Total Financing Costs (Depreciation)		
5				Shared Service Capital Financing	36,000	36,000
	524,300	447,500	971,800	Total Expenditure	767,000	764,000
				Income		
	(24,000)	(78,000)	(102,000)	Total External Income	(102,000)	(102,000)
	(32,000)	0	(32,000)	Recharge to HRA	(32,000)	(32,000)
	(56,000)	(78,000)	(134,000)	Total Income	(134,000)	(134,000)
	468,300	369,500	837,800	Net cost of service	633,000	630,000
				Combined saving before Set Up costs	(204,800)	(207,800)
				Share of saving to each authority before set up costs (50:50 split)	(102,400)	(103,900)
6				Total set up costs	204,000	191,000
7				Net cost of service increase/(saving) in Year 1	(800)	(16,800)

APPENDIX 2 CCTV Cost Summary - Notes

1 Employee Costs

The employee costs represent a median position and is the average of the highest and lowest cost of the staff currently employed by the CCTV services. It is assumed that the shared service will contain a mix of staff currently employed by both authorities.

2 Premises Costs

Premises costs includes Buildings Maintenance/Electricity/Cleaning Materials & Equipment.

3 Supplies & Services

Transmission costs (new cost) - included in Supplies & Services est £16,850 per annum

Included in Supplies & Services: Purchase of Tools/Equipment; Communications; Printing/Stationery/Office Supplies/Postage/Delivery charges; Subscriptions; Telephone Costs; Training; IT Supplies & Services; Provisions/Refreshments/Subsistence; Other Supplies & Services.

4 Recharges

The total for recharges is the current cost of both Cambridge & Huntingdon and assumes that 100% of the current cost would be retained.

An exercise needs to be carried out to determine the overhead costs directly attributable to the CCTV service in order to confirm the true service cost , and to identify the residual costs that will need to be absorbed by each authority)

In the long term, it may be possible to reduce the overhead costs if the current control room space(s) can be let for external rental income.

5 Capital, Assets & R & R Funds

Each authority will retain ownership and responsibility for their own assets (excluding control room equipment) and retain a repairs & renewals budget sufficient to replace these assets. Procurement will be a shared service responsibility.

The shared service capital financing represents the shared cost of the two control rooms only.

6 Set up costs

Some of the set up costs have now been ascertained and are shown on the summary. Costs still to be identified for:

1. Bollard Control - via CPSN
2. Help point/voice control camera - via CPSN
3. Medium router
4. Retail radio link - via CPSN

7 Net cost of service increase(saving) - assumes pay back of all set up costs in year one.

This page is intentionally left blank

**CCTV OPERATIONS – SHARED SERVICE PROPOSAL
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being))**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 At its meeting held on 2nd July 2013, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) considered a report by the Head of Operations seeking in principle approval for establishing a joint CCTV shared service with Cambridge City Council.

2. THE PANEL'S DISCUSSIONS

2.1 The proposal refers to the business case for a shared service with Cambridge City Council. On the basis of the analysis that has been carried out to date the service is likely operate under a single management structure from the CCTV Control Room at Eastfield House and is expected to generate around £200,000 of savings per year to be shared equally between the two authorities. Whilst the assets will remain the responsibility of the relevant authority the new body will be responsible for the monitoring of images.

2.2 Wireless technology could enable the new service to generate additional income through commercial contracts. This and other opportunities in both the private and public sectors to improve the service's financial performance will be explored once the shared service has been established.

2.3 In total there will initially be 14 members of staff in the shared service. It is intended to review the structure of the service once it has been established. Consultations with Trade Unions and other relevant bodies will be undertaken.

2.4 The Panel is concerned over the financial implications for the Council of the transfer of staff from the City to the District Council. Whilst detailed work has yet to be undertaken on this element of the proposals, a number of safeguards have been identified to protect the interests of Huntingdonshire. Nevertheless, Members have sought assurances that the full impact of the change should be incorporated fully into the business plan.

2.5 It is expected that the CCTV Control Room at Eastfield House will have to be reconfigured to provide sufficient screens to cover the two Council areas. There is capacity on site to undertake the necessary adaptive works and further expansion in the future could be accommodated. There will be no reduction in CCTV coverage of Huntingdonshire from the present level and the shared service should result in improved consistency and resilience of the service.

2.6 The Panel strongly supports the recommendations contained within the report by the Head of Operations and has requested that if the shared service proceeds, a regular report is submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Members on its operational and financial performance.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The Cabinet is invited to take into account the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) as part of its deliberations on the report by the Head of Operations.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Minutes and Reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 2nd July 2013.

Contact Officer: Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer
☎ 01480 388006
✉ Habbiba.Ali@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Agenda Item 8

SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP

TUESDAY, 4 JUNE 2013

CIVIC SUITE 1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN

ACTION SHEET

**MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

Management Side:
Councillor Mrs B Boddington
Councillor A Hansard
Councillor Mrs P A Jordan
Councillor T V Rogers

Employee Side:
Mrs S McKerral
C Sneesby
G Vince

IN ATTENDANCE:

B Bentley
P Corley
Mrs A Jerrom
Mrs S Lammin
S Howell
A Radford

APOLOGIES:

Councillor J W Davies
Mr K Lawson
Mrs G Smith

ITEM NO.	SUBJECT	ACTION BY
1.	Election of Chairman Councillor A Hansard was elected Chairman of the Group. <i>Councillor A Hansard in the Chair</i>	
2.	Report of the Advisory Group The report and action sheet of the meeting of the Advisory Group held on 27th February 2013 was received and noted.	
3.	MEMBERS' INTERESTS No declarations were received.	

ITEM NO.	SUBJECT	ACTION BY
4.	<p>Appointment of Vice-Chairman</p> <p>K Lawson was appointed Vice Chairman of the Group.</p>	
5.	<p>Half Yearly Report</p> <p>Members received a report by the Contract Health and Safety Advisor summarising health and safety issues that had been included in the half yearly safety reports submitted to him by Heads of Service for the period 1 October 2012 to 1 April 2013.</p> <p>Mr Radford advised that a meeting had been arranged for 7 June to resolve the issue of who should be responsible for manning the Civic Suite doors in the event of an evacuation.</p> <p>Accidents were on a par with previous years and lost time incidents remained low reflecting Heads of Services' continued commitment to the risk assessment process and staff health and safety training.</p>	
6.	<p>Ventilation and Humidity in Pathfinder House</p> <p>In updating the Group on progress toward the resolution of ventilation and humidity issues within Pathfinder House, the Facilities Team Leader explained that the procurement procedure had caused a delay; however three quotes had now been received from Chartered Engineers and were currently being considered by the Managing Director. Mr Bentley would be providing the engineers with Mr Lawson's comprehensive report on the issue and would be inviting them to take into consideration the way the building is populated and the existing plant. It was uncertain at present whether remedial work would involve the existing air handling unit or if individual units would be provided, however Mr Bentley expected the work would be targeted initially at those areas most affected.</p> <p>The Group was advised that Ms Domingo, who had carried out the data capture for the initial report would be carrying out further checks during the warm weather to rule out any possible seasonal influence. Timescales for the work were currently unknown. Eastfield House would be checked following the conclusion of work at Pathfinder House.</p>	
7.	<p>Workplace Inspections</p> <p>The Group agreed with a suggestion put forward by the Unison Safety</p>	

ITEM NO.	SUBJECT	ACTION BY
	<p>Representatives that occasional workplace safety inspections by the Group should be reinstated. Following a suggestion by the Head of Environmental and Community Health the Group agreed that the Safety Advisor be requested to highlight for inspection those areas that had been identified under the Hazard Notification Policy.</p> <p>In order to avoid repetition the Democratic Services Officer undertook to provide the Safety Advisor with details of areas that had been inspected previously.</p>	<p>Safety Advisor</p> <p>Mrs A Jerrom</p>
8.	Quarterly Accident /Incident Reports	
	<p>(a) Pathfinder House</p> <p>The Group received and noted a report by the Corporate Health and Safety Advisor giving details of the accidents or incidents reported in offices and active lifestyles activities since the last meeting of the Group.</p> <p>Two non-RIDDOR accidents or incidents involving employees in Pathfinder House had been reported. Three adults and four children had been involved in accidents requiring first aid during healthy lifestyles activities.</p> <p>It was reported that one RIDDOR incident had been reported since the compilation of the report on the employees return to work, however it was as yet unclear as to why it had not been reported as a work place incident at the time.</p>	
	<p>(b) Operations Division</p> <p>The Group noted a report by the Operations Division Health and Safety Co-ordinator giving details of the 18 accidents that been reported by the division since the last meeting. Three accidents involving employees being absent from work for more than 7 days had been reported to the Incident Contact Centre under RIDDOR. Two accidents involving members of the public had occurred at Hinchbrook Country Park. The report included details of the remedial action that had been taken following a review of the accidents and incidents by the Operations Management Team.</p> <p>In commenting on the number of accidents involving 240ltr wheeled bins the Group was informed that there had been an occasion where the bin had fallen off the lorry mechanism, this had been captured on the cab CCTV footage. It was suggested that this could have been due to the bin being slightly off centre and the manufacturers had agreed to investigate the problem if it happened again.</p>	

ITEM NO.	SUBJECT	ACTION BY
	<p>(c) One Leisure</p> <p>The Group also received a report by the One Leisure Quality, Facilities and Safety Manager detailing accidents which had been reported since the last meeting. No accidents had been reported under the requirements of RIDDOR Regulations. Nine employee related accidents and 254 non-employee accidents, had been reported, 5 of which were not caused as a direct result of taking part in an activity, remedial action had been taken and was detailed in the report.</p>	
9.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Group was scheduled for 11th September 2013.</p>	