

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMY AND GROWTH)** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE 0.1B, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, CAMBS, PE29 3TN** on **TUESDAY, 16TH JANUARY 2018** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

**Contact  
(01480)**

## **APOLOGIES**

**1. MINUTES** (Pages 5 - 8)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2017.

**A Green  
388008**

**2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

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

**3. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS** (Pages 9 - 12)

A copy of the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions is attached. Members are invited to note the Plan and to comment as appropriate on any items contained therein.

**B Buddle  
388007**

**4. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT OVERVIEW PRESENTATION**

The Panel are to receive a Civil Parking Enforcement Overview Presentation.

**G McDowell  
388386**

**5. HOUGHTON AND WYTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN** (Pages 13 - 188)

The Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan will be presented to the Panel.

**C Kerr  
388430**

**6. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS** (Pages 189 - 196)

Members are to receive the work programmes for all Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

**A Green  
388008**

Dated this 8th day of January 2018



Head of Paid Service

**Notes**

## **1. 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.*

## **Non-Statutory Disclosable Interests**

- (4) *If a Member has a non-statutory disclosable interest then you are required to declare that interest, but may remain to discuss and vote providing you do not breach the overall Nolan principles.*
- (5) *A Member has a non-statutory disclosable 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 a disclosable pecuniary interest, 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, or*
  - (c) *it relates to or is likely to affect any body –*
    - (i) *exercising functions of a public nature; or*
    - (ii) *directed to charitable purposes; or*
    - (iii) *one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a Member or in a position of control or management.*

*and that interest is not a disclosable pecuniary interest.*

## **2. Filming, Photography and Recording at Council Meetings**

*The District Council supports the principles of openness and transparency in its decision making and permits filming, recording and the taking of photographs at its meetings that are*

*open to the public. It also welcomes the use of social networking and micro-blogging websites (such as Twitter and Facebook) to communicate with people about what is happening at meetings. Arrangements for these activities should operate in accordance with guidelines agreed by the Council and available via the following link [filming, photography and recording at council meetings.pdf](#) or on request from the Democratic Services Team. The Council understands that some members of the public attending its meetings may not wish to be filmed. The Chairman of the meeting will facilitate this preference by ensuring that any such request not to be recorded is respected.*

**Please contact Mr Adam Green, Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny), Tel No. 01480 388008/e-mail [Adam.Green@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:Adam.Green@huntingdonshire.gov.uk) if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee/Panel.**

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

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

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the District Council's website – [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk](http://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 Elections & 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.*

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## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMY AND GROWTH) held in Meeting Rooms 0.1a and 0.1b, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 12th December 2017.

PRESENT: Councillor D B Dew – Chairman.  
Councillors C E Bober, E R Butler,  
Mrs S Conboy, I D Gardener, Mrs J Tavener,  
D R Underwood and K D Wainwright.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Harrison and B Hyland.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors R C Carter and R Fuller.

### 33. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 34. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

### 35. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel received and noted the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which has been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st December 2017 to 31st March 2018.

### 36. LOCAL PLAN: PROPOSED SUBMISSION CONSULTATION

With the aid of a report by the Planning Service Manager (Growth) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Local Plan: Proposed Submission Consultation was presented to the Panel.

The Executive Councillor for Housing and Planning explained to Members that the Regulation 18 consultation concluded in August 2017, as well as the Call for Sites consultation which ran alongside it. The Executive Councillor is proposing that the Council agrees that the Local Plan proceeds to the Regulation 19 stage of the process, which tests the soundness and legality of the Local Plan.

The Panel was informed of the key differences between Consultation Draft 2017 and the Proposed Submission Draft, which were: a revision to definition of built-up; changes to Renewable Energy Policy as the previous policy position to restrict wind farms received no support from Parishes, companies or residents. The new position is that all areas in the District, with the exception of Great Fen, is available for wind farm applications; in the proposed submission draft

there are an extra 12 sites allocated totalling 898 additional dwellings.

Members were asked to consider whether they wanted a Local Plan which updated previous policies and improves the ability for the Council to plan for development. The Executive Councillor reminded the Panel that if there was a delay to the submission of the Local Plan then the Council would have to plan for an additional 5000 houses.

The Executive Councillor wanted to put on record his thanks to the planning team for producing the Local Plan.

In response to the question, what are the risks to the Council in terms of challenge, the Executive Councillor informed Members that there is always a risk however, if the Council can demonstrate that it has a five year land supply, then it is in a better position to defend planning refusals. The Panel was informed that in terms of, has the Council gone through the right process, then yes. The Executive Councillor added that developers might be less than happy that their site wasn't allocated and that he won't be surprised to receive challenge in the next stage. The Planning Services Manager added that if the inspector states that a modification is required then they will invite the Council to make the modification.

The Panel was informed that through the Local Plan, the Council are stating that the site allocations are suitable for development however it isn't giving permission for development. Each planning application would have to come before the Council's Development Management Committee.

Following a question regarding Local Service Centres and has the Council made a robust check to ensure that they have made the right decision, the Panel was informed that the Members of Development Plan Policy Advisory Group (DPPAG) had looked into the issue thoroughly and are content with the outcome.

In regards to the two additional sites in Bluntisham, the Panel was informed that those sites have already been subject to planning applications and have therefore been included in the Local Plan. However it was emphasised that the sites had been put forward to the Council before inclusion.

Members were informed that the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) process is the principle that a site is suitable for development whereas the Planning Application takes the HELAA into account as well as the specifics.

In response to the question, is there any links between the Council's local plan and the plans of the Combined Authority, the Panel was informed that the Combined Authority are developing a non-statutory spatial plan which is a high level document and does not affect local plans.

Members were informed that the Members of DPPAG have thoroughly reviewed the Local Plan.

The Panel recommends to Cabinet that the recommendations made to Council are endorsed.

*(At 7.02pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor K D Wainwright entered the meeting.)*

*(At 7.08pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor Mrs J Tavener entered the meeting.)*

**37. REPRESENTATIVES ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS - ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT**

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Representatives on External Organisations – Annual Update Report was presented to the Panel.

A Member informed the Panel that they are the Council's representative on an external organisation however they no longer receive an invite to their meetings which led the Member to state that some representatives may not receive invites to meetings or the organisation no longer meets.

A Member noted that some representatives have full time employment and may not be available to attend meetings of external organisations.

The Panel agreed with the comment that if Members are representing the Council on external organisations then Overview and Scrutiny do expect an update.

A discussion ensued regarding the Great Fen Project and it was noted that the Council provide £20k of funding to the organisation per year. The Panel agreed to invite Kate Carver to attend a Panel meeting to discuss the project in greater detail.

*(At 7.40pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor R C Carter left the meeting and did not return.)*

**38. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS**

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Panel reviewed all Panels' work programmes since the last meeting.

It was noted that at the Panel meeting in January 2018, Members will receive a presentation on Civil Parking Enforcement. The Panel agreed to formally invite the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Communities and Environment) to the meeting.

Chairman

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

**Prepared by** Councillor G J Bull, Executive Leader of the Council  
**Date of Publication:** 20 December 2017  
**For Period:** 1 January 2018 to 30 April 2018

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

Councillor G J Bull	Executive Leader of the Council	Councillor R Fuller	Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Housing and Planning
Councillor D Brown	Executive Councillor for Commercial and Shared Services	Councillor J A Gray	Executive Councillor for Strategic Resources
Councillor S Cawley	Executive Councillor for Transformation and Customers	Councillor J White	Executive Councillor for Operations
Councillor Mrs A Dickinson	Executive Councillor for Community Resilience, Well-Being, and Regulatory Services		

Notice is hereby given of:

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

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

Agendas may be accessed electronically at [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk).

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

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

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

1. Information relating to any individual

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

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

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

10 Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private.	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Community Chest Grant Aid Awards 2017/18 - Phase 2	Grants	16 Jan 2018		Chris Stopford, Head of Community Tel No. 01480 388280 or email: chris.stopford@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		A Dickinson/ J A Gray	Performance and Customers / Communities and Environment
Draft Revenue Budget 2018/19 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2022/23***	Cabinet	18 Jan 2018		Clive Mason, Head of Resources Tel No. 01480 388157 or email: clive.mason@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		Cllr J A Gray	Performance and Customers
Community Resilience Plan	Cabinet	18 Jan 2018		Chris Stopford, Head of Community Tel No. 01480 388280 or email: chris.stopford@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		A Dickinson	Communities and Environment

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan***	Cabinet	18 Jan 2018		Clara Kerr, Planning Services Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email: clara.kerr@huntingdonshire.gov.uk			
Revenue Budget 2018/19 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2022/23	Cabinet	8 Feb 2018		Clive Mason, Head of Resources Tel No. 01480 388157 or email: clive.mason@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J A Gray	Performance and Customers
Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19	Cabinet	8 Feb 2018		Clive Mason, Head of Resources Tel No. 01480 388157 or email: clive.mason@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J A Gray	Performance and Customers
Business Case for CCTV Commercialisation*** ##	Cabinet	8 Feb 2018		Chris Stopford, Head of Community Tel No. 01480 388280 or email: chris.stopford@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		D Brown	Performance and Customers
Memoranda of Understanding with the Local Enterprise Partnership***	Cabinet	8 Feb 2018		Andy Moffat, Head of Development Tel No. 01480 388400 or email: andy.moffat@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		G Bull	Economy and Growth
Corporate Enforcement Policy	Cabinet	8 Feb 2018		Chris Stopford, Head of Community Tel No. 01480 388280 or email: chris.stopford@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		A Dickinson	Communities and Environment

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Corporate Plan Refresh	Cabinet	8 Feb 2018		Adrian Dobbyne, Corporate Team Manager, Corporate Team Manager Tel No. 01480 388001 or email: adrian.dobbyne@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		G Bull	Performance and Customers
Lettings Policy Review	Cabinet	8 Feb 2018		Jon Collen, Housing Needs and Resources Manager Tel No. 01480 388220 or email: jon.collen@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		R Fuller	Performance and Customers
Business Case for Document Centre Commercialisation*** ##	Cabinet	22 Mar 2018		Chris Stopford, Head of Community Tel No. 01480 388280 or email: chris.stopford@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		D Brown	Performance and Customers
Endorsement of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036	Cabinet	22 Mar 2018		Clara Kerr, Planning Services Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email: clara.kerr@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		R Fuller	Economy and Growth



**Public**  
**Key Decision - Yes**

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Title/Subject Matter:** Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan examination outcome and progression to referendum

**Meeting/Date:** Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) – 16th January 2018

**Executive Portfolio:** Executive Councillor for Housing and Planning – Councillor R Fuller

**Report by:** Senior Planning Policy Officer

**Wards affected:** The Hemingfords

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### RECOMMENDATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan examination outcome and progression to referendum from the Cabinet report attached at Appendix A.



**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Title/Subject Matter:** Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan examination outcome and progression to referendum

**Meeting/Date:** Cabinet – 18th January 2018

**Executive Portfolio:** Executive Councillor for Housing and Planning

**Report by:** Senior Planning Policy Officer

**Wards affected:** The Hemingfords

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**Executive Summary:**

Following the completion of the examination process for the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan this report proposes acting upon the Examiners' reports to accept the modifications proposed and progress the neighbourhood plan to referendum.

**Recommendations:**

That Cabinet:

1. Agree that the District Council should act upon the Examiners' reports and recommended modifications, and progress the neighbourhood plan, attached as Appendix 1, to referendum.

## **1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT?**

- 1.1 The report seeks agreement to act upon the Examiners' reports into the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan leading to a referendum on whether or not it should be brought into force as part of the statutory development plan. It also sets out a timetable for this process.

## **2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY**

- 2.1 The Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan was originally examined between 14th September and 14th December 2015. The Examiner proposed a number of modifications to the neighbourhood plan, which were discussed with representatives of Houghton and Wyton Parish Council. It was agreed that if applied the modifications would result in a neighbourhood plan that would not reflect the community's views and aspirations. Officers therefore worked with the parish council to formulate alternative modifications that would meet the basic conditions and better meet the community views and be closer aligned with the original submission neighbourhood plan.

- 2.2 Alternative modifications were prepared and consulted on from 7th April to 22nd May 2017. Following consultation the examination was reopened on 7th September 2017 with a new examiner. The examiner's report on the examination of the alternative modifications was received on 20th November 2017. The Examiner proposed a number of modifications to the alternative modifications in order for them to meet the basic conditions and recommended that the neighbourhood plan, incorporating the modifications from the original examination process (that had been accepted previously) and the alternative modifications, as modified, should proceed to referendum.

- 2.3 Following the examination of a neighbourhood plan the Examiner sends their report to the local planning authority and the town/ parish council preparing the neighbourhood plan. The examiner is required to set out one of three options:

- a) That the neighbourhood plan proceeds to referendum as submitted
- b) That the neighbourhood plan is modified by the local planning authority to meet the basic conditions and the modified version proceeds to referendum; or
- c) That the neighbourhood plan does not proceed to referendum as it fails to meet the basic conditions and/ or legislative requirements and cannot be modified to do so.

- 2.4 The local planning authority has limited options in how to respond to the examiner's recommendations:

1. Act upon the Examiner's report and progress the neighbourhood plan to referendum, whether or not the Examiner recommends modifications are necessary to meet the basic conditions;
2. Propose to take a decision substantially different from the Examiner's recommendation which is wholly or partly as a result of new evidence or a different view taken by the local planning authority about a particular fact; or
3. Decide not to progress the neighbourhood plan in light of the Examiner's report - this is only permissible where c) above is the case.

- 2.5 The modified version of the Neighbourhood Plan, the two examiners' reports and draft Decision Statement setting out the modifications considered by the

Examiner as necessary to enable the submission neighbourhood plan to meet the required basic conditions are all included as Appendices. Having regard to the options set out in paragraph 2.4:

- It is considered that the modifications will enable the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan to meet the basic conditions required; and
- There is no new evidence or a different view taken by the local planning authority about a particular fact to indicate that option 2, in paragraph 2.4 should be followed.

### **3. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN**

3.1 Following approval by Cabinet preparations will be made for a referendum to be held on the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Regulations.

3.2 In addition to considering whether the neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions the Examiner is required to recommend on the area to be covered by the referendum. In this instance it is recommended that the referendum area be the same as the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan area, approved by the District Council.

3.3 There is a statutory requirement for 28 working days' notice to be given before the referendum is held. There is also a requirement that the referendum is held within 56 working days of the decision that the neighbourhood plan should proceed to referendum, unless there is an existing planned polling opportunity that the referendum could be combined with which the qualifying body (Houghton and Wyton Parish Council) have agreed. A potential date for the referendum has been discussed with Democratic Services. Holding the referendum on 1st March 2018 is proposed, which would meet both time requirements. This provisional date has been discussed with representatives of Houghton and Wyton Parish Council, and they have indicated that they support this date.

3.4 At the referendum residents will be able to vote on the question: 'Do you want Huntingdonshire District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Houghton and Wyton to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'

3.5 If a majority of residents vote 'yes', Full Council will be asked to 'make' the neighbourhood plan at its next available meeting, which, assuming that the referendum is held on 1st March, would be on 25th March 2017. The plan will then become part of the statutory development plan for Huntingdonshire.

### **4. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN**

4.1 Progressing the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan through to referendum links to the strategic objective 'To empower local communities'. It will help to achieve the action of working with parishes to complete neighbourhood and parish plans.

### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 A Neighbourhood Plan must meet the basic conditions set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Examiners' reports have confirmed that Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan, as proposed to be modified, meets all the basic conditions. Officers are

satisfied that there are no conflicts with the basic conditions and legislative requirements.

## **6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 An Extra Burdens Grant of £20,000 can be claimed following the referendum, intended to meet the costs of the referendum and other resources involved in supporting the production of the neighbourhood plan.

## **7 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 7.1 The recommended decision is necessary to enable the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to referendum.

## **8. RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 8.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) Agree that the District Council should act upon the Examiners' reports and recommended modifications, and progress the neighbourhood plan, attached as Appendix 1, to referendum.

## **9. LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: The modified version of the Neighbourhood Plan

Appendix 2: The examiner's report received 14th December 2015

Appendix 3: The examiner's report received 20th November 2017

Appendix 4: The draft Decision Statement setting out the modifications necessary to enable the submission neighbourhood plan to meet the required basic conditions.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

[Localism Act 2011](#)

[The Neighbourhood Planning \(Referendums\) Regulations 2012 \(as amended\)](#)

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

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Email: [james.campbell@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:james.campbell@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)



# Houghton & Wyton

## Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018 - 2036



Referendum Plan

January 2018





## Part A – Referendum Neighbourhood Plan

### CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
	Background.....	1
<b>2</b>	<b>LOCAL CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>4</b>
	Houghton and Wyton today.....	5
<b>3</b>	<b>VISION AND OBJECTIVES .....</b>	<b>12</b>
	Challenges for Houghton and Wyton .....	12
	Vision for Houghton and Wyton .....	12
	Objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan .....	14
<b>4</b>	<b>BUILT UP AREA .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>NATURAL ENVIRONMENT .....</b>	<b>177</b>
	Protection of Sites .....	17
	Prevention of coalescence with St Ives .....	18
	Local Green Spaces.....	21
	Verges and Greens .....	23
	Biodiversity .....	23
	Protection of agricultural and grazing land .....	25
<b>6</b>	<b>TOURISM .....</b>	<b>27</b>
	Tourism development .....	27
	Provision of new tourist accommodation.....	28
	Change of use of tourist accommodation .....	29
<b>7</b>	<b>COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE.....</b>	<b>30</b>
	Provision of new community facilities .....	30
<b>8</b>	<b>TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT.....</b>	<b>31</b>
	...ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.	
	Parking.....	31
	Access by non-car modes .....	32
<b>9</b>	<b>FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE.....</b>	<b>34</b>

<b>10 BUSINESS.....</b>	<b>36</b>
Providing for the needs of new and existing businesses .....	36
<b>11 HOUSING.....</b>	<b>38</b>
Small-scale residential development .....	38
<b>12 DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT .....</b>	<b>400</b>
<b>13 MONITORING.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>GLOSSARY.....</b>	<b>44</b>

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1	Character Areas
Appendix 2	Greens & Verges
Appendix 3	Community Action Plan
Appendix 4	Listed Buildings

## **PART B – COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS**

### **Non-planning issues**

This does not form part of the statutory development plan – it contains community aspirations and Parish Council ambitions that cannot be included in policies in the Neighbourhood Plan

## **Index of policies**

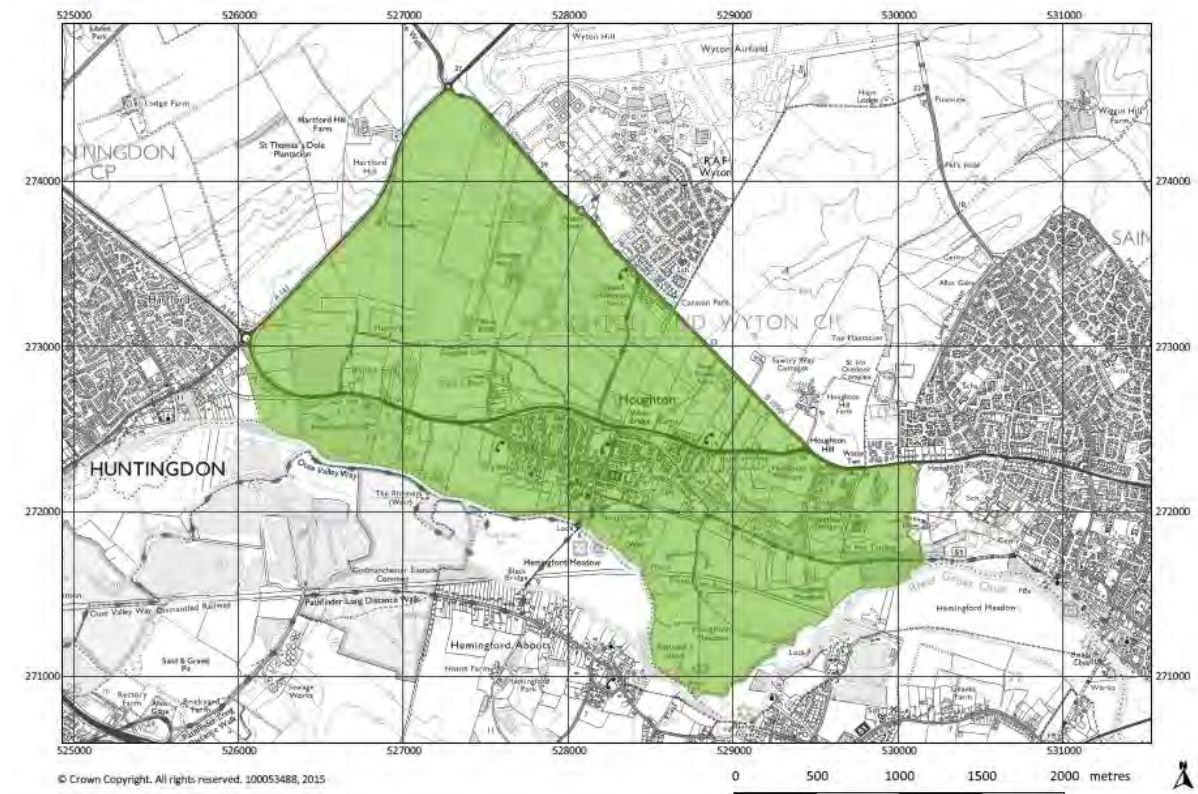
- Policy HWNP1 - Houghton and Wyton built up area
- Policy HWNP2 - Protection of sites
- Policy HWNP3 - Anti-coalescence
- Policy HWNP4 - Protection and maintenance of Local Green Spaces
- Policy HWNP5 - Greens and verges
- Policy HWNP6 - Retaining and enhancing biodiversity
- Policy HWNP7 - Protection of best and most versatile agricultural land
- Policy HWNP8 - Tourism development
- Policy HWNP9 - Provision of new tourist accommodation
- Policy HWNP10 - Change of use of existing tourist accommodation to permanent residences
- Policy HWNP11 - Provision of new community facilities
- Policy HWNP12 - Parking to serve new development/Houghton and Wyton village
- Policy HWNP13 - Access by non-car modes
- Policy HWNP14 - Flooding and drainage
- Policy HWNP15 - Provision for the needs of new or expanded businesses
- Policy HWNP16 - Windfall residential development
- Policy HWNP17 - Design of new development

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## Background

- 1.1 This is the Neighbourhood Plan for Houghton and Wyton Parish (**hereafter known as 'Houghton and Wyton'**). It is a new type of planning document produced in the Parish. It is part of the **Government's new approach to planning, which aims to give local people more say about what goes on in their area.** This is set out in the Localism Act that came into force in 2011.
- 1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to represent one part of the development plan for the parish over the period 2015 to 2036. For clarity, the development plan consists of any planning policies currently adopted by the local planning authority, Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.3 The policies in this plan have been produced to be in general conformity with the Huntingdonshire Core Strategy 2009. In addition, the plan has given due regard to the emerging Huntingdonshire Local Plan which, when adopted, will cover the period to 2036.
- 1.4 The Plan therefore provides the local community with a powerful tool to guide the long term future of Houghton and Wyton and its surrounding countryside for the period 2015 to 2036. The Plan gives all residents ownership of managing what happens in the community. It is not just for the Parish Council but for all. The Plan contains a vision for the future of Houghton and Wyton Parish and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision.
- 1.5 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate specific sites for development the group asked for sites to come forward as part of the process and these sites were assessed against the objectives and are shown as supporting evidence.
- 1.6 In order to develop the Neighbourhood Plan, Houghton and Wyton Parish Council set up a Neighbourhood Plan Working Group which comprised six Parish Councillors and a number of local volunteers.
- 1.7 The Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan will cover all of Houghton and Wyton Parish. In preparing the Plan, there has been dialogue with the adjoining parishes of Hemingford Abbots, Hemingford Grey, Godmanchester, Wyton on the Hill and St Ives Town Council as well as with Huntingdon District Council. An application for neighbourhood plan designation was approved by Huntingdon District Council on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2012.
- 1.8 The map in Figure 1 below shows the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area, which is the same as the administrative boundary of Houghton and Wyton Parish.

**Figure 1 Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan area**



- 1.9 The principal purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to guide development within the parish and provide guidance to anyone wishing to submit a planning application for development within the parish. The process of producing a plan has sought to involve the community as widely as possible and the different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance to Houghton and Wyton, its residents, businesses and community groups.
- 1.10 Some of the Neighbourhood Plan policies are general and apply throughout the Plan area, whilst others are site or area-specific and apply only to the appropriate areas illustrated on the relevant map. Nevertheless, in considering proposals for development, the Parish and District Council will apply all relevant policies of the Plan. It is therefore assumed that the Plan will be read as a whole, although some cross-referencing between Plan policies has been provided.

### How to read this document

Each section of the plan covers a different topic. Under each heading there is the justification for the policies presented which provides the necessary understanding of the policy and what it is seeking to achieve. There is also a summary of how each policy contributes towards the objectives of the plan. The policies themselves are presented in the blue boxes. It is these policies against which planning applications will be assessed. It is advisable that, in order to understand the full context for any individual policy, it is read in conjunction with the supporting text.

## **How the Neighbourhood Plan is organised**

1.11 This Plan is divided into thirteen sections:

- Section 1: Houghton and Wyton Today; a brief description of the Parish today and the key issues that have influenced the Plan
- Section 2: The Vision for Houghton and Wyton over the plan period.
- Section 3: Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan Objectives; this sets out what Houghton and Wyton wants to achieve over the plan period.
- Sections 4-13: Neighbourhood Plan Policies; which set out policies to support the overall vision, and the way in which the objectives will be reached, Policies are arranged in the following themes:
  - Village limits/built-up area
  - Natural environment
  - Tourism
  - Community infrastructure
  - Traffic and transport
  - Flood risk and drainage
  - Business
  - Housing
  - Design of new development
  - Monitoring
- There is also a glossary of relevant terms.
- Part B - Community Aspirations. This part consists of non-planning issues that the community raised as being important. The Parish Council has not ignored these important issues, but as this is a statutory planning document it cannot include non-planning issues. This section is included in the Neighbourhood Plan to demonstrate to the community that all of their concerns have been taken into account and will be addressed by the Parish Council outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

## 2 LOCAL CONTEXT

### History of Houghton and Wyton

- 2.1 Houghton and Wyton lie side by side on the north bank of the River Great Ouse, some two miles west of St Ives in Cambridgeshire. In 1934 the two villages were united to form the civil parish of Houghton and Wyton. The distinctive features that make the village a popular visitor destination include Houghton Mill, Houghton Equestrian Centre, Huntingdon Wyevale Garden Centre, the river Great Ouse and its flood meadows, plus the range of historic houses and cottages. In this Neighbourhood Plan Houghton and Wyton are referred to as one village.
- 2.2 A significant number of prehistoric, Iron Age and Saxon finds have been discovered in the parish and there have been a scattering of archaeological finds along Houghton Hill in the east of the parish, indicating the presence of people here from very early times, including stone and flint **tools, a Bronze Age 'Beaker' burial and a Romano-British cemetery.** Thicket Lane, joining the settlement with St Ives, is recorded in the Historic Environment Record as a monument. It appears that Houghton was founded during the 7th century. **The name comes from 'tun' meaning enclosure, farmstead, settlement, village; 'hoh' is also old English meaning a heel, or projection of land below the crest of a hill. Together these two words as 'Hohtun' describe a settlement on a projecting hillside – a description that fits the hillside rather than the riverside settlement seen today.** The village is sited around a green, (which is now a tarmac area where 5 roads converge) which was once larger than it is now. Wyton, perhaps a century or so later in date, grew up west of Houghton along the same road and originally may have been a hamlet, which developed into a fully-fledged village later. The curious network of tracks known as The Lanes in Houghton is part of the old network of paths originally leading to open fields and meadows.
- 2.3 Houghton Mill is one of the last and most complete water mills to survive on the river Great Ouse. There has been a mill on the site since 974, originally belonging to Ramsey Abbey. The current mill dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and was extended in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is listed Grade II\*. The mill ceased working in 1930 at which stage local people helped to buy it and donated it to the National Trust. It was used by the Youth Hostel Association from 1934 until 1983. Thereafter it fell into relative disrepair before work commenced in 1998 on a complete restoration project to restore the waterwheels and install a turbine. In 2012, a recycled pair of millstones was installed, driven by electricity to enable the Mill to operate all year round. The National Trust acquired the 19<sup>th</sup> century mill house in 1983 and developed a tearoom and toilets.
- 2.4 The Parish Church of St Mary (Listed Grade II) in Houghton, mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086), is built in the Perpendicular style, mainly 14th century but with a 13th century chancel rebuilt in 1851 and an embattled west tower with a spire containing five bells. The chancel has an elegant piscina (double stone basin) and a stone seat in early English style. The pulpit was made in 1893 from the wood of a tree from Houghton Hill House. A new stained glass window was installed to commemorate the Millennium.
- 2.5 The former Parish Church in Wyton, listed Grade I, dates from the early 13<sup>th</sup> century with a 14<sup>th</sup> century chancel and a 19<sup>th</sup> century north aisle.
- 2.6 The many attractive houses and cottages which border the streets and lanes of Houghton and Wyton form one of the distinctive features of the parish. The oldest surviving houses were originally yeoman-farmers' homes and of timber construction. **These tend to be situated on the**

principal streets and basically consist of three rooms on the ground floor and three rooms above. Another style of housing to be found in the village is that of husbandmen or lesser farmers, usually found down back streets and lanes. The village also boasts some remaining examples of labourers' cottages. Within the parish there are 57 listed buildings (of which three are Grade II\*).

- 2.7 With the coming of the Enclosures Act in 1773 and new farming techniques, the reliance on farming as the major source of employment began to decline and with this many of the older houses disappeared or fell into disrepair.
- 2.8 However, from about 1840 onwards the villages became very popular, partly due to the river Great Ouse and the popularity of holidaying and spending leisure time on the river. This attracted a new style of gentry to the village who built the grand houses of the village, including Houghton Hill House, Houghton Grange, The Dingle, The Elms and Houghton Manor. During this period many earlier houses were modernized and extended, disguising their origins.
- 2.9 Wyton experienced the first post-war expansion when a small group of council houses was built at Manor Close in the 1920s. This was followed by the construction in Houghton of Hill Estate (1952) and Brookside (1966). A controversial estate of nearly 50 bungalows was later built at Victoria Crescent, gaining contemporary praise for their design. Between 1975 and 1978 three new developments were constructed on the land of Manor Farm in Wyton, these being St Margaret's Road, Loxley Green and Warren Close.
- 2.10 The Ministry of Defence sold off housing adjacent to the airfield in 2000, creating a new community. This was followed by the development of Pine Hill Park, consisting of around 50 park homes located along Sawtry Way. The village of Houghton and Wyton has expanded significantly since the 1950s, but has managed to retain its village character.

## **Houghton and Wyton today**

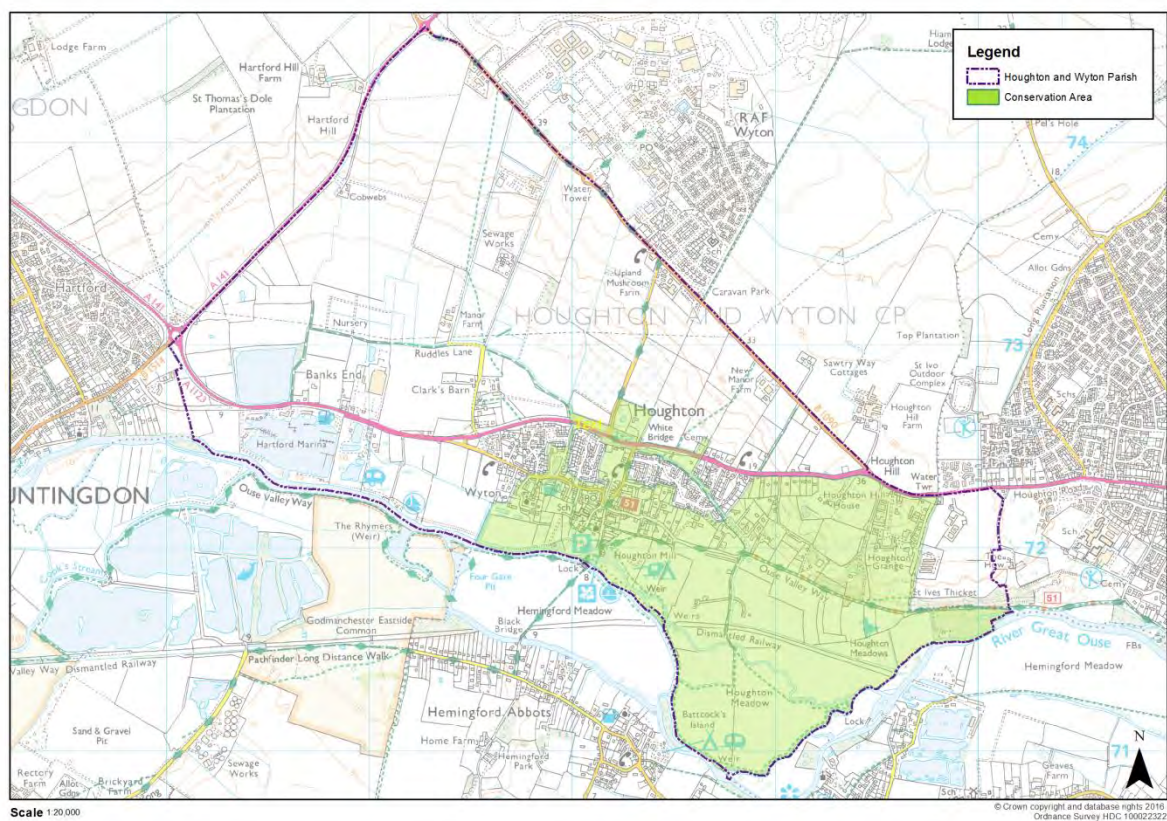
- 2.11 The Parish of Houghton and Wyton is in a particularly attractive area of the Great Ouse River valley with splendid riverside meadows and the rising landscape towards the North providing a backdrop to the river views.
- 2.12 Located on the western side of East Anglia there is good road access North and South via the A1 and East and West by the A14. Huntingdon is on the East Coast main railway line with fast services to London and the North. The new guided bus has proved successful allowing improved access for residents going to Cambridge and tourists from Cambridge visiting the Parish.
- 2.13 Local services are provided by Huntingdon (with its local hospital) and St Ives, both within three miles. All major services are at Peterborough and Cambridge, twenty miles away, and include the University, Addenbrookes and Papworth Hospitals (all world class).
- 2.14 On the south side of the A1123 are Daylock Marine Services and Hartford marina, together with its restaurant, flats and floating lodges, providing leisure activities on the river, plus holiday and permanent accommodation. On the north side of that road is Huntingdon and Wyevale garden centre, a shopping destination attracting people from a wide area. Further towards Hartford is a commercial fishing lake.
- 2.15 On the northern edge of the Parish, along the south side of Sawtry Way, is a commercial area, opposite RAF Wyton, providing local employment and opposite Wyton-on-the-Hill is Pine Hill Park mobile homes providing low-cost housing for the over 55s, in an attractive hillside setting. Closer to St Ives is Houghton Equestrian Centre which is a high quality facility for horse owners



and visitors and provides local employment. Nearer the village on the eastern side of Mere Way is an alpaca farm which may develop as a **visitors' centre**.

- 2.16 Within the village there are two pubs, three small shops, and a mini-supermarket which houses a post office. The village also boasts a successful primary school and St Mary's Church. The river provides the southern boundary and there are the navigation lock and the historic flour mill, caravan park, car park and tearooms managed by the National Trust which together form a major tourist attraction.
- 2.17 The Conservation Area boundary was re-drawn in 2012 and covers an area of considerable historic, architectural and archaeological interest demonstrating more than a thousand years of continuous settlement.

**Figure 2 Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area**



- 2.18 The parish is thus an attractive place to live and to visit therefore the neighbourhood plan aims to maintain and enhance this situation. Therefore a wide range of topics have been considered in producing the Neighbourhood Plan.

## Green spaces



- 2.19 The built-up area of the village has very little land that is not developed. The existing green spaces provide recreation opportunities, open vistas and a refuge for wildlife. They form a key aspect in the character of the village.
- 2.20 In the remainder of the Parish a large proportion of the land is agricultural which creates the rural environment in which the village sits.
- 2.21 The land that forms the green gaps between the parish and its neighbours are of particular importance.

## Tourism



- 2.22 Due to its location, history and character, the parish is a popular destination for quiet tourism with an estimated 100,000 visitors per year, many of whom stay in the National Trust caravan park or local B&Bs. Visitors can enjoy the River Great Ouse, its lock, meadows and see the flour grinding at the historic National Trust Mill. The village centre with its attractive clock tower provides shops and a public house for both visitors and residents.
- 2.23 Walkers can ramble across the meadows, take the village trail to view a wide range of older buildings or walk one of the varied footpaths such as the one which gently climbs up to Wyton on the Hill for uninterrupted views across the Ouse Valley. Winding its way through the village, the Ouse Valley Way National Footpath provides easy walking access to St Ives, via the attractive Thicket Path, or to Godmanchester by the river through fields and past fishing lakes of the nature reserve. For those wishing to get on the water, the local boat hire and the marinas provide facilities for river craft and anglers, who also enjoy the local fishing lakes.
- 2.24 Tourism is thus a major contributor to the local economy supporting employment and business. Developments that support tourism are therefore encouraged but only if they do not have a negative impact on residents or the character of the area.

## Leisure, recreation and community

- 2.25 The village is very active and the Parish magazine, delivered free to all households, is a great success in keeping everyone informed. There are good sports facilities for football, numerous cricket teams, tennis, keep fit and bowls on the Playing Field plus two play areas for younger children. Also located on the playing field are the Pavilion, the Scout Hut and Tennis Club hut. The Pavilion and the Memorial Hall provide indoor venues for a wide variety of clubs and organisations from Pilates to the Gardening Club and cater for all ages from toddlers to the over-sixties. The School, St Mary's Church and the St Mary's Centre offer further indoor venues.



- 2.26 In early December, the Clock Tower, shops and pub are festooned with twinkling lights and a large Christmas tree is erected ready for the great 'switch on' by Father Christmas.



- 2.27 Feast Week takes place during the first week in July. Activities through the week have included a bowls match, an angling contest, a duck race, junior tennis, a Quiz night, and a car treasure hunt. Something for everyone!



- 2.28 A new mini music festival started in 2013 and due to its success was repeated in 2014 and 2015. It is hoped this will continue as a regular event in the future.

## Infrastructure

- 2.29 The A1123 is one of the busiest non-arterial roads in Cambridgeshire and divides the village from the rest of the Parish to the North. The community feels access to and from the village is arduous at busy times and could be considered dangerous at all times. The lack of pedestrian crossings reduces access to the village by other parishioners, limits the use of footpaths to the North and is one reason for the lack of stops for the guided bus. However the serious noise pollution from the road has recently been reduced by a new quieter surface.
- 2.30 Parking in the village is limited, particularly at the beginning and end of the school day, resulting in congestion and frustration. The centre of the village is called the 'Green' which is the junction of five roads and is a through bus route. It is the heart of the village and its character must be preserved according to the Neighbourhood Plan Survey
- 2.31 There are no public toilets in the village despite the large number of visitors.



## Business



- 2.32 There are 894 economically active residents (16 to 74 years) in the parish. Of these people, 50% are employed and 12% are self-employed. In total, 25% of the population is retired. <sup>1</sup>
- 2.33 From the recent NP survey there are approximately 300-400 people employed in businesses located in the Parish.

## Housing



The Parish has the full range of dwelling types <sup>2</sup> : Accommodation type	% of Total
Detached house or bungalow	51
Semi-detached house or bungalow	20
Terraced house or bungalow	5
Flat, maisonette or apartment	9
Caravan, other mobile or temporary structure	15

81% are owner occupied and the rest rented.

- 2.34 There are 826 households in the parish with a population of 1,817 giving an average household size of 2.2 persons. The age profile for the parish shows a low proportion (17%) aged less than

<sup>1</sup> 2011 Census

<sup>2</sup> 2011 Census

20 years compared to the district average of 24%. By contrast, the parish has a high proportion of people of retirement age – 26% compared to a district average of 16%<sup>3</sup>.

- 2.35 There is relatively little deprivation in Houghton and Wyton although 17 households reported overcrowding and 31 do not have central heating.<sup>4</sup>

### Areas of distinctive character



- 2.36 The many attractive houses and cottages which border the streets and lanes of Houghton and Wyton form one of the distinctive features of the parish.

### Quality of life



- 2.37 Residents reported their health as follows (2011 census):

- Very good = 857 (47%)
- Good = 646 (36%)
- Fair = 245 (13.5%)
- Bad/very bad = 64 (3.5%)

- 2.38 The parish provides an excellent quality of life and the maintenance of this is a priority for its residents. The recently enlarged Conservation Area recognised the importance of the special character and history of the village and the residents feel passionate about keeping this together with the preservation of the green spaces within the village and maintenance of the existing biodiversity within the parish.

- 2.39 This quality of life is considered to be under threat from two major and associated issues<sup>5</sup>:

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<sup>3</sup> 2011 Census

<sup>4</sup> 2011 Census

<sup>5</sup> 2013 neighbourhood plan Survey

- The continual growth of traffic on the A1123 and through the village which:
  - increases the delays and dangers of the village access points;
  - forms a barrier to the integration of the Parish to the north of the road with the village;
  - places increased pressure on parking in the village.
  - produces pollution (noise and emissions)
- Housing developments:
  - **on the eastern edge which threaten the Parish's independence from St Ives;**
  - piecemeal building to the west of the village which could result in a continual ribbon of development along the A1123 from St Ives to Huntingdon.

### 3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

#### Challenges for Houghton and Wyton

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address, as far as is possible, the challenges that face the community of Houghton and Wyton. In summary these challenges are:

- **The need for increased sustainability** – in particular, reflecting the global threats of dependence on fossil fuels and imports for our basic food supply.
- **Managing the pressure for new development** – and ensuring that the village remains as a village.
- **Retaining the vibrancy of the retail outlets on offer** – particularly by taking advantage of opportunities to expand the shopping facilities in the village.
- **Protecting the green spaces in and around the parish** – taking the opportunity to preserve and enhance green areas within and around the village.
- **Retention of community assets** – recognising what these are and ensuring they are adequately protected.
- **Improvement of facilities for community groups** – and ensuring that facilities continue to be maintained to a suitable standard to support a range of community activities.
- **Car parking** – addressing problems in the village and the associated effects this has on the retail and services offered in the village.
- **Addressing the housing needs of younger and older members of the community** – by ensuring that housing is developed which can provide flexibly for this range of needs.
- **Providing appropriate employment opportunities** – particularly for small rural start-up businesses that need appropriate premises on flexible terms.
- **Taking advantage of the tourism assets** – but in a way that ensures the additional visitors do not have a detrimental impact on the landscape, biodiversity or the quality of life of residents.
- **Protecting and enhancing the character** – by improving the appearance of the conservation area and the setting of listed buildings in Houghton and Wyton.

#### Vision for Houghton and Wyton

3.2 The vision for Houghton and Wyton is as follows:

**We are an active, thriving, dynamic and cohesive community; proud to live in this special landscape which we are keen to share with others.**

3.3 Our vision is of a parish that continues to be centred on the single village area of Houghton and Wyton. It will maintain and develop its character and retain its separate identity and location away from other nearby settlements. Our vision is of a village which links with its surrounding areas whilst retaining the historic centre as its heart:

- Links with the rural areas to the north and south and also the vital relationship with the River Great Ouse;
- Links to the east and west, with development at Houghton Grange consolidating its role as part of the single village area, reinforced through better physical linkages and an integrated community.

### **Protecting the landscape**

- 3.4 In order to achieve the vision, it is necessary to protect our special landscape. As the landscape along the Ouse Valley is what makes this such a special place to live and visit, efforts should be made to enhance and protect the views, and to improve and extend the existing habitats and biodiversity.

### **Enhancing quality of life in the community**

- 3.5 It has been commented upon that the people living in the parish are a **'dynamic and resourceful community'**. It is vital that the potential of the existing assets of the parish are maximised to further improve the quality of life of the residents. To this end it is important for residents to be connected both physically through public transport links, cycleways, bridleways, footpaths and the river as well as electronically through maintaining and improving good broadband connections and mobile telephony. The A1123 road, with its issues of traffic volume and safety, **will continue to be a main focus to improve villager's quality of life.**
- 3.6 To develop our community further we are keen to explore opportunities that ensure the community grows stronger and more self-sufficient. For a truly sustainable community we are seeking to extend retail opportunities and improved access to public transport. If the pub and village shop were ever sold, the community has stated that it would be prepared to take over these vital village assets. We are also keen to maintain and extend the village clubs and societies and especially the playing field at the heart of the village, as these organisations and facilities form the backbone for the community.
- 3.7 At the heart of the village lies the Village Green which is beginning to look tired and does need an injection of new life. Car parking in the village is a major issue for residents, shoppers and visitors alike, and solutions need to be found which avoid the heart of the village being clogged up with parked cars.

### **Providing appropriate employment and tourism opportunities**

- 3.8 Historically, employment in the village would have relied heavily on farming. When the village and surrounding area began attracting artists at the turn of the century, catering for the needs of visitors increased in importance. Our vision is to capitalise on this special place where we live and to extend and improve the visitor experience thereby increasing employment in this sector.
- 3.9 Currently there are approximately 300–400 people employed in businesses in the parish. We wish to increase this by encouraging the development of rural and craft workshops.
- 3.10 It is estimated that there are in excess of 100,000 visitors to the village every year,<sup>6</sup> whether visiting the Mill, camping, cycling or walking. We would like to see this increased along a theme of **'quiet tourism'** which could include, for example, expanding camping/tea room facilities, extending boat hire and moorings and developing fishing lakes, horse-riding and chalets.

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<sup>6</sup> Estimated over 100,000 visitors visit the National Trust Mill Car Park



## Objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.11 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan as identified through engagement with the community are as follows:

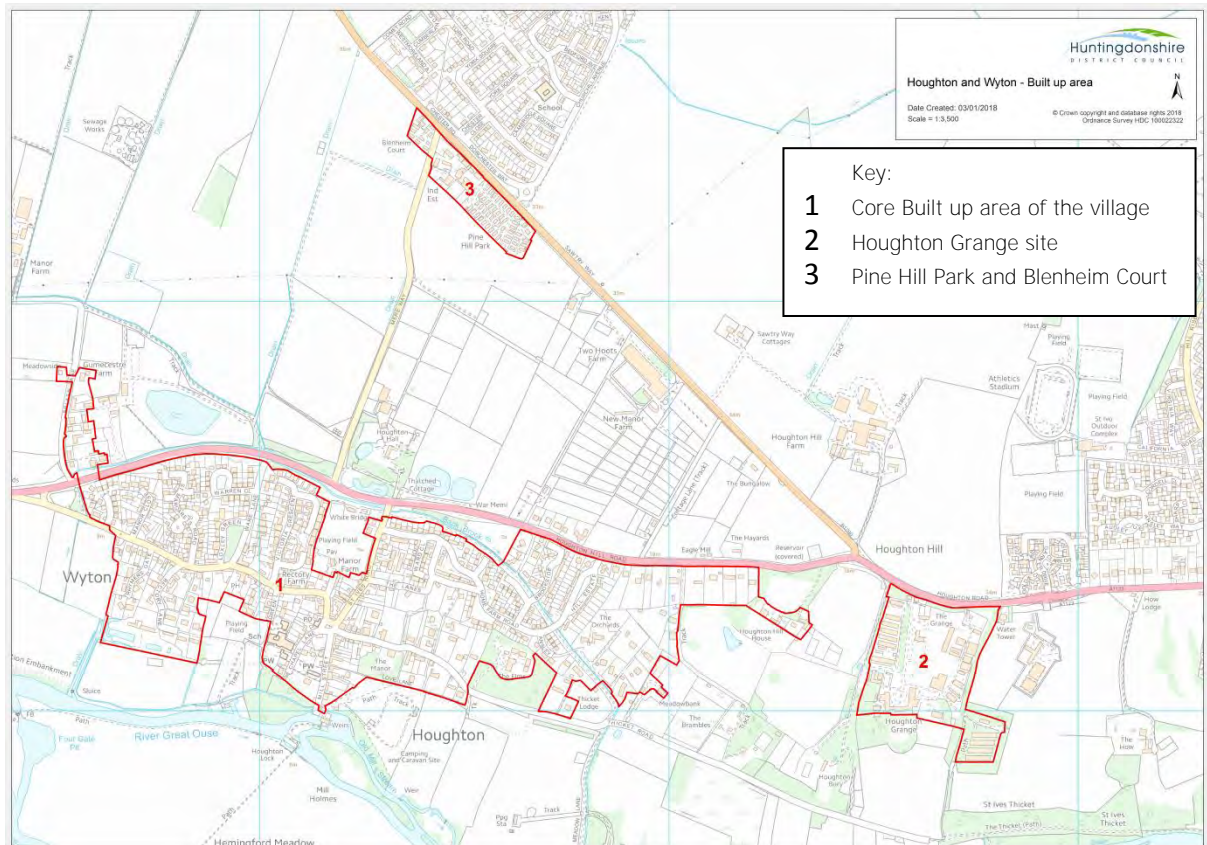
Objective	HWNP policy
<b>Objective 1:</b> To protect and enhance the green spaces of importance within the parish and to resist the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.	1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
<b>Objective 2:</b> To protect and enhance the views identified in the conservation review (2012) that characterise the village.	1,2,3,4,5, 6, 7
<b>Objective 3:</b> To retain the separate identity of Houghton and Wyton as a small rural village and avoid any further merging with neighbouring towns and villages.	1, 3, 7
<b>Objective 4:</b> To protect and enhance the range and distribution of biodiversity in the parish.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
<b>Objective 5:</b> To promote the growth in appropriate 'quiet tourism' (i.e. tourism which respects the character of the countryside) in order that the beautiful countryside of the River Great Ouse and meadows may be shared with visitors.	2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13,17
<b>Objective 6:</b> To expand existing agricultural and rural visitor facilities and attractions and develop appropriate new opportunities.	2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15
<b>Objective 7:</b> To provide accommodation for arts, crafts and leisure activities to meet the needs of the local community and visitors.	8, 9, 10, 11, 12,15
<b>Objective 8:</b> To support the retention of existing local services and businesses in the parish and actively encourage the development of new, small-scale businesses which benefit the community and visitors.	8, 10, 11, 15
<b>Objective 9:</b> To encourage the appropriate development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses.	3, 8, 9, 10
<b>Objective 10:</b> To support small scale housing development schemes that are in keeping with the existing character of Houghton and Wyton.	1, 2, 7, 9, 12, 13,16, 17
<b>Objective 11:</b> To resist the loss of holiday accommodation within the parish to permanent residences.	8, 10
<b>Objective 12:</b> To maintain and enhance the distinctive Character Areas of the Parish as well as protecting the conservation area and the parish's historic and listed assets.	4, 5, 12,17
<b>Objective 13:</b> Increase the provision of housing that enables older people to downsize to a dwelling size and style appropriate for their changing needs.	16
<b>Objective 14:</b> To ensure maximum safety to road and footway users in the parish by improving traffic flow, car parking and public transport links.	12, 13, 16, 17
<b>Objective 15:</b> To control infrastructure developments so that the village's open and quiet character and its varied fabric is preserved and improved, while meeting the needs of the residents.	4, 5, 12, 13, 17
<b>Objective 16:</b> To steer new development to areas of lower flood risk as far as possible.	1, 4, 9, 10,11,14, 15,16,17

## 4 BUILT UP AREA

### Policy justification

- 4.1 The NPPF makes clear distinctions between built up areas and the countryside. To assist with interpretation of the neighbourhood plan's policies, built up areas have therefore been defined and mapped; all land outside the defined boundary is deemed to be countryside and subject to policies influencing development outside the built up area.

**Figure 3 Houghton and Wyton built up area**



### Policy

#### Policy HWNP1 - Houghton and Wyton built up area

The built up area boundary for Houghton and Wyton is shown on Figure 3 above.

A built up area is defined as a distinct group of 30 or more homes and their immediate surroundings.

Other areas outside the built up area are part of the open countryside.

Proposals for development within the built up area will be guided by the relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies and other policies in the development plan.

Proposals for development outside of the defined built up areas will be acceptable where they comply with relevant policies for building in the countryside.

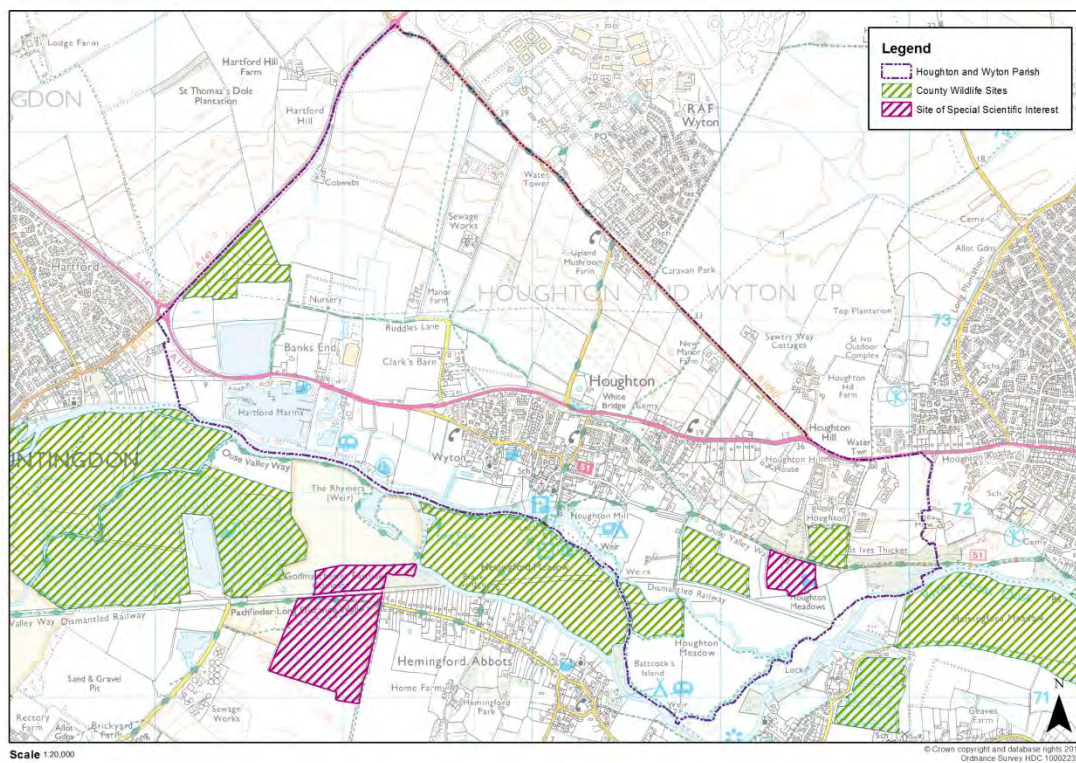
<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP1</b>	<b>1,2,3,10,16</b>
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## 5 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

### Policy justification

- 5.1 The NPPF recognises the local ecological networks and the hierarchy of designated sites. This policy seeks to recognise all the designated areas and welcomes developments that enhance or extend ecological corridors connecting them.
- 5.2 Within the parish there is a nationally recognised Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - Houghton Meadow - as well as important habitats recognised as County Wildlife Sites (CWS). The purpose of these policies is to highlight those sites already designated and to provide a level of protection for non-statutory areas such as CWS. It aims to prevent harm through the direct and indirect impacts of development.
- 5.3 The Lawton Review concluded in 2014 that the protection of wildlife sites in isolation was not sufficient to protect England's biodiversity. The review identified the need for establishing a coherent ecological network that is more resilient to current and future pressures, which can be achieved by creating bigger wildlife sites of better quality which are better connected.

**Figure 4 Map of SSSIs, CWS**





## Policy

### Policy HWNP2 - Protection of sites

All new development should protect and, wherever possible, enhance biodiversity and establish, enhance or extend ecological corridors and the connectivity between them.

Development on land within or outside a SSSI likely to have an adverse effect on a SSSI interest, either individually or cumulatively, should not normally be permitted. Where an adverse effect is likely, permission should only be granted where the benefits of the development, at this site, clearly outweigh both the impacts that it is likely to have on the site's features and any wider impacts on the national network of SSSIs.

<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP2</b>	<b>1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10</b>
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### Prevention of coalescence with St Ives

- 5.4 Working together with policy HWNP1, this policy seeks to protect the village character and distinctiveness by retaining and enhancing a clear and obvious open land gap between the village and neighbouring market town of St Ives.
- 5.5 Historically the land identified in Development Plan documents separating Houghton & Wyton from St.Ives has comprised that land extending east of Houghton Grange and being made up of the St.Ives Golf Course, BBSRC Field and Thicket Wood.
- 5.6 Previous Inspectors of Development Plan documents have carefully described and defined the area in question using various terms such as 'green gap', 'open gap'; 'separation' and 'green wedge'. They have valued its importance using comments that it 'should not be impinged upon', 'not compromised' and 'should be protected', including that it was 'vital'.
- 5.7 The Inspector of the Core Strategy 2009 stated that 'separation should be retained' and during preparation of the plan, the SHLAA 2009 specifically excluded the BBSRC field from development for this reason.
- 5.8 Whilst recognising the vital importance of maintaining a gap between village and town, subsequent plans have allowed some development of the town westwards and onto the northern section of old St.Ives golf course. In so doing this has reduced the area of land capable of physically separating the communities.
- 5.9 The depletion of historic land area once making up the 'green gap' now means that the BBSRC field occupies the only undeveloped frontage adjoining the A1123. It represents the last undeveloped and largely open area of agricultural and grassland countryside east of the village, as well as running north to south, uninterrupted from the A1123 south to the Thicket.
- 5.10 As a consequence the BBSRC field has gained importance in ensuring anti coalescence is maintained.
- 5.11 Whilst the BBSRC field together with the Thicket wood immediately to the south of it, remains the cornerstone of this policy, it should be noted that the surrounding areas of land which knit together in a patchwork across Houghton Hill, and continue to include the remaining undeveloped southern slopes of the old golf course (although not within the designated area of

this Neighbourhood Plan) ; the county wildlife site (south of Houghton Grange); as well as the albeit secondary, more manicured gardens belonging to the scattering of houses west of Houghton Grange; are all now increasingly important in helping to maintain the perception of separation.

- 5.12 Whilst recognising an increased reliance upon the wider area working together to deliver the objective of anti coalescence, the Core Strategy 2009 does not include a specific anti-coalescence policy which brings these areas together and defines them as a gap.
- 5.13 The importance to the community of anti coalescence between Houghton and Wyton the western edge of St Ives has historically been very significant. This continues to be the case as evidenced through the funding of a court case, a petition of over 700 signatures and many letters to the District Council on the subject as well as the Neighbourhood Plan surveys and consultations. It is the opinion of the community of Houghton and Wyton that, with the growth of neighbouring St Ives, assimilation would not be possible without totally destroying the historic character of the parish and the settlements.
- 5.14 It is therefore the purpose of HWNP policy 3 to define and protect those areas of land responsible for delivering both the actual and perceived anti coalescence of village and town as experienced from road, footpaths, meadow or river.

### **Policy justification**

- 5.15 Huntingdonshire is characterised by a variety of individual towns and villages. However, as stated in the Local Development Scoping Report 2007 which informed the Core Strategy 2009, the extent of urban development over the past 50 years has transformed the appearance of its market towns and has also had a major impact on many of the villages. It went on to say that in some cases this has led to the incorporation of previously distinct settlements such as Eaton Socon (St. neots) and Hartford (Huntingdon).
- 5.16 Houghton and Wyton can contribute to maintaining this rich tapestry by way of ensuring the continued separation between the built up area of the village and the town of St Ives. This will help to protect the special character of Houghton and Wyton which has a clear and distinct identity as a village from that of St Ives as a market town.
- 5.17 The landscape of Houghton Hill is valued as a significant and unique topographical feature in the area forming a key element in long distance views across the Ouse Valley and contributing to the setting of both Houghton and Wyton and St Ives.
- 5.18 Historically Houghton Hill House and Houghton Grange stood in extensive grounds somewhat detached from the eastern end of Houghton. Housebuilding since the 1950s has extended the village eastwards such that Houghton Hill House is now connected to the eastern end of the defined built up area. Houghton Hill house has an entrance from the A1123 with a section of landscaped garden with ornamental tree cover fronting the road and helping to partially conceal the house.
- 5.19 Next to this is Houghton Grange which has been identified as an allocated development site within the Core Strategy. This site is detached from the core village and when developed will be large enough to create its own built up area. The woodland belt surrounding the site on three sides to the south, east and west, does screen views of the site. This is particularly important on the eastern flank and to the south where it links to Houghton Meadow county wildlife site and leads down to countryside footpaths.

- 5.20 On the northern edge of the site, two large listed gate houses front onto the road on either side of a long wide entrance. A water tower is also situated on the north-eastern corner next to the A1123 and both form landmarks when travelling along this road.
- 5.21 To the north of the A1123 recent development in St Ives has extended westwards such that it now directly abuts the extensive open farmland rising to the north of Houghton Grange; however, this land lies within the parish of Wyton on the Hill and is outside the scope of this neighbourhood plan.
- 5.22 Westward of Houghton Grange, a scattering of individual properties and gardens create a patchwork and populate the ridge and lower slopes before connecting with the built up area of the core village.
- 5.23 The eastern edge is separated from St Ives by a more open and larger tract of land, known as the BBSRC Field. It is the only significant natural grassland area left between the village and the town. It is also the last remaining area of open frontage along the A1123 affording glimpses of long distance views from the road. Taken together with the Thicket wood it is the only area of land which runs uninterrupted by housing north to south from the road to the valley floor. It does contain two small groups derelict buildings on its western edge, formerly used in association with Houghton Grange as a poultry research station. One of these groups is attached to the south western corner of Houghton Grange and has been included within the built up area specified in Policy HNWP1. Once again this is heavily screened from the southern approaches by mature trees.
- 5.24 **The District's historical Development Planning documentation stretching back over 20 years has** consistently recognised the BBSRC field and Thicket wood as being at the heart of providing the important and substantial separation of Houghton & Wyton from St.Ives.
- 5.25 In the development of the Core Strategy 2009 the BBSRC Field is expressly treated by the source material for Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy as being unsuitable for residential development, precisely because of its importance in forming the landscape gap between St Ives and Houghton.
- 5.26 **Further support for the above interpretation comes from the Core Strategy's express saving of** Policies EN 15 and EN17 of the 1995 Local Plan.
- 5.27 With the granting of planning permission and current building programme for the old St.Ives golf course, the remaining land i.e. the BBSRC field and Thicket wood, has become significantly more important to maintain separation. However, it is also much more apparent that in order to maintain a meaningful perception of separation, both visually and physically, this now has to work in conjunction with other areas of undeveloped and unallocated land lying between the two settlements.
- 5.28 This policy recognises this need, ensuring that coalescence with St Ives is prevented and the special character of Houghton and Wyton is therefore retained. In doing so it puts the BBSRC field and Thicket wood at the heart of that area essential to ensuring anti coalescence, together with the surrounding area of the County wildlife site (south of Houghton Grange) and the gardens west of Houghton Grange (but excluding the built up areas defined in HWNP1).
- 5.29 The aim of preventing the coalescence of St Ives and Houghton and Wyton has, however, to be balanced against the fact that Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy allocates about 400 houses to a significant greenfield development to the west of the town. Planning permission has been granted for some of these houses a number of which have been built. Decisions as to where the remainder of these houses will be located will be made in the emerging Local Plan.

## Policy

### Policy HWNP3 – Anti -coalescence

Development proposals should respect the individual and distinct identities of the village of Houghton and Wyton and the town of St Ives. Development will not be permitted if, individually or cumulatively, it would result in the loss of the visual and physical separation between these two settlements, or would lead to their coalescence.

<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP3</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9,</b>
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## Local Green Spaces

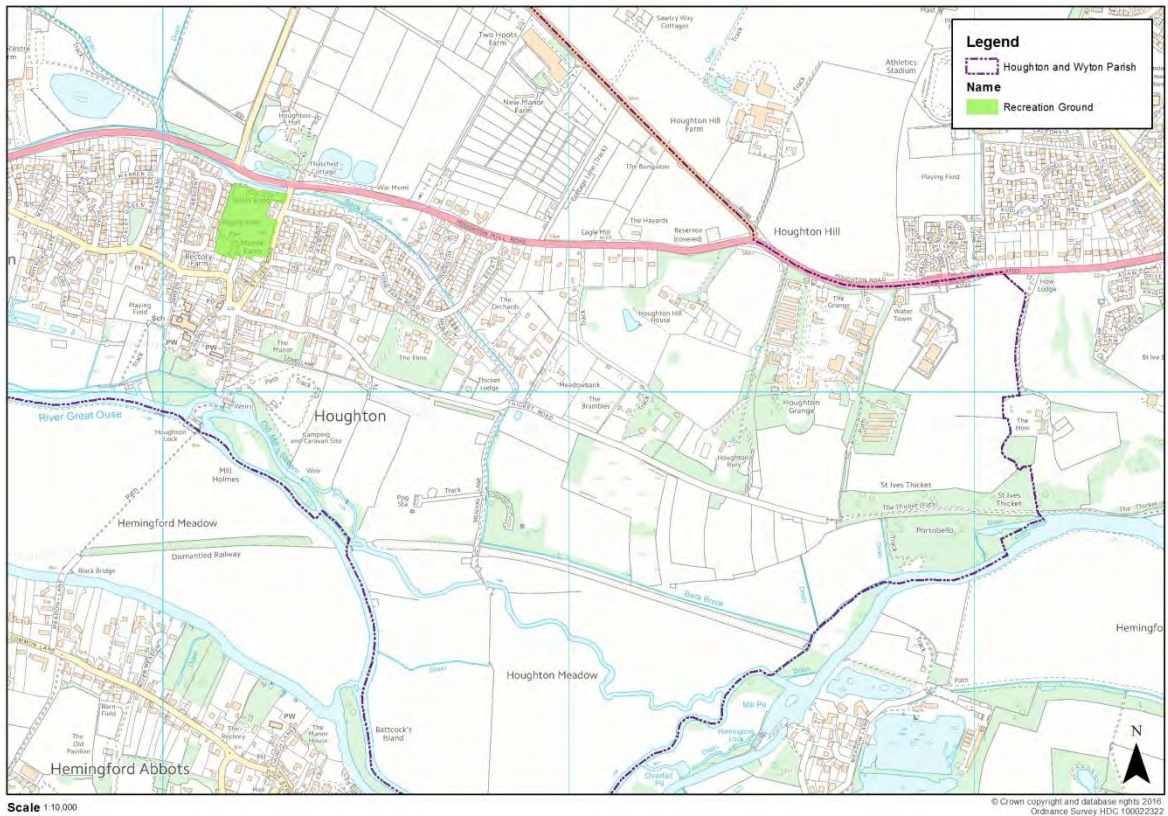
- 5.30 As part of the Neighbourhood Plan process, the community was asked to consider if there were any important green open spaces of value in the Parish. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect this site.

### Policy justification

- 5.31 Under the NPPF, Neighbourhood Plans have the opportunity to designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to them. This will afford protection from development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 77 of the NPPF says that Local Green Spaces should only be designated:
- *"where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
  - *where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
  - *where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land."*
- 5.32 Whilst the village has seen some development during the second half of the twentieth century, it retains a number of green spaces that contribute to its character and provide opportunities for informal and formal recreation. This policy wishes to see the most important of these spaces protected for future generations.



**Figure 6 Map of Local Green Space**



- **Houghton and Wyton Playing Field** - because of its recreation value. Lying in the heart of the village with boundaries abutting Victoria Crescent, St Ives Road and the A1123 provides a place for both formal and informal recreation. The field was given in trust to the village and is currently part owned by the Parish Council, which purchased their share in 1962, and the Eastgate Trust. The Playing Field is home to the village football, cricket teams, the village **bowls, tennis and 'keep-fit'**. The Pavilion and Scout Hut sits on the field, providing a venue for all scouts and guides as well as being available for hire. The field also hosts significant events within the village calendar – Feast week and music festival as well as many other one offs and charity fundraising events. It is a meeting place, dog walking and social recreation place for the village. There is a car park for users of the playing field.



## Policy

### Policy HWNP4 - Protection and maintenance of Local Green Space

In recognition of the value to the local community, the following area is designated as Local Green Space and will be protected from development other than in very special circumstances:

- Houghton and Wyton Playing Field

This Local Green Space is shown on the map in Figure 6.

<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP4</b>	<b>1, 2, 4, 12, 15, 16</b>
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## Verges and Greens

### Policy justification

- 5.33 The verges and greens are important because they contribute towards **the village's character** and distinctiveness. They also perform a biodiversity function, being a place where various species thrive. It is therefore important that the most significant of these greens and verges are protected. The verges and greens identified for special protection are identified in Appendix 2.
- 5.34 The verges and greens will need to be subject to a separate management plan, to be drawn up by the Parish Council in partnership with the relevant authority.

### Policy HWNP5 – Greens and verges

The green areas and verges identified in the appendix are valued for their biodiversity and **contribution to the village's character and distinctiveness**. **Development that protects and enhances the openness and biodiversity of these areas will be supported**. Development that would detract from the special characteristics or biodiversity of these areas will be resisted.

<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP5</b>	<b>1, 2, 4, 12, 15</b>
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## Biodiversity

- 5.35 Houghton and Wyton contain a large area of floodplain meadows, some of which is designated but the majority of which is impoverished from a biodiversity perspective. There has been a significant loss of species-richness in the riverside meadows. A key objective for the Ouse Valley area of greenspace enhancement is the restoration of species rich floodplain meadows.

5.36 The aim of this policy is to:

- protect the existing biodiversity assets of the parish;
- enhance the number and range of species, especially those species on Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) lists;
- create new woodland;
- improve wildlife corridors to create better connectivity
- manage hedgerows appropriately; and
- work with farmers to minimise the damage to biodiversity through their actions.

### **Policy justification**

5.37 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that “the planning system should minimise impacts on biodiversity...by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.”

5.38 It goes on to state at paragraph 117 that, “to minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations.”

5.39 The Huntingdonshire Core Strategy recognises the importance of biodiversity and in particular the sensitive nature of the Great Ouse Valley. Policy CS9 which seeks to create new green infrastructure specifically identifies the need for coordinated action to create new wildlife habitats to increase biodiversity.

5.40 The lowland hay meadows are characterised by species rich swards including, great burnet, meadowsweet, meadow buttercup, yellow rattle and lady’s bedstraw and at Houghton Meadow, down the Thicket, it is recorded that the scarce green winged orchid is present. The great crested newt has been recorded at Houghton Hill.

5.41 The banks of the river and its backwaters are characterised by willows and avenues of black poplar hybrids.

5.42 The river Great Ouse is important for eels, spined loach, tommy ruffe, lampreys and otter. Many dragonfly and damselfly species are also present.

5.43 The sound of skylarks, warblers and nightingales are to be heard in spring and summer and migrating geese are to be seen and heard in Autumn.

### **Policy**

#### **Policy HWNP6 – Retaining and enhancing biodiversity**

Development is expected to protect and enhance biodiversity assets including species rich meadows, the River Great Ouse and areas of semi-natural habitat associated with the river. If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, permission will be refused.

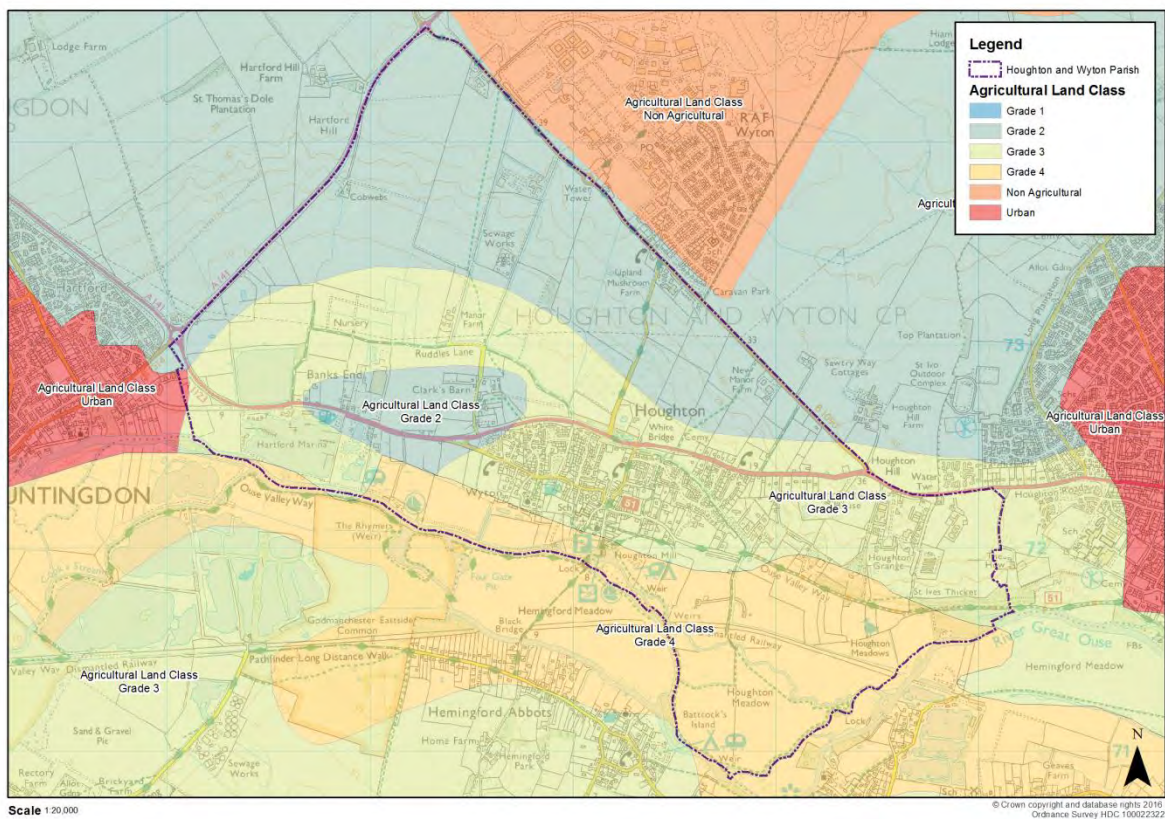
<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP6</b>	<b>1, 2, 4</b>
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## Protection of agricultural and grazing land

### Policy Justification

- 5.44 The history of the parish is intertwined with farming and with cattle grazing before going to market at St Ives. Indeed the Splash on the A1123 was the watering stop for cattle travelling to market. With the loss of all the farms within the settlement has come the loss of grazing and agricultural land.
- 5.45 Figure 7 shows the agricultural classification of land in the parish. This shows that there is a significant amount which is classed as Grade 2 (very good) with a proportion that is also grade 3 (good to moderate).

**Figure 7 Agricultural Land Classification**





5.46 Paragraph 112 of the NPPF states:

*"Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality."*

5.47 Existing landowners who graze within the parish have highlighted the lack of grazing opportunities for farming their alpacas, cattle and goats. Policy HWNP7 therefore seeks to ensure that Grade 1, 2 and 3a agricultural land can only be brought forward for development if it can be demonstrated that it has not recently been in agricultural use and has little prospect of being brought back into productive use in the near future. The land must not have been farmed for at least two years, a period intended to ensure that speculative applications for development of high quality agricultural land are avoided, whilst at the same time still providing an opportunity for agricultural land that clearly has no prospect of re-use to come forward and address any additional needs over the short term (i.e. the next five years).

**Policy**

**Policy HWNP7 – Protection of best and most versatile agricultural land**

Development of best and most versatile agricultural land (as defined in the NPPF) will normally be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that significant development of agricultural land is necessary and no other land of a poorer agricultural quality is available.

<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP7</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4, 5,10</b>
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## 6 TOURISM

### Tourism development

#### Policy justification

- 6.1 One of the key themes in the NPPF is supporting a prosperous rural economy. Within this it recognises the importance of tourism as part of that. Paragraph 28 states that neighbourhood plans should:

*"...support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres."*

- 6.2 Visitors to Houghton and Wyton are attracted to the National Trust Mill, Houghton Equestrian Centre, Huntingdon Wyevale Garden Centre, the River Great Ouse, and for the many walks and cycleways around the countryside and village. This tourism is one which respects the sensitive nature of the environment, in particular the species-rich meadows and the landscape stretching along the Ouse Valley.
- 6.3 **Such 'quiet tourism' should be welcomed, recognising the economic benefits it brings to the local and wider community.** The mantra of quiet tourism is, 'take only photographs, leave only footprints'.
- 6.4 Examples of the types of tourism which are acceptable include:
- Foot/cycle paths where they improve access to the parish, are safe and as long as no deterioration is caused to the environment.
  - Mooring or marine establishments on the waterways which conform to the environmental criteria identified elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan.
  - Activities which do not cause harm to the network of protected habitats and landscapes.
- 6.5 The following indicates examples where changes to the tourism enhancement would not be acceptable because they would not accord with the principles of quiet tourism:
- Trail/dirt bike tracks
  - Large, regular music festivals.
  - River racing using high volume motor boats, river water skiing and wake-boarding.
  - Unauthorised camping/trailer sites.
- 6.6 Temporary activities may be considered appropriate but the location where the activities occur should be left in a condition as was originally seen and the natural habitat should in no way be affected by pollution or excessive noise.
- 6.7 The purpose of these policies is to attract day and residential visitors so that they can experience the beauty of the landscape, the agriculture, rural activities and attractions which help the parish develop economically through the creation of jobs and visitor spend. This must be balanced with the need to ensure that tourism development is appropriate and does not have a detrimental impact on the quality of life of the community.

### Policy HWNP8 – Tourism development

The development and expansion of tourism facilities, attractions and activities connected with day and residential visitors will be supported where the following criteria can be met:

- there are demonstrable economic and social benefits of the proposals; and
- there are no significant detrimental impacts on the existing community, and
- any impacts on the natural environment are capable of being adequately mitigated.

<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP8</b>	<b>5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11</b>
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## Provision of new tourist accommodation

### Policy justification

- 6.8 If the tourist economy is to grow, then it is important that tourist accommodation should also be allowed to grow in Houghton and Wyton as well. However, such accommodation should be in keeping with the 'quiet tourism' offer of the wider area. Large scale tourist accommodation, mainly in the form of large hotels, is not considered appropriate because of the impacts that such large numbers of additional residential visitors are likely to have on local residents. In particular this relates to the additional levels of traffic that will be created on the local road network.
- 6.9 Again, the policies in the Huntingdonshire emerging Local Plan pertaining to the impact of development in the countryside should apply where relevant.

### Policy

#### Policy HWNP9 – Provision of new tourist accommodation

**Proposals for new tourist accommodation will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the following criteria can be met:**

- **The impact on the existing road network would be acceptable;**
- **Pedestrian and cycle access to services in the village is provided wherever possible and ideally via footpaths and cycle routes; and**
- **There would be no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or the setting of any listed building in the Parish or the countryside**

<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP9</b>	<b>5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 16</b>
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## Change of use of tourist accommodation

### Policy justification

- 6.10 There is a concern, based on several recent planning applications and permissions in the parish, that holiday accommodation is being changed into permanent residential dwellings. This has two impacts – firstly, it reduces the stock of holiday accommodation, thereby reducing the attractiveness of the local area for overnight visitors; and secondly, it increases the resident population of the parish, with the associated increased burden on services, in a piecemeal fashion.
- 6.11 It is appreciated that if holiday accommodation is no longer a viable business, then it may be appropriate to consider it for alternative uses. However, it is appropriate that any applicant for such change of use should have to demonstrate that the business is no longer viable. This should be done by providing substantial evidence to prove that the business is not viable as tourist or visitor accommodation. It is felt that 18 months is a reasonable time frame as this represents two trading seasons

### Policy

#### **Policy HWNP10 - Change of use of existing tourist accommodation to permanent residences**

The change of use of existing tourist accommodation to permanent dwellings will only be permitted when it can be reasonably demonstrated that tourist accommodation is no longer viable. Evidence may include details of the business case and marketing of the property as a going concern at a market price over a period of months normally taken to be representative of two trading seasons.

<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP10</b>	<b>5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11,16</b>
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## 7 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

- 7.1 The intention of the policy in this section of the Neighbourhood Plan are to ensure that there is maintenance and further development, when required of enough locations and places to meet the recreational, educational, social and cultural needs of the residents of the parish.

### Provision of new community facilities

#### Policy justification

- 7.2 A limited range of community facilities has been identified as being needed by the community at this present time. However, it is recognised that, over the plan period, it is likely that new or larger facilities will be needed. Also, existing facilities will need replacing once their ongoing maintenance is no longer financially viable.
- 7.3 Therefore, this policy seeks to provide general support for the provision of such community facilities, as opposed to identifying a finite list or specific locations for the provision of such facilities. It is recognised that the funding of such facilities is constrained and that the limited amount of residential development in the parish means that developer contributions will also be limited. Therefore, it will be important that the local community uses its resources to lever in funds through grants and other means in order to fund the bulk of the cost of any new facility. It is therefore important, where appropriate, that the planning process does not provide costly and unnecessary delays in their subsequent provision.
- 7.4 Where appropriate, the use of private facilities to address the needs of the community and general public will be supported. In particular this could include the provision of public conveniences to serve the village.
- 7.5 Other specifically identified items are a guided bus-stop and allotments. Preferred sites have yet to be identified.

#### Policy

##### **Policy HWNP11 – Provision of new community facilities**

The provision of new community facilities to address the identified needs of the residents of the parish will be supported. These needs could relate to new recreation, leisure, spiritual, social, education and medical facilities.

<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP11</b>	<b>5, 6, 7, 8, 16</b>
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## 8 TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT

### Parking

#### Policy justification

- 8.1 There are high levels of car ownership locally – 1.56 cars per household in the parish of Houghton and Wyton as compared to 1.47 cars per household in Huntingdonshire district and 1.33 cars per household across the East of England region<sup>7</sup>. This partly reflects the rural location of the neighbourhood plan area but also the limited public transport that is available. The principle bus service (the 1A/1B) operates between one and two services an hour to and from Cambridge and Huntingdon but does not operate in the evenings. Given that there is not expected to be any increase in bus provision to serve Houghton and Wyton then the propensity to increase bus patronage is expected to be very limited. Therefore new development will bring significant numbers of additional cars that will have to find places to park.
- 8.2 In addition, new tourist development will bring more cars into the parish. It is important that a balance is struck between the benefits that this brings in terms of income from tourism, and the loss of amenity for local residents and businesses.

#### Parking in the village centre



- 8.3 It is important that new development adequately provides for the parking needs arising from it. In particular, development close to the centre of the village – along with additional tourist visits - is likely to create significant levels of on-street parking unless appropriate off-road solutions are provided.

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<sup>7</sup> Source: 2011 Census

## Policy

### **Policy HWNP12 – Parking to serve new development/Houghton and Wyton village**

Any proposals to provide additional public car parking to serve the village of Houghton and Wyton will be supported in principle.

<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP12</b>	<b>6, 7, 10, 14, 15</b>
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## Access by non-car modes

### Policy justification

- 8.4 The community considers that the network of footpaths and cycle paths across the parish is a valuable asset. It wishes to expand this network, both for use by residents and by the tourists that are attracted to the area.
- 8.5 It is vital that, where possible, foot and cycle paths are provided that link to the centre of the village. This is where the majority of services are provided and the extra footfall, that these links will create, will serve to increase the viability of the shops and services in the centre of the village, whilst at the same time not worsening the problems with traffic and parking there. For example:
- From the equestrian centre on Sawtry Way to the cemetery
  - From Meadow Lane opposite the cemetery to the back brook
  - From Houghton Grange to the Thicket which leads to the village centre
  - From the Thicket (opposite the Elms) to the meadows and camp site
  - From Meadow Lane going east along the old railway line towards Houghton Grange
- 8.6 In addition, access to bus services is important to ensure that those without access to a car (in 2011, 9% of the households in the parish did not have access to a car<sup>8</sup>). Therefore it should be easy to access bus stops on foot from new developments that are creating additional movements.
- 8.7 Where there is currently a lack of provision of a good footpath and/or cycle path to the village centre and/or a bus stop within a reasonable distance, new developments which are creating additional movements must seek to address this by providing new access paths. Only where it is physically not possible or demonstrably unviable to make such provision will the policy not apply.

<sup>8</sup> Source: 2011 Census

## Policy

### **Policy HWNP13 – Access by non-car modes**

Any development within the parish which creates additional movements will have to demonstrate that there is good access to the village centre on foot or by bicycle and/or that there is good access to an operational bus route. Where such access is lacking and there is a deliverable solution, new provision must be made towards addressing this.

<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP13</b>	<b>5, 10, 15,</b>
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## 9 FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

### Policy justification

- 9.1 The parish is situated in a river valley with a river that regularly floods and is protected by a flood bank. The longer the river remains flooded the more surface water run-off accumulates in the ditches and the brook, and the risk of flooding increases until the river cannot remove the excess water. The longer the flood plain is covered in water the more opportunity there is of water leakage through the flood protection bank. Water can then flood roads, gardens, houses and parts of the sewerage system.
- 9.2 In the locality a further threat comes from leakage from the existing sewer system and the ongoing silting up of the River Ouse.
- 9.3 In the winter of 2012/13, the village came very close to major flooding problems, with Thicket Road impassable to motor vehicles on several occasions. The Parish Council also received several reports from residents that their houses were on the verge of flooding and that power had been lost, even with sandbags having been deployed.
- 9.4 The 2011 Great Ouse Catchment Flood Management Plan, produced by the Environment Agency, identified the parish as being in a flood risk area where the risks are currently deemed to be appropriately-managed, but where the risk of flooding is expected to rise significantly in the future. The number of properties at risk from flooding in the Houghton/Hemingford/St Ives area could rise fourfold over the next century as existing flood defences are over-topped. Moreover, this assumes that there is no new development, yet within this area there are significant levels of new development already planned.
- 9.5 **The NPPF states at paragraph 100 that, "Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk."**
- 9.6 It is therefore considered prudent that, until new flood defences are put in place, a robust approach is adopted to new development, and developers must demonstrate that it will not cause problems with flooding and drainage.
- 9.7 It should also be recognised that flooding problems do not only come from surface water flooding but also from groundwater flooding. These issues in aggregate can serve to create the problems that have been experienced in recent years. Planning applications should therefore consider both issues jointly. If this serves to create an unacceptable cumulative impact, then an application should be refused.
- 9.8 Adequate surface water management is crucial to help Houghton and Wyton adapt to, and mitigate for, climate change. The National SuDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) Standards and Building Regulations Part H set out a clear hierarchy for surface water management and it is important that new developments manage surface water through SuDS rather than connecting into the public system

## Policy

### **Policy HWNP14 - Flooding and drainage**

Development will only be permitted in areas benefitting from defences where the sequential and exception tests are passed and residual risk of flooding has been considered and it can be demonstrated that the development will be safe.

Any development that which would reduce the flood plain storage capacity of a site will not be permitted unless an alternative storage facility is provided to compensate within the site on a level-for-level and volume-for-volume basis. Reference should be made to the SFRA maps which define the extent of the functional flood plain and any such facilities should be approved by the Environment Agency or other appropriate body.

Replacement dwellings and buildings will only be permitted in areas at risk of flooding if it can be demonstrated that they will be substantially safer and will reduce flood risk, taking into account the effects of climate change.

All developments will be expected to demonstrate that they have followed the surface water management hierarchy to ensure that infiltration and other methods of surface water disposal are considered and provided for ahead of maintaining any connection to surface water sewers. Such developments must demonstrate that, where possible, they have reinstated natural drainage flow pathways.

Any development increasing the demand on the drainage systems is required to provide written confirmation from the appropriate sewerage provider that sufficient infrastructure capacity exists, or that any required increase in sewerage capacity is completed prior to occupation of any part of the development.

Mitigation must be undertaken for all planning permissions for any cumulative impact of surface water and groundwater flooding that would be created by development.

<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP14</b>	<b>16</b>
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## 10 BUSINESS

### Providing for the needs of new and existing businesses

#### Policy justification

10.1 One of the key themes in the NPPF is supporting a prosperous rural economy. Paragraph 28 states:

*"Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:*

- *support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;*
- *promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- *support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres;*
- *promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship."*

10.2 There are over 33 businesses within the parish which does not include those working as sole traders. Over the plan period, it is considered vital to support local services and businesses in order that they may create employment opportunities for residents and local people.

10.3 In particular in a rural location, it is considered most appropriate to encourage small scale businesses which encourage and promote tourism and rural enterprise generally and/or benefit the local community. Many of these businesses will be start-ups and for these people, having access to low cost premises on flexible rents is of paramount importance. The provision of such flexible space within the parish will therefore be welcomed.

10.4 Another feature of the local economy is the enduring, but adapting, agricultural base. Whilst relatively small, it does provide local employment and makes effective use of the land. It is also adapting to new trends with the opening up of farm shops, for example. Such enterprises should be encouraged rather than stifled.

10.5 Support will therefore be given to proposals which demonstrate an active approach to providing sustainable commercial activity within the context of a rural parish.

10.6 The one caveat is the concern over sprawling development along the main routes that surround the built up area of the parish – namely the A1123, A141 and B1090 routes. Along these routes

there are more restrictions on new businesses, as these are not considered to represent the most appropriate locations for such development.

## Policy

### **Policy HWNP15 – Provision for the needs of new or expanded businesses**

Proposals for new or expanding businesses will be supported provided they are appropriate to their rural setting and respect the character of the village, the countryside and wider landscape including views in and out of the area. Any such use will need to ensure that its impact on light, noise and air is acceptable.

Proposals that provide suitable space for start-up or incubator businesses **develop the Parish's** agricultural base or increase retail space in the village centre are particularly encouraged.

The loss of existing retail or other community services and facilities will be resisted unless alternative or enhanced provision is made elsewhere in suitable and accessible locations in the parish or it can be demonstrated that the use is no longer viable.

New development along the A1123, A141 or B1090 should seek to retain existing trees, hedges and ditches wherever possible to protect the rural setting.

Any new development should not increase flood risk. Planning applications for development within the Plan area must be accompanied by a site-specific flood risk assessment in line with the requirements of national policy and advice, but may also be required on a site by site basis based on locally available evidence.

<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP15</b>	<b>6, 7, 8, 16</b>
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## 11 HOUSING

### Small-scale residential development

#### Policy justification

- 11.1 In 2011 there were 826 dwellings in the parish of Houghton and Wyton. The large majority are located in the village whilst the remainder are spread around the parish – mainly at Hartford Marina in the west and the Pine Hill Park development along Sawtry Way.
- 11.2 Like many old villages, development initially occurred slowly over many centuries and resulted in a stock of very individualistic housing. More recent developments over the last 40 years have tended to be medium scale and of a more similar type. However, the parish remains rural in nature and housing at the edges blends well into the countryside which completely surrounds it and provides the important separation, distinct from neighbouring settlements.
- 11.3 Protecting the separate identity of Houghton & Wyton is a key objective of the Neighbourhood Plan, and retention of this surrounding countryside is crucial to retaining the distinctiveness of the village. Policy HWNP1 seeks to focus development within the built up area boundary, as defined in Figure 3 - development in open countryside should not be permitted if it would have the effect of reducing the separate identity of Houghton and Wyton. In addition, the policies in the Huntingdonshire emerging Local Plan pertaining to the impact of development in the countryside will apply to restrict any such development.
- 11.4 Looking over the plan period to 2036, the Neighbourhood Plan Survey 2013 demonstrated broad satisfaction with the mix of houses currently available, reflecting the broad range of accommodation that residents enjoy across the parish. This ranges from some permanent residency house boats and park homes, which offer low entry price into the area, through apartments to large detached properties.
- 11.5 The demographics of the village reflect those of Huntingdonshire generally with the largest proportion of the population being of retirement age. There is no significant growth- other than via tourism and through development of the Houghton Grange site in the east- envisaged in the local population and very low levels of net migration are expected (based on this limited growth and the popularity of the parish with those already living there). However, the Neighbourhood Plan Survey did highlight that over time there will be a gradual shift towards needing a greater proportion of accommodation for single and dual occupancy (77% respondents agreed) as well as dwellings specifically designed for the needs of older people (80% agreed). Residents want to be able to downsize as they get older but not be forced to move out of the village. Having a stock of smaller properties for downsizing also means that these older people will be more willing to move and release their larger properties back to the housing stock in order that they become family homes again.
- 11.6 Within this, there is also a need to provide affordable housing to address local needs. The neighbourhood plan area has a very low proportion of social rented properties – only 3% - yet for many people currently living in Houghton and Wyton, the price of properties on the open market is prohibitively high. In particular, some young families that have grown up in the village as well as older residents looking to downsize wish to stay living locally but cannot afford to do so. It is important that the provision of new dwellings reflects the needs of these people as well.

- 11.7 This is supported by the Cambridge Sub-Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)<sup>9</sup> which identified that one-person and couple households will make up the majority of the household increase from 2011 to 2031. In fact, they will represent 96% of the household change over that period.
- 11.8 Development through small-scale, incremental growth enables better preservation of the general housing mix and harmony with the existing character of the local setting and buildings. It is essential that the supply of any new homes is realised in accordance with the distinctive features, scale and grain of the local area. Housing sites must be carefully considered and will only be acceptable where they reflect these principles and are consistent with the neighbourhood Plan taken as a whole
- 11.9 The Huntingdonshire Core Strategy provides the spatial strategy for housing development across the District at present. However, the emerging Local Plan will supersede it and this identifies land at St Ives West for a mixed use allocation), including the land at Houghton Grange. This is the only site allocated or proposed for allocation within the parish.
- 11.10 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for development, it is expected that there will be windfall sites that come forward over the plan period. It is important that they are of a suitable scale to be in keeping with the parish and the village (90% of respondents from the NP survey agreed with small scale developments) Given the restriction on development outside the built up area boundary, most of these small scale windfalls are expected to come forward within the village.
- 11.11 Development proposals that address the needs of the local population will be supported. In particular, this is housing that is suitable for the needs of older people but would also provide opportunities for first-time buyers. Specifically this will be:
- two-bed and also one-bed properties
  - housing for older people.
- 11.12 In order to provide flexibility, it is considered that self-build development should also be encouraged.

## Policy

### Policy HWNP16 – Windfall residential development

Residential development on windfall sites in the in the village that meets local needs will be supported. In particular, the provision of one or two bedroom units and housing that meets the needs of older people is particularly encouraged. Self build units will be supported on appropriate sites.

<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP16</b>	<b>10, 13, 14, 16</b>
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<sup>9</sup> Cambridgeshire Insight (2013) *Cambridge Sub-Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment*, for Cambridgeshire authorities

## 12 DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

### Policy justification

12.1 Paragraph 58 of the NPPF states that:

*"...neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:*

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
- create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;*
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping."*

12.2 The Huntingdonshire emerging Local Plan also recognises the importance of design quality based on a thorough understanding of a site and its context. In particular, the Neighbourhood Plan considers the most important aspects to be:

- solutions which reflect their surroundings;
- proposals must contribute positively to the local character, appearance, form and pattern of development through sensitive siting, scale, massing, form and arrangement of new development and use of colour and materials;
- proposals should respect and respond appropriately to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape, and avoid the introduction of incongruous and intrusive elements into views.

12.3 The community has identified design quality as an important issue in order to preserve the character of the village in particular and the parish in general.

### ***Character Areas***

- 12.4 A key consideration within the Neighbourhood Plan is to understand how certain areas define the character and feel of that community, and then identify where they are in order to make sure their importance is properly considered when making decisions on future developments.
- 12.5 The parish is characterised by its varied architectural styles, building density and layout, its road and footpath networks and its geographical setting. Together these elements confirm the village's identity as a small rural settlement.
- 12.6 The Neighbourhood Plan Survey recorded the importance that the community places on maintaining and protecting this small and rural character, both now and in the future.
- 12.7 Such areas of 'distinctive character' have been identified. It is important to note that the transitional areas between the distinctive areas are also important to the village scene where the same criteria should be applied, with reference to the relevant adjacent Character Area.
- 12.8 Key defining elements are identified under two headings - those which are common throughout the village and those which are specific to a particular road or street or part of the village.
- 12.9 The common distinctive character elements are:
- The lanes, footpaths and roads at the limit of the village, which have natural and largely untrimmed hedgerows.
  - The height and variety of the historic roof lines and separation between buildings and their interconnecting views.
  - Grass verges are regularly used to define the extent of the road, particularly in the older parts of the village.
  - The many and varied old and mature trees within the built environment. There are examples of such trees in both the older and more recently built areas of the village.
  - The pavements on one side of the road only.
  - The low density and period reproduction street lighting only extending as far as the last of the built envelope.
  - The limited use of white or yellow lines.
  - The low density use of road and street signs.
  - The use of cinder or gravel surfacing to footpaths.
  - The extent of natural and uninterrupted river frontage within the village boundary.
  - The generally low density of telegraph wires, satellite dishes, aerials or solar panels on the roof lines of buildings.
- 12.10 The Character Areas are shown in Appendix 1. Where Policy HWNP17 refers to these Character Areas, it is expected that development should have due regard to the guidance provided in Appendix 1 for the respective Character Area. This applies to the Character Area that the development is in and also to any Character Area where development that is adjacent to it will have an impact upon it.

## Policy

### Policy HWNP17 - Design of new development

New development will be supported where it can demonstrate that the following criteria are all met:-

- It respects the character or appearance of the village and its heritage assets including the Conservation Area and the setting of the Great Ouse Valley
- It responds positively to the heritage and distinctive features of any Character Area in which it is situated and pays particular attention to the site's topography and height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation and materials
- It is of a high quality design and, where appropriate, is of a distinctive and individual character
- It retains and incorporates, where possible, existing natural features such as trees, hedgerows and ponds
- It takes any opportunity available to provide safe, accessible and well connected footpath and cycle routes to the village centre, and
- Where the development is located at the edge of the settlement it takes account of, and respects the character of adjacent countryside by providing landscaping and / or developing at a lower height as appropriate to reflect its fringe location

<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP17</b>	<b>5, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16</b>
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## **13 MONITORING**

- 13.1 To ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan, in its entirety, strives to deliver an improving quality of life for people in the parish, it is important that its progress is measured against an appropriate index.
- 13.2 The central theme of the Neighbourhood Plan is about improving quality of life. Therefore, it is appropriate that the index of monitoring targets is closely related to quality of life indices. This will be developed by Houghton and Wyton Parish Council in conjunction with the local community.
- 13.3 The monitoring of this index will be undertaken through a questionnaire survey, distributed to every person on the electoral roll. This will be undertaken at least every five years and the results shared and used to influence Parish Council decisions.
- 13.4** The process of producing the Neighbourhood Plan has identified a number of important actions which have not been included in the main body of the Plan. This is because these are not specifically related to land use matters and therefore sit outside the jurisdiction of a Neighbourhood Plan. However, this is not to say that these actions are not important and they are contained in appendix 3 under Community Action Plan and will be reviewed regularly by the Parish Council.

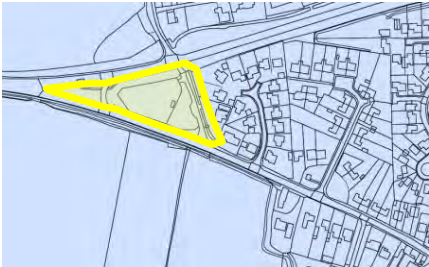
## GLOSSARY

- **Affordable housing** - Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market
- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** – a fixed, non-negotiable contribution that must be made by new development. It is chargeable on each net additional square metre of development built and is set by the Huntingdonshire District Council.
- **Core Strategy** – the planning policy document adopted by Huntingdonshire District Council in 2009, covering Houghton and Wyton parish. This addresses strategic planning matters and the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework, must be in general conformity with the adopted Core Strategy.
- **Emerging Huntingdonshire Local Plan** – the document which, when adopted, will supersede the current Core Strategy. This Local Plan is addressing planning matters up to 2036 and includes strategic allocations which impact on Houghton and Wyton.
- **Intermediate tenure housing** - Homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.
- **Lifetime Homes** - dwellings that incorporate 16 design criteria which can be universally applied to new homes at minimal cost. Each design feature adds to the comfort and convenience of the home and supports the changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life. In particular, it ensures that many disabled or older people are able to live within their own home as opposed to a care setting.
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** – the national planning policy document which sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- **Quiet Tourism** – tourism which respects the character of the countryside
- **Social rented housing** - Housing owned by local authorities and private registered providers for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime.
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) – an evidence base exercise undertaken by all local authorities to determine the amount of land that has theoretical potential for housing development. All sites put forward are considered for their availability, suitability and deliverability for housing. If a site addresses all of these requirements then it is considered to have theoretical potential for housing development; however this does not mean that the site will be brought forward for development or that a planning application will be granted planning permission. All sites **for consideration are collated through a ‘Call for Sites’ exercise which invites anyone to put forward land for consideration through the SHLAA process.**

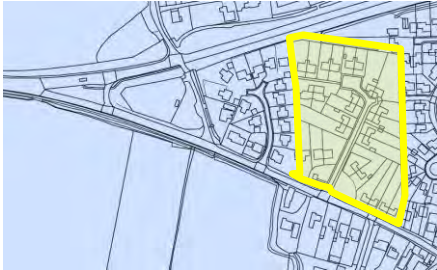
# Appendix 1 Character Areas

**Character Areas:**

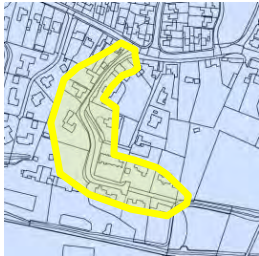
**The Wyton end access road from the A1123**



**Manor Close**



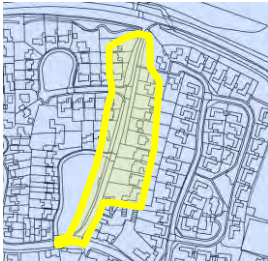
**Rectory Lane**



**Church Walk**

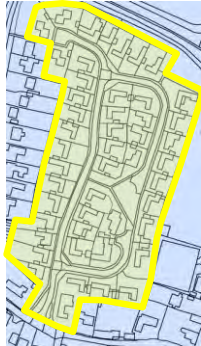


**Ware Lane**



**Character Areas:**

**Victoria Crescent**



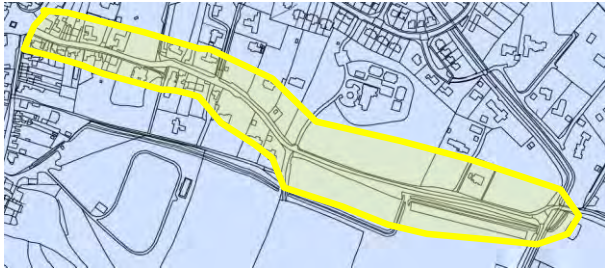
**Green Lane**



**Laughtons Lane**



**Thicket Road**

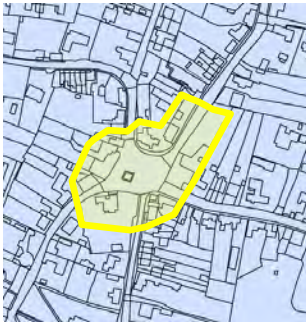


Neighbourhood Plan Working Group



**Character Areas:**

**The village centre**



**Mill Street and Chapel Lane**



**The Lanes**

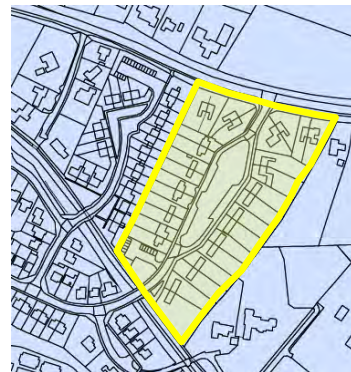


**Character Areas:**

**Love Lane**



**Hill Estate**



**Home Farm Road**

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

**The Wyton end access road from the A1123**

- As the Huntingdon Road leaves the A1123 there are a limited number of low rise houses on the left which gives an open character to the village approach.
- There is scope to open up, and protect, the historic sheep splash on the left hand side, as a further character enhancing feature.

- There is also scope to define the rural feel of the village by softening the hard tarmac traffic prioritising entrance and exit to the village using more rural junction design incorporating rustic fencing, signage and grass verges and clear options for cyclists and pedestrians.



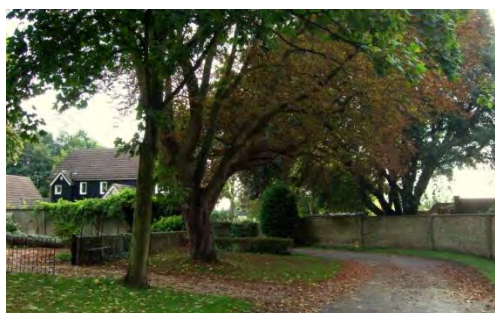
### Manor Close

- The wide entrance road, with green verges on either side leads to a small estate of semi-detached houses built in the early 1920s.
- Each of the symmetrical pairs of houses have retained their rendered and painted exterior
- All have relatively large front and rear gardens separated by low level hedging, and each has off street parking provided by a wide driveway between each pair of houses.
- The estate provides an important size of housing in the overall mix of accommodation available in the village.
- This small estate represents an intact representation of a former council house design with generous plots sizes compared to houses being built today, with each house retaining its original appearance, finish and character.



### Rectory Lane

- A rural no through road with grass verges and lined with mature trees with access to the Grade 1 listed Church of All Saints Wyton.
- Church Walk, an ancient connecting footpath between Rectory Lane and Huntingdon Road.
- There is a mix of older and modern low density housing with associated low levels of traffic which is in balance with the rural nature of the road.



### Church Walk

- Church Walk is a regularly used historic footpath leading from Huntingdon Road, initially between old houses, down to the RAF cemetery and Wyton Church.
- There is limited vehicle access along a gravelled first section for residents of the houses on either side. The surface then becomes a natural rural footpath between old walls and established vegetation on either side as it reaches the church.



### Ware Lane

- The ancient trackway is one of the original thoroughfares in the village of Wyton and part of the old main road between Huntingdon and St Ives. It has wide grass verges backed by ditches and hedges on both sides without any road markings and, due to the development of the A1123 past the village, is now a no-through road to vehicles, but still allows cyclists and pedestrians to leave the village towards the north.
- Ware Lane starts at Huntingdon Road. On the left is situated Loxley Green and the modern development of three-storey townhouses, with the 18th century manor farmhouse in the north-west corner. On the right are the modern Old Manor Farm flats.
- Housing development in the lane took place in the early 1970s and on the right hand side there are bungalows, and then dormer bungalows. On the left hand side there are two pairs of detached houses, all characterised by long front gardens and drives which bridge the ditches.



### Victoria Crescent

- The houses on Victoria Crescent represent a unique architectural style in the village.
- Designed by Sir Colin St-John Wilson (architect of the British Library) who wanted to offer his own 'inside out' design style in a village environment, laid out in a closed crescent, built in the 1960s.
- Their collective character is of common single storey timber cladding over white exterior walls.
- The single road entry into and out of the crescent creates a private feel as well as preventing through traffic access.



- The building density coupled with the single storey construction has created an open feel to the estate, added to by the open and unfenced front gardens and wide road with verges.



### **Green Lane**

- A no through lane, without pavements narrowing to a rural footpath beyond the school, offering important access to the school and the playing field.
- Unspoilt and open views from the lane across the playing field to the tree lined river bank beyond.



### **Laughtons Lane**

- This is a private unmade road with limited vehicle access for residents.
- Laughtons Lane also provides a well-used pedestrian connection between the centre of the village and the playing field.



### **The village centre**

- The centre represents an historic and important hub to the web of five roads into and out of the village.
- There is an important balance of village history and functionality represented by the clock tower, the Three Horseshoes pub, the old George and Dragon pub, the shop, the Potto Brown statue

and plinth, the listed telephone kiosk and water pump, the period garden wall at Whympers, which frames one side of the square.

- The seating outside the Three Horseshoes adds to the village centre street scene and acts an acceptable traffic calming measure
- There are important vistas from the centre. The church and its spire, the old and mature trees and the listed buildings around the centre.
- The absence of road markings, designated parking areas or the use of urban style signs.
- The limited use of shop signs, advertising signs or posters.



### Mill Street and Chapel Lane

- Both are relatively narrow but have an open character helped by no on-street parking.
- Both have limited access with no through traffic use.
- **Both have important historic buildings relevant to the village's history. The architectural styles are rich and variable including thatched roofs and those buildings with historical relevance, such as School House.**
- The roof lines are varied with spaces between sufficient to provide interconnecting views to other parts of the village including to the Mill and the church.
- Mill Street in particular has a single pavement which changes to characterful cobbles in front of the row of thatched cottages.
- **Signage and the entrance to the Mill are unobtrusive and don't dominate the immediate surroundings.**



### Thicket Road

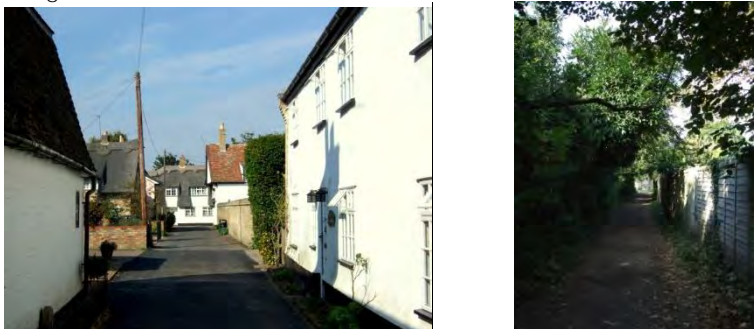
- One of the longest and oldest access routes to and from the village, The Thicket has a wide and varied mix of old and listed properties.
- There is a single footpath on the right hand side at the more populated end, which becomes a grass verge away from the village centre.
- Grass verges without kerb stones define the extent of the road.
- The pavement runs out at the village limit, and becomes the Thicket Path after the White Bridge
- Along its length there is low density reproduction period lighting provided to the end of the run of houses.

- There is no through route for traffic via Meadow Lane (except for emergency vehicles) with priority given to pedestrians, horse-riders and cyclists using The Thicket for access to St Ives.
- There is limited street signage, or lines controlling parking, maintaining the rural character of the road.
- There are many old and mature trees along the length of The Thicket, and in the gardens of the larger houses. A low natural hedge and open metal railings afford views of the formal Elms gardens.
- Beyond the Elms, there are a small number of houses on the left hand side which all stand well back from the road. This, coupled with the lack of the houses on the right, and the open views across the fields to the river, all add to the rural character of this part of the village.



### **The Lanes and Love Lane**

- These interconnecting Lanes represent historic cart tracks and footpaths offering routes between the village, the river and the Mill.
- Today The Lanes and Love Lane represent a well-used and popular network of unspoilt, natural rural footpaths with minimal street lighting, crisscrossing the village, as they have since the village was established.



### **Home Farm Road** (excluding the three-dwelling development on the corner of St Ives Road built later)

- Home Farm Road represents a style of estate development of its time when it was built between 1968 and 1970.
- Houses are set well back from the road with large front gardens and relatively wide pavements.
- The frontages are laid to a variety of lawns or planted gardens but the overall feel is of open space, without the interruption of high dividing hedges or fences.
- The access roads comprise long sweeping curves which add to the feeling of space and widen the general panoramic views across the estate.
- Mature trees have been retained, which together with the green open spaces, adds a softening and pleasing character to the harder lines of the houses.
- The houses have been built with off road garages and parking which beneficially minimises any on road parking.



### Hill Estate

- Built between 1947 and 1952, Hill Estate is a strong example of post war council built housing and layout.
- The red brick semi-detached houses are built on spacious plots with large front gardens.
- The houses face inwards towards the open well-kept green area with mature trees bringing an identity to the estate as a whole.
- The one way circulatory road is respected and contributes to free flow of traffic to and from the estate.
- There is a locally agreed stipulation that prevents on the verge parking. The estate has retained a period block of garages for use by estate residents.





## Appendix 2 – Greens & verges

- Ware Lane verge by the side of Loxley Green - is to be managed for wildflowers which attract pollinators.



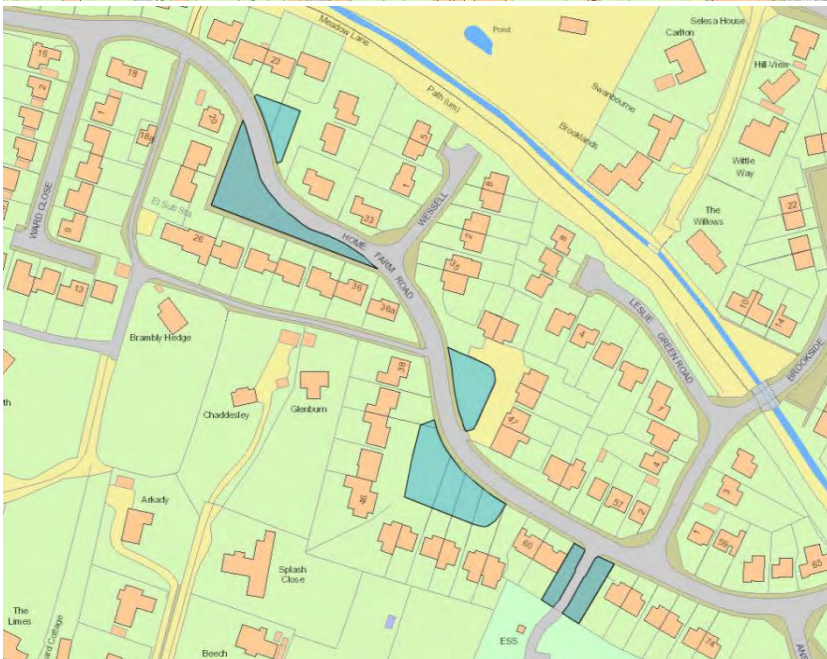
- The verges down the Thicket and in front of the Manor, The Gardens and Rose Cottage – whilst this might seem unnoticed, they are very much appreciated by residents and visitors as a contribution to village’s open space character.







- The green spaces in St Margaret's Road and Home Farm Road - the green areas amidst the housing developments provide a breathing space and a place for trees to develop for all to enjoy.









- The Green in Warren Close is a small development of alternatively designed housing built between 1975 and 1978. The central green was once a pond and still retains the original willow trees that used to surround the pond. The pond was thought to be the remnants of a moat which once encircled an earlier house.







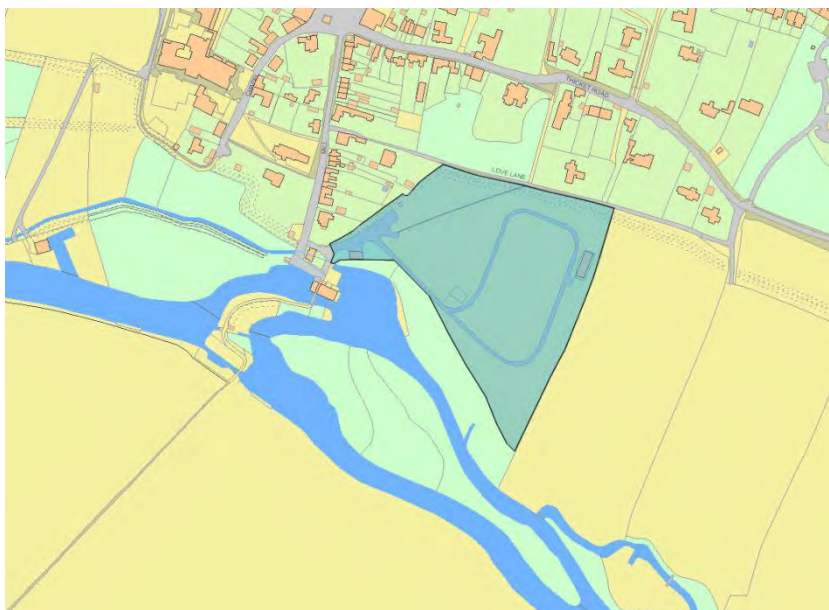
- Thicket Footpath – from the bridge at Thicket Road/Meadow Lane crossroads, down to Portabello Wood, the verge on the right hand side. This footpath is an ancient footpath said to have been used by Oliver Cromwell on his journey between home and school. The verge all along the right hand side provides a wild beauty and gives the path a very rural feel.



- The field on the corner of Thicket Road and Meadow Lane demonstrates ridge and furrow and provides the transition from the built environment to the open countryside and provides a sense of tranquillity towards the edge of the village.

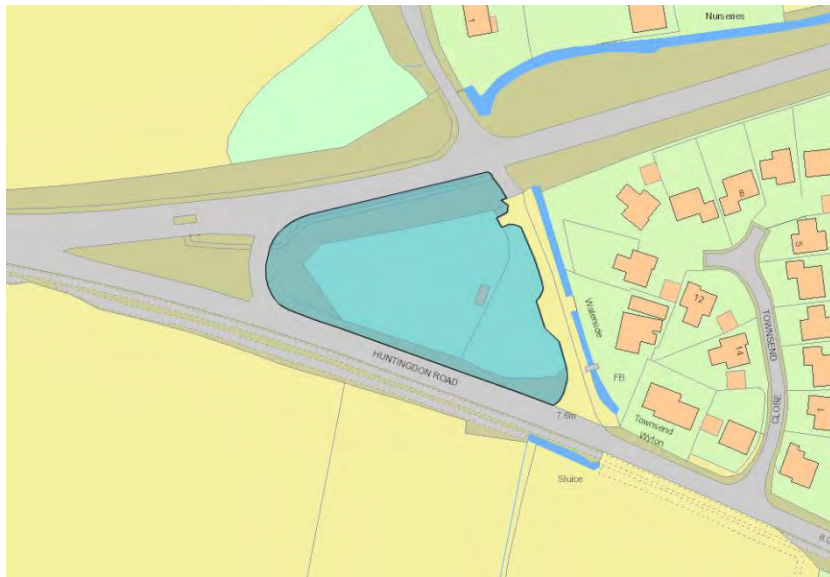


- The National Trust car park and camp site is located at the end of Mill Street. Near the Mill is the car park and camp site, which lies on the backwater of the River Great Ouse. The camp site has been present since the sixties, initially targeted at anglers but then recognising the attraction for families and children to be able to play in the open fields. Under new ownership in the 1980s, a designated car park was established on the ridge and furrow field. Over 200 trees were planted in the 1980s which now provide a tranquil backdrop to the Mill as well as creating habitat for the associated wildlife. The car park and camp site were taken into the National Trust ownership in 1998. This now provides a valuable parking space for visitors to the village.





- The triangle at the crossroads of Huntingdon Road and A1123 is known locally as The Splash. Historically this green space has been used for agricultural purposes. It now provides an important visual amenity for the village entrance with its copse of trees. It is planned to be a community space which will include the planting of fruit trees to make a community orchard. The original Splash pond is important in managing the potential flood risk from the ditch nearby.



- Splash Lane - the verge on the left hand side as you travel up Splash Lane from the A1123 must be sensitively managed and will be planted with trees and shrubs to screen the housing as you approach the village from the west. The verge further up on the right-hand side is also important and needs to be managed as it is on the edge of the countryside and should the rural part of the village.











- Corner of Leslie Green Road and Meadow Lane the verge from Brookside up Leslie Green Road on the right-hand side is important for the trees, shrub cover and needs to be managed for wildlife.





- In front of Manor Close the two areas of green space either side of Manor Close entrance provide a green space to allow trees and bulbs to grow.

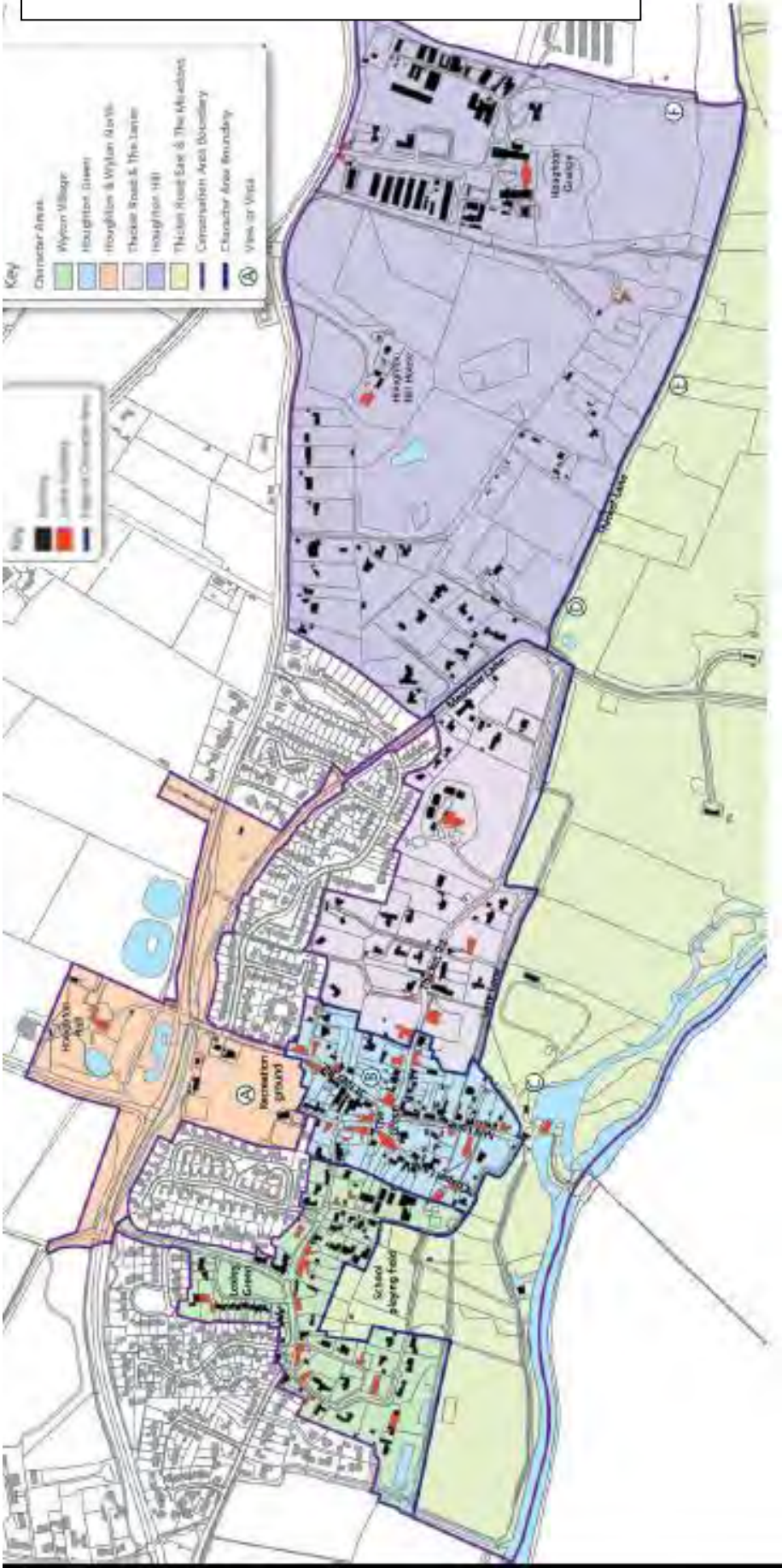


### Appendix 3 – Community Action plan

The following list of actions have arisen out of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process:

Action	Lead body	Timescale
Time Bank	Houghton & Wyton Parish Council	Short - Medium
Bus Stops	Houghton & Wyton Parish Council	Medium
Review access across the A1123	Houghton & Wyton Parish Council	Medium
Review pedestrian access from Houghton Hill across the Back Brook towards home Farm Road	Parish Council and residents	medium
To monitor ongoing usage and requirement of community buildings	Houghton & Wyton Parish Council	Medium
The verges and greens will need to be subject to a separate management plan with relevant authority/landowner	Houghton and Wyton Parish Council	Short- medium

# Appendix 4 Listed buildings



- **1, the Green**  
Grade II\*  
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **1,2 and 3, Chapel Lane**  
Grade II  
1 Chapel Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **3, the Lanes**  
Grade II  
The Lanes, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Allanby Cottage**  
Grade II  
Thicket Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Beth Haccерem Dolly Peg Cottages Thatched Cottages**  
Grade II  
Mill Street, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Beth-haccерem 5**  
Grade DL  
9 Mill Street, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Black Horse Cottage**  
Grade II  
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Buckley House Thrae**  
Grade II  
Thicket Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Church of All Saints**  
Grade I  
5 Rectory Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Dovecote Magdalene House**  
Grade II  
9 Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Durley Cottage**  
Grade II  
Rectory Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **East Lodge to Houghton Poultry Research Station West Lodge to Houghton Poultry Research Station**  
Grade II  
Houghton Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Elder Cottage**  
Grade II  
St Ives Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Fernleigh Small House**  
Grade II  
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Glebe Cottage**  
Grade II  
9 Mill Street, Houghton, Cambridgeshire

- **Holme Cottage**  
Grade II  
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Houghton Bury**  
Grade II  
Thicket Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Houghton Hill House**  
Grade II  
Houghton Hill Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Houghton Mill**  
Grade II\*  
Mill Street, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Houghton Poultry Research Station**  
Grade II  
Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **K6 Telephone Kiosk by Clock Tower**  
Grade II  
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Ladymeere**  
Grade II  
Houghton Hill Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Little Dormers**  
Grade II  
Houghton and Wyton
- **Manor Farmhouse**  
Grade II\*  
St Ives Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Manor Farmhouse**  
Grade II  
Loxley Green, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **May Cottage**  
Grade II  
4 St Ives Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Memorial Shelter and Clock Tower**  
Grade II  
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Mill House**  
Grade II  
Houghton Hill Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Millers Meade**  
Grade II  
Houghton and Wyton
- **Monument to Potto Brown**  
Grade II  
Mill Street, Houghton, Cambridgeshire



- **Parish Church of St Mary**  
Grade II  
9 Mill Street, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Provender House Scrivener's Foodstore**  
Grade II  
1 Chapel Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Riverside**  
Grade II  
9 Mill Street, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Rose Cottage**  
Grade II  
Thicket Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Schae**  
Grade II  
5 Rectory Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Silver Birches**  
Grade II  
St Ives Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Soma House Wayside**  
Grade II  
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Stuart Cottage**  
Grade II  
9 Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Stuart House**  
Grade II  
1 St Margarets Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Sweet Briar**  
Grade II  
Thicket Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Thatched Barn at Rectory Farm**  
Grade II  
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Thatched White Cottage**  
Grade II  
Green Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **The Barn**  
Grade II  
Rectory Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **The Cedars**  
Grade II  
Thicket Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **The Elms**  
Grade II  
Houghton Hill Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire

- **The Homestead**  
Grade II  
Green Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **The Lindens**  
Grade II  
Chapel Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **The Manor**  
Grade II  
Thicket Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **The Old Rectory**  
Grade II  
Mere Way, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **The Old Rectory**  
Grade II  
6 Rectory Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Three Horse Shoes Public House**  
Grade II  
2 Thicket Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Three Jolly Butchers Public House**  
Grade II  
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Tun Cottage**  
Grade II  
The Lanes, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **United Reform Chapel**  
Grade II  
Chapel Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Village Pump**  
Grade II  
1 Mill Street, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Walden House**  
Grade II  
Laughton's Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **West End Cottage**  
Grade II  
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **White Cottage**  
Grade II  
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire

## **PART B - COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS**

### **Non-planning issues**

(This does not form part of the statutory development plan – it contains community aspirations and Parish Council ambitions that cannot be included in policies in the Neighbourhood Plan)

#### **Community Right to Bid**

The Community Right to Bid (Assets of Community Value in legislation) is one of a number of new rights introduced in the Localism Act 2011.

The Community Right to Bid allows communities and parish councils to nominate buildings or land for listing by Huntingdonshire District Council as an asset of community value. An asset can be listed if its principal use furthers (or has recently furthered) their community's social well-being or social interests (which include cultural, sporting or recreational interests) and is likely to do so in the future.

When an owner of an asset that is on the list of assets of community value wishes to sell building or land, a moratorium on the sale (of up to six months) may be invoked, providing local community groups with a chance to raise finance, develop a business plan and make a bid to buy the asset on the open market.

Houghton and Wyton has currently listed the following:

- The Three Horseshoes Inn, The Green, Houghton
- The Green, Hill Estate, Houghton
- The Green, Loxley Green, Wyton
- Ye Olde Village Shop

The Neighbourhood Plan survey findings identified the issues that are important to the local community. Some of the issues identified were non-planning issues and so cannot be included in the main body of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, these issues are important to local people. To show the community that their comments have been taken into account and will be addressed by the Parish Council, all non-planning issues are included in this section.

#### **Non planning objectives**

1. To use developer contributions for community infrastructure within the local community to address impacts arising from growth.
2. To consider actions to address transport-related issues such as traffic flows (both car and non car), parking and safety within the parish.
3. To encourage retailing of locally produced farm produce.
4. To encourage the development of existing sites with already approved planning permissions (Houghton Grange & Beers Garage site) to best meet the needs of the local community.

## **Community infrastructure**

- 13.5 Huntingdonshire District Council has a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in place. New development within the district will pay the relevant CIL charge and the funding pot will be used to address infrastructure needs. Of these proceeds raised within the parish, 25% will be given directly to Houghton and Wyton Parish to spend on addressing the impacts of growth. Whilst growth is not expected to be significant and therefore proceeds from CIL relatively low, it is important to prioritise this spending on particular issues.
- 13.6 The Parish Council will use CIL receipts to address the infrastructure impacts arising from growth. Priorities for infrastructure expenditure will be reviewed regularly and will be subject to change. These include:
- A traffic survey to address traffic issues in the parish and the village.
  - Creation of a plan to improve the traffic flows, parking and appearance of the village centre.
  - Provision of a site for a new non-vehicular river crossing.
  - Replacement of existing unsuitable infrastructure items with items suitable for a rural environment including bus shelters, street lights, rubbish bins, public signs (including information signs) and public seating.
  - Pedestrian/bridleway route between Houghton Hill to Meadow Lane giving access to Home Farm Road – across the Back Brook.
- 13.7 The Parish Council will work closely with all infrastructure providers to develop and deliver the relevant infrastructure
- 13.8 Priorities for infrastructure spending will be reviewed regularly by the Parish Council
- 13.9 Some of the infrastructure projects require cooperation with the neighbouring parishes and **partners It is the Parish Council's intention that through the Neighbourhood Plan it will continue to work with its neighbours and partners on the infrastructure projects.**

## 14 Traffic and transport

- 14.1 The Neighbourhood Plan process identified a number of transport-related issues. In particular, there are issues of traffic flow through the village and parking at the village green which it is considered would benefit from a comprehensive transport study. The funding of this has been identified detail to be found in Part B , Community Aspirations.)
- 14.2 However, there are other matters which relate to highway safety (pertaining to access from new development), parking at new developments and access by non-car modes. When there is any development of the connecting infrastructure within the parish, including roads, footpaths, cycle-ways, bridleways and towpaths, then all aspects relating to safety of the user(s) will be a prime consideration. In particular the dimensions, type of construction and surfacing, and nature of its intended use, will be assessed to ensure the safety of any user.

### Highway safety – access from new development

- 14.3 The nature of the rural roads, even very close to the village, is such that they can be quite dangerous by nature of their size and the number of blind bends. This is exacerbated by the significant levels of traffic that use the main routes surrounding the village, specifically the A1123, A141 and B1090.
- 14.4 It is therefore particularly important that new development which will access these busy routes is appropriate in terms of ensuring the safety of traffic. The creation of new additional access points is generally considered to increase risks to traffic safety. If new development has the opportunity to replace an existing informal access point with a new formal access point, **then this is to be encouraged. A 'formal' access point is one that provides an officially adopted method of access onto a public highway as opposed to informal access provided by, for example, a farm track.**
- 14.5 Furthermore, given the additional traffic using these roads, accidents and casualties are often observed to increase when buildings are located adjacent to the roads as opposed to being set back. In some cases, accidents have resulted in significant damage to buildings (and therefore also to the vehicles involved) because of their proximity to the highway. We will work with developers and the local authorities to ensure proposals for any new development site new buildings away from the highway. This will allow natural screening to address visual, noise and air pollution.
- 14.6 The existing trees, hedges and ditches act as a safety and – in the case of the trees and hedges – sound barrier between the road traffic and buildings. We will encourage these to be preserved rather than being removed and replaced with, for example, brick walls or wooden fences.
- 14.7 The A1123, A141 and B1090 are all through routes whose capacity and safety will be affected adversely by additional access points. Appropriate developments are encouraged by this Neighbourhood plan but the Parish Council will work to encourage any new developments requiring a new access point onto these roads and that go through and past the Parish to demonstrate the positive need for it in traffic terms, through modelling and analytical work, if they are to be taken forward. Furthermore we will seek evidence to demonstrate why the usage of an existing access point, even with improvement works, would not be more appropriate.

- 14.8 For developments fronting on to the A1123, A141 and B1090 roads, we will encourage new buildings to be positioned to maximise the potential of natural screening to minimise visual, noise and air pollution. This is also to protect the safety of road users along these routes.
- 14.9 The Parish Council will request that any trees, hedges or ditches along the edge of the roadsides to be preserved, except where provision for a new access point has to be made.



## **15 Retailing in the countryside**

- 15.1 The creation and expansion of rural businesses can contribute towards a prosperous rural economy. However, whilst promoting a strong rural economy, the NPPF also recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, which is a valuable asset. Retail development in the countryside, if not strictly controlled, can also run counter to the objectives of sustainable development, by creating additional journeys to rural locations. It is therefore desirable to restrict development to that which primarily supports the active maintenance of land in agricultural and other appropriate land based uses, such as farm shops primarily retailing produce at, and produced upon, their own holding.
- 15.2 In considering such development, the Parish Council will support proposals where a significant proportion of produce, in terms of turnover, would originate upon the farm holding where it would be sold and providing it does not have a detrimental impact on the viability of the existing shops in the village. It would wish to restrict produce, which does not originate upon the holding, for sustainability reasons. The Parish Council will seek to resist retail proposals in rural locations where the business case is not considered to justify such a location.

## 16 Existing development sites - parish needs & intentions

### Houghton Grange and Beers Garage Site

16.1 Houghton Grange is a significant asset within the parish. Located on the eastern edge of Houghton and Wyton village, the community wishes for it to be better incorporated into the village. This will enable it to serve the housing needs arising in the community.



16.2 The emerging Huntingdonshire Local Plan proposes land at St Ives West for a mixed use allocation (Proposed Allocation S11), including the land at Houghton Grange which is within the parish and closest to the village. However, the plans for Houghton Grange itself should respect its location within the parish.

16.3 Houghton Grange is a brownfield site incorporating an important listed building. Outline planning permission has been granted for up to 90 dwellings and it is considered that this provides the appropriate scale of growth to satisfy the housing needs of the parish and wider area over the plan period.

16.4 However, it is vital that this addresses the needs of the local community. The chapter on housing has identified that the predominant need is for smaller properties to address the needs of first time buyers and older people, as well as to provide for declining household sizes.

16.5 Therefore it is important that development at Houghton Grange provides a substantial proportion of smaller units. This would principally one and two bed properties, with two bed properties preferred as these provide more flexibility for occupiers as their needs change.

16.6 In particular, it is important that the needs of older people and those with disabilities are properly met 73% of respondents to the survey supported part of Houghton Grange to be a retirement community. The requirement to develop properties to Lifetime Homes standards will help to achieve this.

16.7 Development should also seek to provide an element of live/work units. They would provide potential for small businesses to continue to thrive in the parish.

16.8 In order to ensure that any proposals address the requirements of the local community, it is vital that they are properly planned. A step-by-step approach to the production of a coherent plan will help to achieve this. In the early stages, it is important that the community is involved

in shaping this plan and the principles that underpin it. This can only be achieved if there are events scheduled into its production which involve the community.

16.9 The intention of this section is to ensure that where live/work units are permitted, they do not give rise to unacceptable impacts on nearby residents.

16.10 Beers Garage Site is a brownfield development site in the heart of the village and conservation area. Whatever is constructed here will help define the character of the village for generations to come. It currently has outline planning permission for 4 terraced cottages with parking and gardens at the rear reflecting the adjacent Victorian terraced houses.

### **Houghton Grange**

16.11 In order to provide for the needs of the local community, proposals for residential development at Houghton Grange ideally shall provide the following:

- i. A balanced mix of high quality accommodation, with at least 40% of the properties being two- and one-bed properties (with two-bed properties preferred).
- ii. A number of self-build plots.
- iii. Live/work units, with the opportunity to provide for an incidental amount of financial and professional service (Class A2) or office/research/light industrial (Class B1) use. Such uses must not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the amenity of neighbouring residences.
- iv. Development to Lifetime Homes standards.

16.12 In order to ensure that any proposals meet the needs of the community, it is vital that the community is involved in establishing the principles of any plan. Community events and activities to inform this should be undertaken in conjunction with Huntingdonshire District Council and Houghton and Wyton Parish Council and should ensure extensive engagement with the local community in shaping the outputs.

### **Beers Garage Site**

16.13 To ensure the development of the Beers Site sits well in the character area this development needs to be one cohesive development of architectural merit and identity.

16.14 The community identified the need for a mixed development comprising:

- One- or two-bedroom properties to meet the need for the over 60s as 28% of village properties have single occupancy. Only 14 dwellings in the Parish have been built specifically for this age group and these were built in the 1970s.
- Community amenity to serve the parish and the 150,000+ visitors. This site provides **an ideal location to base a 'resource centre' which could comprise information about the village, village history and the Parish Office.**
- Further small and independent retail outlets sought by the residents.

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Houghton and Wyton Parish Council

# **Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015 - 2036**

## **Independent Examiner's Report**

By Ann Skippers BSc (Hons) Dip Mgmt (Open) PGC(TLHE)(Open) MRTPI FHEA FRSA AoU

14 December 2015

## Contents

	<b>Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Appointment of the independent examiner</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>The role of the independent examiner</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Compliance with matters other than the basic conditions</b>	<b>6</b>
	<i>Qualifying body</i>	6
	<i>Plan area</i>	6
	<i>Plan period</i>	6
	<i>Excluded development</i>	6
	<i>Development and use of land</i>	7
<b>5.0</b>	<b>The examination process</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Consultation</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Compliance with the basic conditions</b>	<b>9</b>
	<i>National policy and advice</i>	9
	<i>Sustainable development</i>	10
	<i>The development plan</i>	10
	<i>Emerging policy context</i>	11
	<i>European Union (EU) obligations</i>	11
	<i>Strategic Environmental Assessment</i>	12
	<i>Habitats Regulations Assessment</i>	14
	<i>European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)</i>	14
	<i>Other Directives</i>	14
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Detailed comments on the Plan and its policies</b>	<b>15</b>
	<i>General and introduction</i>	15
	<i>Local context</i>	16
	<i>Vision and Objectives</i>	17
	<i>Village limits/built up area</i>	19
	<i>Natural environment</i>	21
	<i>Tourism</i>	30
	<i>Community infrastructure</i>	31
	<i>Developer contributions for community infrastructure</i>	32
	<i>Traffic and transport</i>	32
	<i>Flood risk and change</i>	34
	<i>Business</i>	35
	<i>Housing</i>	37
	<i>Design of new development</i>	39
	<i>Existing development sites</i>	40
	<i>Monitoring and community action plan, Glossary and appendices</i>	41
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Conclusions and recommendations</b>	<b>43</b>
	<b>Appendices</b>	<b>44</b>



## Summary

I have been appointed as the independent examiner of the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan.

The Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan is the second neighbourhood plan to reach examination stage in Huntingdonshire. It has clearly been driven by a strong desire to protect the special character of the villages.

I have found it necessary to suggest a number of modifications to the Plan to ensure it meets the basic conditions and subject to those modifications I am satisfied that the Plan:

- Has regard to national policies and advice
- Contributes to the achievement of sustainable development
- Is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area
- Does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations and the European Convention of Human Rights and
- Meets all other requirements that I am obliged to examine.

I am therefore pleased to recommend that the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan can go forward to a referendum subject to the modifications I have suggested. However, it will be noted that there is a tension between two of the basic conditions and so I have also suggested that Huntingdonshire District Council reconsiders the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment if the Plan is modified in accordance with these recommendations.

In considering whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area I see no reason to alter or extend this area for the purpose of holding a referendum.

Ann Skippers  
Ann Skippers Planning  
14 December 2015

Ann Skippers Planning is an independent consultancy that provides professional support and training for local authorities, the private sector and community groups and specialises in troubleshooting, appeal work and neighbourhood planning.

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## 1.0 Introduction

This is the report of the independent examiner into the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan).

The Localism Act 2011 provides a welcome opportunity for communities to shape the future of the places where they live and work and to deliver the sustainable development they need. One way of achieving this is through the production of a neighbourhood plan.

The Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan is just the second neighbourhood plan in Huntingdonshire District to reach examination stage. The two villages lie side-by-side on the northern side of the River Great Ouse, about two miles west of St Ives and a similar distance from Huntingdon which lies to the west.

With a rich heritage including Houghton Mill, a traditional working water mill saved from demolition by local residents in the 1930s and the River Great Ouse and its meadows, the area is popular with visitors as well as residents.

## 2.0 Appointment of the independent examiner

I have been appointed by Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) with the agreement of the Parish Council, to undertake this independent examination.

I am independent of the qualifying body and the local authority. I have no interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan. I am a chartered town planner with over twenty-five years experience in planning and have worked in the public, private and academic sectors. Over the last two years I have examined a number of neighbourhood plans throughout England. I therefore have the appropriate qualifications and experience to carry out this independent examination.

## 3.0 The role of the independent examiner

The examiner is required to check<sup>1</sup> whether the neighbourhood plan:

- Has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body
- Has been prepared for an area that has been properly designated for such plan preparation

---

<sup>1</sup> Set out in paragraph 8 (1) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

- Meets the requirements to i) specify the period to which it has effect; ii) not include provision about excluded development; and iii) not relate to more than one neighbourhood area and that
- Its policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

The examiner must assess whether a neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions and other matters set out in paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

The basic conditions<sup>2</sup> are:

- Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan
- The making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development
- The making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority
- The making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, European Union (EU) obligations and
- Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plan.

Regulations 32 and 33 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) set out two basic conditions in addition to those set out in primary legislation and referred to in the paragraph above. These are:

- The making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site<sup>3</sup> or a European offshore marine site<sup>4</sup> either alone or in combination with other plans or projects
- Having regard to all material considerations, it is appropriate that the neighbourhood development order is made where the development described in an order proposal is Environmental Impact Assessment development (this is not applicable to this examination as it refers to orders).

The examiner must then make one of the following recommendations:

- The neighbourhood plan can proceed to a referendum on the basis it meets all the necessary legal requirements
- The neighbourhood plan can proceed to a referendum subject to modifications or

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<sup>2</sup> Set out in paragraph 8 (2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

<sup>3</sup> As defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012

<sup>4</sup> As defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007

- The neighbourhood plan should not proceed to a referendum on the basis it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

If the plan can proceed to a referendum with or without modifications, the examiner must also consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the neighbourhood plan area to which it relates.

If the plan goes forward to referendum and more than 50% of those voting vote in favour of the plan then it is made by the relevant local authority, in this case Huntingdonshire District Council. The plan then becomes part of the 'development plan' for the area and a statutory consideration in guiding future development and in the determination of planning applications within the plan area.

## **4.0 Compliance with matters other than the basic conditions**

I now check various matters set out above in section 3.0 of this report.

### **Qualifying body**

Houghton and Wyton Parish Council is the qualifying body able to lead preparation of a neighbourhood plan. This complies with this requirement.

### **Plan area**

The Plan covers the parish of Houghton and Wyton which is coterminous with the Parish Council administrative boundary. HDC approved the designation of the area on 19 December 2012. The Plan relates to this area and does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area and therefore complies with these requirements. Figure 1 on page 2 of the Plan shows the area.

### **Plan period**

The Plan covers a period of 21 years from 2015 – 2036. This time period appears on the front cover of the Plan and again in the Basic Conditions Statement, but paragraph 1.4 on page 1 of the Plan refers to 2014 – 2036. In the interests of consistency I recommend a modification later on in this report that brings these two dates in line with one other.

### **Excluded development**

The Plan does not include policies that relate to any of the categories of excluded development and therefore meets this requirement.

## Development and use of land

Policies in neighbourhood plans must relate to the development and use of land. Sometimes neighbourhood plans contain aspirational policies or projects that signal the community's priorities for the future of their local area, but are not related to the development and use of land. Where I consider a policy or proposal to fall within this category, I have recommended it be moved to a clearly differentiated and separate section or annex of the Plan or contained in a separate document. This is because wider community aspirations than those relating to development and use of land can be included in a neighbourhood plan, but non-land use matters should be clearly identifiable.<sup>5</sup> Subject to any such recommendations, this requirement can be satisfactorily met.

## 5.0 The examination process

It is useful to bear in mind that the examination of a neighbourhood plan is very different to the examination of a local plan.

The general rule of thumb is that the examination will take the form of written representations.<sup>6</sup> However, there are two circumstances when an examiner may consider it necessary to hold a hearing. These are where the examiner considers that it is necessary to ensure adequate examination of the issue or to ensure a person has a fair chance to put a case.

After consideration of the documentation and representations, I decided it was not necessary to hold a hearing.

I did however seek further written factual clarification of a number of issues. My queries addressed to both the Parish and District Councils are appended to this report. The responses I received from both Councils are of course a matter of public record. I have referred to these queries and the responses as appropriate throughout this report.

I am very grateful for the exemplary support and quick responses that the officers at HDC and representatives of the Parish have given me during the course of the examination.

I undertook an unaccompanied site visit to Houghton and Wyton and the surrounding area on 3 November 2015.

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<sup>5</sup> Paragraph 004 of Planning Practice Guidance

<sup>6</sup> Schedule 4B (9) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

## 6.0 Consultation

A Consultation Statement (CS) has been submitted. This details the engagement activities carried out which included two surveys, events and exhibitions. In addition articles in newspapers and a local magazine, radio features, posters and a website have kept residents up to date.

A summary results leaflet on the second survey, the Issues and Options survey has been included as Appendix E and given that the CS indicates that 645 responses were received to this survey, the leaflet is an eye catching and interesting way to capture and importantly feed back those responses to the community.

Targeted engagement with various consultees and those attending village groups such as the Baby and Toddler Group have helped to ensure that widespread engagement has taken place.

Interestingly, this has included engagement with visitors to the area as well as residents and local businesses through an initial vision survey.

The pre-submission draft of the Plan was published for seven weeks from 14 November 2014 to 3 January 2015, sensibly giving a little bit more time over the Christmas period. Statutory and non-statutory consultees were notified by email and local people were notified through a flyer delivered to every household and notices in the village. Two drop-in surgeries were held and as well as copies on the website, hard copies were made available from the Parish Council and the Post Office. This mix of notification and availability of both online and hard copy version of the draft Plan is to be welcomed.

The CS summarises the responses to the pre-submission consultation, but takes a rather minimalist approach in places in explaining how they have been addressed.

Following on from the pre-submission period, the submission Plan six week consultation period from 19 June 2015 to 31 July 2015.

This attracted a number of representations which I have taken into account in preparing this report.

A representation<sup>7</sup> on behalf of a local landowner suggests that the pre-submission period of consultation should be rerun as there is little evidence to suggest any consideration of sites beyond the village edges took place during the Plan's evolution and that the landowner in question has not been contacted. Another landowner<sup>8</sup> also feels that there has been insufficient contact with landowners. This is a great pity, not least because of the importance of the sites that both these landowners have interests in. Nevertheless there seems to have been a fairly comprehensive campaign in

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<sup>7</sup> Pegasus Planning

<sup>8</sup> Representation from Barford+co on behalf of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council



publicising the Plan and whilst more can always be done, on balance, there seems to have been adequate opportunity for interested parties including land owners, to participate.

A representation from St Ives Town Council indicated that their comments on the pre-submission version have not been included in Appendix G of the CS. The CS should contain details of the persons and bodies consulted, explain how they were consulted, summarise the main issues and concerns and describe how these have been considered and, where relevant, addressed. As a result I sought confirmation from the Parish Council that a) the CS met this requirement and b) that all those responding have been included in it. I have received satisfactory confirmation of these points.

Some representations offered support for the Plan. Others sought additions for instance the inclusion of Houghton Hill as a character area or more on affordable housing. It is not my role to add to or improve the Plan, but rather to consider the submitted Plan against the basic conditions. However, I feel sure that the qualifying body will carefully consider these suggestions and incorporate them as appropriate in any future versions of the Plan.

I have also specifically referred to some representations, as I have done here in this section, and sometimes identified the person or organisation making that representation. However, I have not referred to each and every representation in my report. Nevertheless each one has been considered carefully and I reassure everyone that I have taken all the representations received into account during the examination.

## **7.0 Compliance with the basic conditions**

### **National policy and advice**

The main document that sets out national planning policy is the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) published in 2012. In particular it explains that the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development will mean that neighbourhood plans should support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan and identify opportunities to use Neighbourhood Development Orders to enable developments that are consistent with the neighbourhood plan to proceed.<sup>9</sup>

The NPPF also makes it clear that neighbourhood plans should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. In other words neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. They

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<sup>9</sup> NPPF paras 14, 16

cannot promote less development than that set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.<sup>10</sup>

On 6 March 2014, the Government published a suite of planning practice guidance. This is an online resource available at [www.planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk). The planning guidance contains a wealth of information relating to neighbourhood planning and I have had regard to this in preparing this report. This is referred to as Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in this report.

The NPPF indicates that plans should provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency.<sup>11</sup>

PPG indicates that a policy should be clear and unambiguous<sup>12</sup> to enable a decision maker to apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. The guidance advises that policies should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence, reflecting and responding to both the context and the characteristics of the area.

### **Sustainable development**

A qualifying body must demonstrate how a neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF as a whole<sup>13</sup> constitutes the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice for planning. The Framework explains that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.<sup>14</sup>

### **The development plan**

The local planning authority for the area is Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC). The current development plan for the area and relevant to this examination consists of:

- The Core Strategy (adopted September 2009) which sets the spatial vision, objectives and strategic directions of growth to 2026 and
- Saved policies from the Local Plan 1995 and the Local Plan Alteration 2002.

The Core Strategy indicates that Huntingdonshire lies within the designated London/Stansted/Cambridge/Peterborough Growth Area and the southern part of the District lies in the Cambridge sub-region, but is still predominantly rural in character.

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<sup>10</sup> NPPF para 184

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid* para 17

<sup>12</sup> PPG para 041

<sup>13</sup> NPPF para 6 which indicates paras 18 – 219 of the NPPF constitutes the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid* para 7

## Emerging policy context

The District Council is currently producing a new Local Plan for the area. The Local Plan will cover the period up to 2036 and, once adopted, will replace all current parts of the development plan including the Core Strategy 2009 and the saved policies of the Local Plan 1995 and the Local Plan Alteration 2002.

According to HDC's website, following targeted consultation in January 2015, work is progressing on the local plan and it is expected that the pre-submission local plan will be finalised and out to public consultation in Autumn 2016. The Plan has usefully taken account of the emerging Local Plan.

A representation<sup>15</sup> points out that two proposals in the emerging Local Plan are of particular interest; one is SEL 3 which relates to about 254 hectares of land at Wyton airfield proposed for a mix of uses, but which lies outside the Plan area (although still with the potential for impacting upon the Plan area) and the other is SI 1.

In relation to SEL 3, a representation<sup>16</sup> considers that the Plan should acknowledge the strategic development at Wyton airfield and plan positively to support it including consideration of brownfield sites which are close by and fall within the Plan area. The Plan might well have taken the opportunity to address such issues, but its omission of doing so does not mean that the Plan as currently presented would not meet the basic conditions.

SI 1 St Ives West is a proposed allocation of some 47 hectares of land for a mix of uses to the west of St Ives in the Stage 3 consultation draft Local Plan to 2036 which was the last full public consultation version of the emerging Local Plan. The site has been extended to 54 hectares in the targeted consultation draft of January 2015. Part of the proposed allocation falls within the Plan area.

A representation<sup>17</sup> contends that the (neighbourhood) Plan should not proceed until there is an up to date adopted development plan on which the Plan can be based or tested against. Based on advice in PPG<sup>18</sup> and a judgment handed down in a judicial review,<sup>19</sup> it is widely accepted that a neighbourhood plan can be developed before or at the same time as the production of a local plan. I accept though that both the LPA and the qualifying body should work proactively together to minimise any conflicts.<sup>20</sup>

## European Union Obligations

A neighbourhood plan must be compatible with European Union (EU) obligations, as incorporated into United Kingdom law, in order to be legally compliant.

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<sup>15</sup> James Holden

<sup>16</sup> Pegasus Group

<sup>17</sup> Gladman Developments Ltd

<sup>18</sup> PPG para ref id 41-009-20140306

<sup>19</sup> Gladman Developments Ltd v Aylesbury Vale District Council [2014] EWHC 4323 (Admin)

<sup>20</sup> PPG para ref id 41-009-20140306

## Strategic Environmental Assessment

Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment is relevant. Its purpose is to provide a high level of protection of the environment by incorporating environmental considerations into the process of preparing plans and programmes. This Directive is commonly referred to as the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Directive. The Directive is transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

There is however no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan to have a Sustainability Appraisal or Assessment.

In relation to the SEA Directive, a screening exercise has been carried out by Huntingdonshire District Council dated February 2015 and concluded that the Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and that an environmental assessment would not be required.

Natural England<sup>21</sup> and English Heritage,<sup>22</sup> now known as Historic England, agreed with this conclusion. However, the Environment Agency (EA)<sup>23</sup> expressed concern over flooding and indicated that both a SEA and a Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) would be needed. After discussion, the EA agreed that if the Plan's scope was altered by including objectives and policies to avoid any additional less vulnerable, more vulnerable or highly vulnerable development in Flood Zones 2 and 3 as this would mean there would be significantly less flood risk to consider, then a SEA and Level 2 SFRA would "probably not be essential".<sup>24</sup> As these objectives and policies suggested by the EA would go beyond the stance of national policy, it appears that some lengths have been taken to avoid the need to undertake a SEA.

HDC has therefore concluded that a SEA is not needed provided appropriate amendments to the Plan are made. It appears that the submission plan (i.e. the version subject of this examination) incorporates such amendments and therefore by implication would seem not require a SEA based on the information before me.

However, representations from the Environment Agency, and indeed HDC, on various policies throughout the Plan suggest that various policies are changed from referring to "all vulnerable development" to more vulnerable and highly vulnerable to bring the policies in line with the NPPF.

The NPPF<sup>25</sup> sets out what PPG describes as strict tests to protect people and property from flooding.<sup>26</sup> It advocates a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development. Plans should be informed by an appropriate assessment of flood risk and ensure policies steer development to areas of lower flood risk as far as possible. Any

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<sup>21</sup> see response of 28 November 2014

<sup>22</sup> see response of 26 November 2014

<sup>23</sup> see response of 27 November 2014

<sup>24</sup> see email from EA of 12 February 2015

<sup>25</sup> NPPF Section 10

<sup>26</sup> PPG para ref id 7-001-20140306

development in an area at risk of flooding should be safe for its lifetime taking account of climate change impacts. Finally flood risk to and from the Plan area should be managed so that flood risk is not increased overall and any opportunities to reduce flood risk are taken through, for example, the inclusion of policies on sustainable drainage systems.

PPG<sup>27</sup> explains that the sequential test steers new development to Flood Zone 1 (areas with a low probability of flooding). Where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 1, the flood risk vulnerability of land uses should be taken into account and sites in Flood Zone 2 (medium probability of flooding) should be considered, applying an exception test if necessary. Only if there are no sites in Flood Zones 1 or 2 should Zone 3 (high probability of flooding) be considered taking into account the vulnerability of land uses and applying the exception test if required. Land uses are categorised according to their vulnerability and further tables 'map' those categories against the flood zones to see where development is appropriate and where it should not be permitted.

If the comments from the EA and HDC (received as representations on the submission plan) were acted upon and these changes made, this would appear, on the face of it, to be at odds with the previous advice given by the EA referred to above in relation to whether a SEA is required or not. There is, by the way, no implied criticism of either organisation in my comments.

I have considered this issue carefully at length. I take the view that the basic condition of most relevance to this discussion is whether it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State. In relation to flooding, a number of policies in the Plan as it is currently presented do go beyond the stance taken in the NPPF on flooding.

Whilst they do so on the basis of specific advice from the EA, this advice has been given in relation to the need for a SEA rather than on the basis of any evidence that the requirements of national policy on flooding need to be exceeded in this specific locality.

Therefore I judge it to be appropriate for me to recommend modifications to bring the objectives and policies on flooding in the Plan in line with the NPPF. Whilst then I have reached the view that the submitted Plan can be said to be compatible with EU obligations in relation to the need for a SEA (as it accords with EA advice given at the screening stage), if the recommendations of this examination report were to be accepted, this then in my view would mean that it would be prudent for the local planning authority to explore again the question of whether a SEA be needed.

In reaching this view, I am also mindful that ultimately PPG advises that it is the responsibility of the local planning authority to decide whether the Plan is compatible with EU obligations.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> PPG para ref id 7-019-20140306

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid* ref id 11-032-20140306

It is also clear from the representations from the EA that there would be benefit in obtaining more and up to date information about flood risk. For me this illustrates well the circumstance envisaged by PPG<sup>29</sup> whereby the reasoning and evidence that informs the (emerging) Local Plan process may be relevant to the development of a neighbourhood plan and a collaborative approach between the bodies concerned should be taken.

### **Habitats Regulations Assessment**

Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora known as the Habitats Directive aims to protect and improve Europe's most important habitats and species. It identifies whether a plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. If a plan is considered to be likely to have a significant effect on a European site then an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan for that site, in view of the site's conservation objectives, must be undertaken.<sup>30</sup> If it is considered that an appropriate assessment would be required, then a SEA will also usually be needed.

A number of European sites namely the Portholme Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Ouse Washes SAC, Ouse Washes Special Protection Area and Ramsar site, Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site are located within 15km of the neighbourhood plan area.

HDC concludes in their screening report of February 2015 that an appropriate assessment is not required. Natural England agree that the Plan, alone and in combination with other relevant plans, is unlikely to have a significant effect on the European sites.<sup>31</sup>

### **European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)**

The Plan has regard to fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the ECHR and complies with the Human Rights Act 1998. There is nothing in the Plan that leads me to conclude there is any breach of the Convention or that the Plan is otherwise incompatible with it.

### **Other Directives**

I am not aware of any other European Directives which apply to this particular neighbourhood plan and in the absence of any substantive evidence to the contrary, I am satisfied that the Plan is compatible with EU obligations.

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<sup>29</sup> PPG para ref id 41-009-20140306

<sup>30</sup> NPPF para ref id 11-029-20150209

<sup>31</sup> Natural England email of 28 November 2014



## 8.0 Detailed comments on the Plan and its policies

In this section I consider the Plan and its policies against the basic conditions. Where I recommend modifications in this report they appear in **bold text**. Where I have suggested specific changes to the wording of the policies or new wording these appear in **bold italics**.

### General

The Plan is presented simply and clearly and is well written. It is an inviting document with attractive photographs that give a real flavour of the Parish. The layout used is easy to follow and the Plan is simple to navigate with a useful detailed contents page and index of policies.

However, I found some of the figures very hard to read and decipher and I note that HDC has offered to provide maps. Given that the Plan will be used in determining planning applications, it is critical that any maps, plans and figures in the Plan are easily read and interpreted. This is a helpful offer from HDC and one that I would urge the Parish Council to accept.

### 1 Introduction

This section sets the scene for the Plan well explaining what the purpose of the Plan and where it fits into the hierarchy of planning documents.

The explanation in paragraph 1.10 and the blue box on 'how to read this document' on page 2 which provide very clear and succinct guidance and are very useful to include in the Plan.

There are one or two minor issues that would benefit from revision in the interests of accuracy, as some provisions of the Localism Act came into effect in 2011, and in the interests of consistency, as the front cover of the Plan highlights that the Plan period commences in 2015 rather than 2014 as I have already highlighted.

In addition paragraph 1.11 and the contents page whilst very welcome in principle do not tie up with the section headings or numbers in the submission version of the Plan.

Finally, paragraph 1.11 refers to site specific allocations for new development whereas paragraph 1.5 states the Plan does not allocate sites. Indeed the Plan contains some other references to "allocated sites" throughout, but the Plan itself does not allocate any sites. As a result I sought clarification on this point from the Parish Council who confirm that any mention of allocated sites is an oversight as whilst a call for sites was made, a decision was taken before the pre-submission version of the Plan not to include

any allocations. In the interests of consistency and accuracy, these minor and easily made glitches should be remedied.

I therefore recommend the following modifications:

- **Change the date from “April 2012” to “2011” at the end of paragraph 1.1 on page 1**
- **Change the date from “2014” to “2015” in paragraph 1.4**
- **Ensure that the contents page, section headings and numbers as well as figures together with paragraph 1.11 on page 3 are consistent and tie up with each other and accurately reflect the Plan’s contents**
- **Remove any references throughout the Plan to allocated sites or similar as appropriate** (please note that this recommended modification is not repeated at every instance and so applies to the Plan as a whole)

## 2 Local context

This is a very interesting and informative section which provides context on the Parish and highlights some of the key issues of importance and concern to the community.

It usefully contains a plan of the Conservation Area on page 6. However, I found this quite hard to read and therefore I recommend that this useful and important plan is included at a larger scale and that the Conservation Area boundary is better defined for clarity. Given that the Plan indicates the Conservation Area has recently been enlarged, the most up to date plan should, of course, be included.

Following my query on the latest position for a proposal for the Great Ouse Valley and Washes to become an Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB) referred to in paragraph 2.22 of the Plan, this paragraph should be deleted or be moved to a separate aspirational section of the Plan or to a separate document. This is because the most recent advice from Natural England is that this aspiration is unlikely to be considered until 2018/19. Therefore in the interests of accuracy and to avoid the Plan being open to accusations of being misleading, this should not be included as it is currently presented in the Plan.

I note that there are a number of references throughout the Plan to the proposed AONB and all references should be deleted for the reasons given above.

There is also a need to update the contents of paragraph 2.29; it might be useful to consider how this part of the Plan can be ‘future proofed’ so that it does not become out of date quickly. For instance this paragraph could explain the successes of the 2013, 2014 and, hopefully 2015, music festivals, and then indicate it is hoped that more will be held in the future.

Paragraph 2.30 on page 8 refers to the “arduous” and “dangerous” nature of the access to and from the village; this may well be the case, but unless there is evidence to support these claims they are probably best expressed as a perception or opinion. For instance the paragraph could be rephrased to indicate that “the community feels...” or similar.

Paragraph 2.38 on page 10 repeats the information given in an earlier paragraph (2.6 on page 4). Given that paragraph 2.6 sits well and contains a little more information, I suggest that paragraph 2.38 is deleted; either way the repetition should be removed. A quick general check of the Plan before preparing the referendum version with a view to removing any repetitious elements may well be of benefit.

I therefore recommend the following modifications:

- **Improve the clarity of Figure 2 on page 6 and ensure it is the most up to date plan of the Conservation Area**
- **Delete paragraph 2.22 or revise and update the wording and move this issue to a separate aspirations section or document**
- **Remove all other references to the proposed AONB throughout the Plan** (please note that this recommended modification is not repeated at every instance and so applies to the Plan as a whole)
- **Update paragraph 2.29 on page 8**
- **Make it clear in paragraph 2.30 on page 8 that the claims about the access are opinions or add in the evidence which supports these claims**
- **Delete paragraph 2.38 on page 10 or ensure that any repetition is removed between this paragraph and earlier ones**

### 3 Vision and objectives

Starting off with eleven challenges for the Parish, the Plan articulates an unusual, original and clearly locally driven vision which is to be welcomed. The vision is:

“We are an active, thriving, dynamic and cohesive community; proud to live in this special landscape which we are keen to share with others.”

The vision is then further developed in subsequent paragraphs which explain the key ways in which the vision might be achieved.

The only paragraph that gives me some concern is paragraph 3.8 on page 13. This states that “as an infill village for housing, our needs will be for a limited number of quality designed houses aimed at both the younger and older members of the

community.”. It seems to me that this tries to set policy in this section and that it might be premature to do this in this part of the Plan; therefore I recommend this paragraph be deleted.

This section then articulates 17 objectives relating each one to the relevant policy in the Plan. I have the following comments on the objectives.

Objective 1 seeks to restrict any further loss of grazing or agricultural land. The NPPF supports a prosperous rural economy and promotes the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses. It also indicates that whilst the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land should be taken into account, if development of agricultural land is necessary then areas of poorer quality land should be used in preference to land of a higher quality.<sup>32</sup> This objective then is too restrictive as it does not take account of the possibility of diversification (which is recognised in objective 9) or the quality of the land concerned. Therefore it should be modified to address this.

I note that Natural England particularly supports objectives 1 (notwithstanding my comments above), 4 and 5.

Objective 17 refers to flooding. I note that there is support from the Environment Agency for this particular objective. Given the issue over flooding that has been rehearsed already in my report, this objective should be worded to be more flexible.

Objective 13 refers to Houghton Grange; I have recommended that the section of the Plan that relates to Houghton Grange be deleted or moved to a clearly identified and separate aspirational section of the Plan or a separate document. Therefore objective 13 should be deleted.

I also notice a small typo in paragraph 3.1: it should be “the” instead of “he” in the last bullet point challenge.

A representation<sup>33</sup> queries the accuracy of visitor numbers quoted in paragraph 3.11. Whilst I do not have any evidence before me whether the figure cited is accurate or not, and I note it is an estimate, it is important that information contained within the Plan is accurate and does not mislead. Therefore this should be checked and modifications made as appropriate.

The following modifications are therefore recommended to ensure the Plan meets the basic conditions:

- **Delete paragraph 3.8 on page 13**

**(modifications continued on next page)**

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<sup>32</sup> NPPF paras 28 and 112

<sup>33</sup> Representation from HDC

- **Reword objective 1 to read: “To protect and enhance the green spaces of importance within the parish and to *resist the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land wherever possible.*”**
- **Delete objective 13 (consequential amendments will be needed)**
- **Reword objective 17 to read: “To steer new development to areas of lower flood risk as far as possible.”**
- **Correct typo in paragraph 3.1; “the” instead of “he”**
- **Check the figure of 150,000 visitors cited in paragraph 3.11 for accuracy and make any necessary changes**

#### 4 Village limits/built up area

##### Policy HWNP1

This policy introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the built up area of Houghton and Wyton. An “indicative” built up area is shown on Figure 3 on page 17 (Incorrectly referred to as Figure 4.1 in paragraph 4.5 incidentally). I sought to clarify whether it was the intention of the qualifying body to define their own built-up area boundary in the Plan, whether a built-up area boundary is defined in any adopted development plan and whether the emerging Local Plan seeks to propose such an area and if so, the differences, if any, between these areas.

The Parish Council advise that they do seek to define a built up area; indeed this is what is indicated in the Basic Conditions Statement.

I am advised that village limits were defined in the Local Plan 1995 and that the policies in that Local Plan relating to village limits remain extant. The Core Strategy<sup>34</sup> takes the approach of defining what might constitute a built up area in words rather than defining a boundary on a plan. This approach seems to be continued in the current iteration of the emerging Local Plan which would have a written definition of what the built up area is and rely on a case by case interpretation.

Therefore paragraph 4.2 seems incorrectly to state that the village limits have been retained in the Core Strategy.

There is no reason why a neighbourhood plan cannot define its own built up area boundary. In this case however, that approach differs from the one taken in the development plan. In these circumstances I would expect to find some supporting evidence or at least explanation of how the built up area has been defined in relation to

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<sup>34</sup> Core Strategy para 5.15

the strategic approach and why it has been defined as it has in this locality. Paragraph 4.5 attempts to do this but only in a very limited way.

Whilst representations variously advise me that the built up area boundary is too generous or overly restrictive, HDC, rightly I think, consider that defining a boundary might be counterproductive.

From my observations at my site visit, the built up area boundary shown on Figure 3 did not make much sense to me insofar it did not seem to me to form an obvious boundary in the absence of any solid explanation for it. In addition the inclusion of an open area to the west of Houghton Grange seemed to me to be at odds with the community's desire to ensure separation between Houghton and St Ives. Given that PPG<sup>35</sup> advises that proportionate and robust evidence should support the choices made and the approach taken, I am not convinced that this policy is underpinned satisfactorily by evidence.

The supporting text to the policy quotes from the Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan. Paragraph 4.3 incorrectly quotes from paragraph 5.15 of the Core Strategy. Whilst the definitions between the two are not necessarily at odds with each other, they do differ.

In addition given that the supporting text quotes extensively from an emerging Local Plan there is no guarantee that the emerging Local Plan will remain intact or be adopted in its current form. Whilst I consider it good practice for the Plan to have taken account of emerging policy, it is a harder argument for it to rely on something that may well change or even be deleted.

Furthermore when I consider the wording of the policy, it introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the built up area, but the NPPF's presumption applies everywhere and is not qualified or restricted in that way and so the policy takes a narrower approach than national policy.

Outside the built up area i.e. the countryside, rural activities and quiet tourism are supported by the policy, but there is little to define what type of activities this phrase might or might not include which gives rise to some uncertainty. In addition the NPPF's support for a prosperous rural economy does not differentiate between quiet and noisy tourism for example although I accept the NPPF supports tourism which respects the character of the countryside and that this could arguably be quiet tourism.

The issue of flooding has already been rehearsed earlier in this report and I do not intend to discuss it at every juncture. However, paragraph 4.6 does not appear to reflect PPG accurately.

Therefore given the lack of evidence for this policy and the very limited explanation of the built up area boundary, its unclear definition on the map and the stance of the

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<sup>35</sup> PPG para ref id 41-040-20140306

policy itself, in order for the basic conditions to be met, I recommend deletion of the policy.

- **Delete Policy HWNP1 and its supporting text**

## 5 Natural environment

This section contains a number of figures identifying various sites and areas that subsequent policies refer to.

Figure 4 on page 19 identifies a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and County Wildlife Sites (CWS). Unfortunately I find this figure hard to read and to distinguish between the different designations. In the interests of clarity, this figure should be made more legible by being included at a larger scale and with different and clearer site designations. There is no need to include the Conservation Area designation on this figure.

Figures 5 and 6 on pages 19 and 20 refer to common land. Common land has a particular meaning and the law restricts the kinds of activities that can be carried out on commons. Following my query about these two areas, confirmation has been given to me that both areas are common land. It is therefore not necessary for these areas to be specifically identified or included in the policies and therefore these two figures should be deleted.

- **Make Figure 4 more legible and simpler**
- **Delete Figures 5 and 6 showing common land**

## Policy HWNP2

This policy seeks to do two things; it seeks to resist development that would have a harmful impact on the SSSI, CWSs and common land and to enhance and extend the wildlife sites and habitats to create better connectivity between them. I have already referred to the two areas of common land.

The conservation of biodiversity makes a significant contribution to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF and other guidance on designated sites and protected species distinguishes between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites so that protection is commensurate with their status and appropriate weight is given to their importance and wider contribution.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> NPPF para 113



The first element of the policy seeks to resist development that would have an adverse impact on these three categories of sites except in exceptional circumstances. This has two implications; firstly the policy does not offer any protection for biodiversity other than on the three areas of land specified and secondly, whilst the NPPF refers to exceptional circumstances<sup>37</sup> it does so in relation to major development in national parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, none of which apply to this Plan area. In relation to SSSIs, the NPPF<sup>38</sup> does refer to exceptions but then goes on to qualify that. The policy in introducing this exception to CWSs and common land goes beyond the stance national policy takes. Therefore the policy does not adequately recognise the hierarchy of designated sites or the principles in the NPPF sufficiently.

The second element of the policy seeks to support development that would enhance the habitats and extend the wildlife sites and enhance connectivity. Whilst on the face of it this is a positive stance to take, the effect of it might be to support otherwise unwanted development if it facilitated these aims and this is probably not the intention of the policy. The intention of the policy has regard to the NPPF in that impacts on biodiversity should be minimised and net gains should be provided wherever possible.

Therefore to ensure that regard is given to the NPPF and that the policy will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, it is recommended that the policy be reworded.

- **Policy HWNP2 should be reworded as follows:**

***“All new development should protect and, wherever possible, enhance biodiversity and establish, enhance or extend ecological corridors and the connectivity between them.***

***Development on land within or outside a SSSI likely to have an adverse effect on a SSSI interest, either individually or cumulatively, should not normally be permitted. Where an adverse effect is likely, permission should only be granted where the benefits of the development, at this site, clearly outweigh both the impacts that it is likely to have on the site’s features and any wider impacts on the national network of SSSIs.”***

- **Consequential amendments to the supporting text will be necessary**

### **Policy HWNP3**

Coalescence between settlements is a recognised planning issue. It is important to prevent neighbouring settlements merging into one another and for local identity and distinctiveness to be reinforced and promoted. The Plan seeks to identify a “local settlement gap” on the east of the Plan area and to the west of St Ives. It identifies the

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<sup>37</sup> NPPF para 116

<sup>38</sup> NPPF para 118

proposed gap clearly on Figure 7 on page 22. The effect of the policy would be to protect the specific area or feature of the land in question although I recognise the policy is carefully worded so as not to exclude development per se, it sits within a section titled “natural environment”. This is clearly a matter of great importance to the local community and one that has a long history.

My request for clarification included providing me with a copy of the High Court judgment<sup>39</sup> and the HDC Officer Position Statement in relation to St Ives West dated 29 September 2014.

Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy (as the most recent adopted plan for the area) identifies that, as part of the St Ives Spatial Planning Area, provision will be made in the following “general” location for homes “in a significant greenfield development to the west of the town” i.e. St Ives. The precise area is not identified on any plan, but a directional arrow on a map shows the direction of growth. The principle then of development in this general location is established by the Core Strategy, but no further detail has emerged. The Court case referred to above quashed a subsequently produced urban design framework for the area. The Officer Position Statement explains that decisions about which specific parcels of land should be developed “should be determined through the full Local Plan process”.

The emerging Local Plan, referred to in the supporting text, seeks to allocate St Ives West (Policy S1 1) for a mix of uses. The land identified as the proposed settlement gap clearly falls within this proposed allocation and is the easternmost part of the proposed allocation that falls within the Parish following changes to the Parish boundary a few years ago.

The basic conditions refer to the need for neighbourhood plans to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan. I consider Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy to be such a policy and HDC have confirmed that this is their view too. I consider Policy CS2 to be of most relevance to this discussion, but have also taken Local Plan 1995 Policy En15 which deals with open spaces and gaps for protection into account as the notation for that policy shown on the proposals map extends partway along the proposed local settlement gap in the Plan.

HDC rightly point out that the Core Strategy predates the NPPF. I consider that the Core Strategy and Policy CS2 have regard to the NPPF and are consistent with it.

A balance must be struck between the Government’s support for localism and its drive to provide more housing. I have carefully considered this issue and have, on balance, reached the conclusion that the identification of a proposed gap cannot be considered to meet the basic conditions.

This is for a number of reasons. First of all I do not consider the proposal to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policy CS2. PPG<sup>40</sup> sheds light on what is meant

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<sup>39</sup> [2013] EWHC 1476 (Admin)

<sup>40</sup> PPG para ref id 41-074-20140306

by “general conformity”; it is whether the neighbourhood plan policy or proposal supports and upholds the general principle that the strategic policy is concerned with, the degree of conflict if any between the neighbourhood plan policy or proposal and the strategic policy, whether the neighbourhood plan provides an additional level of detail or a distinct local approach without undermining that policy and the rationale for the approach taken and the evidence to justify that approach.

In this case although the Core Strategy policy does not specify or allocate a site, the designation of the gap, land known as the BBSRC field, would not uphold the general principle in Core Strategy Policy CS2. Therefore designation of the gap would prevent, or, at the very least, make it harder for the District Council to plan for the strategic needs of the District, particularly given various constraints including flooding in the area. As a result I consider the proposed gap cannot be said to be in general conformity with the relevant strategic policies in the development plan or pay sufficient regard to national policy and advice or would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

A representation<sup>41</sup> on behalf of the landowner also goes further by explaining that the BBSRC field, the gap, is an essential part of the delivery not only of Core Strategy Policy CS2, but also of Policy CS9 which deals with strategic green infrastructure enhancement.

This proposal does not provide an additional level of detail or a distinct local approach which does not undermine the strategic policies.

However, I do recognise and fully accept that it is important to ensure that the village does not merge with St Ives. I noted the desire to ensure separation between the two settlements in my comments on Policy HWNP1 earlier in this report. Whilst there is little evidence in the Plan to support the identification of the BBSRC field as a settlement gap as, for example, a feature of the landscape or for its visual importance and so on (and this would have been particularly helpful given that part of the proposed gap contains various buildings on it which I understand have been used for research and development in the past), it seems to me that the intent of the policy can be supported. The supporting text<sup>42</sup> describes this as “to protect the village character and distinctiveness by retaining and enhancing a clear and obvious open land gap between the village and the neighbouring town of St Ives”.

I therefore consider that whilst the designation of the proposed gap on a map would not support the strategic development needs of the District, would pay insufficient regard to the NPPF and would undermine the potential to achieve sustainable development, a more general policy that might be termed an ‘anti-coalescence’ policy would be regarded as appropriate and in line with the basic conditions.

As a result I recommend that Figure 7 identifying a specific area of land is deleted and Policy HWNP3 be reworded. These modifications are to be found on the next page.

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<sup>41</sup> Barford+co on behalf of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council

<sup>42</sup> Page 21 of the Plan

- Delete Figure 7 on page 22
- Reword Policy HWNP 3 as follows:

***“Development proposals should respect the individual and distinct identities of the village of Houghton and the town of St Ives. Development will not be permitted if, individually or cumulatively, it would result in the loss of the visual and physical separation of these two settlements or lead to their coalescence.”***

## Policy HWNP4

This policy seeks to designate three areas of Local Green Space (LGS). These are shown on Figure 8 on page 23 of the Plan. Once again I personally find it hard to distinguish the extent of the areas from the small scale of the figure and the lack of distinctive colours used and this should be remedied in the interests of clarity. In addition the name of each area on Figure 8 does not coincide with descriptions of each area that follow. This should also be remedied in the interests of clarity.

The NPPF<sup>43</sup> is clear that local communities have the opportunity of designating LGS, but that such a designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. It lists a number of criteria that such a designation needs to meet. It further states that identifying land should be consistent with local planning of sustainable development.

Taking each of the three areas in turn: the playing field or recreation ground is in the heart of the village, close to the community it serves. The supporting text explains that a number of regular activities take place there as well as events. It is described as a meeting place and is clearly special to the local community and meets the requirements of the designation.

The Elms Gardens is described as a natural setting to The Elms, a large private building that appears to have been converted into apartments. It is renowned for its snowdrops and aconites and other flora and fauna and has some historical significance.

A number of representations point out that the Gardens are in private ownership and there is no public access. PPG<sup>44</sup> advises that land without public access can be considered and gives the example of green areas valued for their wildlife, historic significance and so on. Such a designation does not confer any rights of public access over what exists at present. Nevertheless the policy for managing development within a LGS should be consistent with policy for Green Belts.

I consider that the Plan does not provide sufficient demonstration of why the Elms is special to the local community. Given that such a designation may also prevent

<sup>43</sup> NPPF paras 76, 77, 78

<sup>44</sup> PPG para ref id 37-017-20140306

development usually associated with a private residence coming forward, this needs to be satisfactorily demonstrated.

In respect of both these areas, I note that most of the areas fall outside the indicative built up area shown on Figure 3, but a part of both falls inside the boundary. I have recommended deletion of Policy HWNP1 and so the point is perhaps of little relevance, but should in the future a built up area be defined it would seem sensible to ensure consistency.

The third area proposed is described as the BBSRC field. This area seems to be exactly the same as the area proposed as a local settlement gap under the previous policy.

The NPPF is clear that designating any LGS should be consistent with local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and services. PPG<sup>45</sup> explains LGS designation should not be used in a way that undermines the aim of plan making to identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs. PPG<sup>46</sup> explains that the area in question should not be an extensive tract of land and that “blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements” will not be appropriate. Had the built up area boundary been retained in an earlier policy, this area would have been adjacent to that settlement boundary.

The supporting text details the history of the field and quotes from a number of texts and other sources in support of this. Therefore the historical significance and beauty of the area are given as main reasons, together with the importance of the land as a buffer. However, part of this site has buildings on it. I have already found in the discussion of the previous policy that designating this land as a settlement gap would not meet the basic conditions. The same arguments apply here. Overall there is insufficient and persuasive evidence to support a LGS designation and I am also mindful that LGS should not be used to undermine plan making or as a back door to prevent development.

Whilst I have found that only one of the areas meets the criteria for designation as a Local Green Space as outlined in the NPPF,<sup>47</sup> the wording of the policy requires amendment to bring it in line with the wording in the NPPF and to update the relevant figure number for accuracy. Subject to these modifications Policy HWNP4 accords with the basic conditions.

- **Delete The Elms and the BBSRC field as Local Green Spaces from Policy HWNP4 and undertake consequential amendments to the supporting text and figure**
- **Revise Figure 8 on page 23 so that the area of Local Green Space retained is clearly shown and easily distinguishable from the background colour wash (or remove the colour wash) and ensure that the name of the LGS is the same as in the text (or vice versa) (modifications continue on next page)**

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid* para ref id 37-007-20140306

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid* para ref id 37-015-20140306

<sup>47</sup> NPPF paras 76, 77 and 78

- Replace the sentence “...and will be strongly protected from development:...” in Policy HWNP4 to “...and will be protected from development other than in very special circumstances:..”
- Change the reference in Policy HWNP4 from “Figure 4.3” to “Figure 8” (or ensure consistency)

## Policy HWNP5

This short policy seeks to protect and enhance the greens and verges in the built-up area of the Parish. Its preamble rightly identifies such areas as important both for their contribution to the character of the Parish and its distinctiveness and for biodiversity.

Pages 27 to 32 identify the more significant of these areas and considerable work has gone into then identifying, describing and photographing these areas. I requested a map showing the areas and have been provided with detailed maps of each area. At my site visit these did seem to be inconsistently identified and I saw a number of other areas and verges that usefully could be subject to this policy. As a result, on balance, and I am conscious of the work that has gone into producing numerous maps for my benefit, it might be better for the policy and its preamble to consider listing, describing or using the mapping so that the policy is clear about which areas it applies to. Any references to common land should be deleted in line with the earlier discussion in this report.

The policy is worded so that *any* development that achieves protection is supported and so, similar to a point made earlier in the report, the policy needs some reworking to avoid supporting development that achieves the policy’s objectives, but would clearly be unacceptable in other ways.

It also refers to greens and verges within the built up area; firstly this has been recommended for deletion, but secondly and in any case some of the identified areas are not within the built up area.

The policy also indicates the need to work in partnership with landowners which include the National Trust. This is useful and should be placed in the supporting text rather than form part of the policy itself as this is not a development and use of land matter.

Therefore in order to meet the basic conditions, the policy should be reworded.

- **Reword Policy HWNP5 as follows:**

***“The green areas and verges identified on Figure X [or on pages XXXX] are valued for their biodiversity and contribution to the village’s character and distinctiveness. Development that protects and enhances the openness and***

***biodiversity of these areas will be supported. Development that would detract from the special characteristics or biodiversity of these areas will be resisted.”***

- **Consequential amendments to the supporting text and a decision on how best to identify the areas concerned will be needed**

## **Policy HWNP6**

Biodiversity is rightly identified as a key component of the Parish’s location next to the River Great Ouse. Both the NPPF and the Core Strategy recognise the importance of biodiversity.

Policy HWNP6 seeks to protect and enhance the landscape and biodiversity of the Parish which is in principle to be welcomed and will help to achieve sustainable development. However the wording of the latter part of the policy appears to accept “significant loss of biodiversity as part of development” and its replacement elsewhere on the same development site.

The policy approach taken by Policy HWNP6 is, in my view, at odds with the NPPF’s approach. This is because the NPPF conserves and enhances biodiversity and if significant harm resulting from development cannot be avoided (and this includes location on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated or compensated for, it states permission should be refused.<sup>48</sup> Therefore the wording of the policy needs alteration so that it takes account of the NPPF and is therefore able to meet the basic conditions.

It may also be useful to cross check any changes to this policy with any changes to Policy HWNP2 and to ensure there is no overlap or repetition. In addition paragraphs 5.16 and 5.17 offer fairly short, selective quotes from the NPPF and it might be useful to add more explanation.

- **Reword Policy HWNP6 as follows:**

***“Development is expected to protect and enhance biodiversity assets including species-rich meadows, the River Great Ouse and areas of semi-natural habitat associated with the river. If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, permission will be refused.”***

- **Consider any overlap with (the modified) Policy HWNP2 and amend supporting text as necessary**

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<sup>48</sup> NPPF para 118



## Policy HWNP7

The supporting text indicates that this policy seeks to introduce a presumption against development that reduces grazing and agricultural land and is therefore similar to objective 1 discussed earlier in this report.

The NPPF supports a prosperous rural economy and promotes the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses. It also indicates that whilst the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land should be taken into account, if development of agricultural land is necessary then areas of poorer quality land should be used in preference to land of a higher quality.<sup>49</sup> I indicated the objective was too restrictive and recommended a modification to it. Likewise the supporting text at paragraphs 5.27 and 5.28 on page 35 are at odds with the NPPF and given the introduction of a presumption against development that results in the loss of such land and the introduction of time scales, these paragraphs are far too onerous and restrictive and should be deleted.

However, the policy wording itself does not reflect the accompanying text (recommended for deletion) or the NPPF sufficiently and adds a further criterion about benefits outweighing the retention of land in agricultural use. Nevertheless the sentiments expressed in the policy would help to achieve sustainable development and with suitable rewording can be retained.

With regard to other more minor matters, paragraph 5.24 on page 34 refers to Figure 5.5, but the figure is titled Figure 9 and so this should be amended in the interests of accuracy. This seems to be a commonly occurring theme and I suspect that there is a wider point here about the need to ensure that Figure numbers tie up with references in the supporting text and policy throughout the Plan. Therefore any recommendations throughout this report that detail a change to a figure number or similar should be interpreted as simply ensuring that everything ties up. Given that once again I find Figure 9 hard to read, it might be better to simply refer in text to the latest classifications for reasons of clarity and to ensure the figure is not out of date quickly.

Paragraph 5.26 quotes correctly from the NPPF, but refers to a paragraph in it that deals with the use of minerals. As a result it is not appropriate to include this reference in the Plan. Paragraph 5.28 incorrectly refers to Policy HWNP6.

- **Amend text in paragraph 5.24 on page 34 to refer to “Figure 9” rather than “Figure 5.5”**
- **Ensure that Figure 9 is up to date or refer to the most recent classifications in the supporting text and avoid the need for a figure as this could be out of date quickly (modifications continue on next page)**

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<sup>49</sup> NPPF paras 28 and 112

- Delete paragraphs 5.26, 5.27 and 5.28 on page 35
- Reword Policy HWNP7 as follows:

***“Development of the best and most versatile agricultural land (as defined in the NPPF) will normally be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that significant development of agricultural land is necessary and no other land of a poorer agricultural quality is available.”***

## 6 Tourism

### Policy HWNP8

This is a well-worded and clear policy that supports tourism development in line with national policy and it will help to achieve sustainable development. It therefore complies with the basic conditions and no modifications are recommended.

### Policy HWNP9

Tourist accommodation is the subject of this policy. It seeks to support new tourist accommodation where there no harm would be caused to the village road network or to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and setting of listed buildings and where pedestrian and cycle access is available. In principle the support this policy offers to tourist accommodation aligns with national policy and will help to achieve sustainable development. However, the three criteria together represent a relatively high hurdle for development to jump over and therefore I recommend that the wording of the policy is modified so that it includes more flexibility so that the high hurdle it presents does not hinder the sustainable growth of this sector in the Parish.

HDC indicate that paragraph 6.9 incorrectly cites Policy LP11 of the emerging Local Plan. Given the stage the emerging Local Plan is at, this Plan cannot be read alongside it. Therefore the Parish Council should be satisfied that this policy (as reworded) is what they intended.

- Reword Policy HWNP9 as follows:

***“Proposals for new or expanded accommodation for tourists will be supported provided that the following criteria are met:***

- ***the impact on the existing road network would be acceptable; and***
- ***pedestrian and cycle access to services in the village is provided wherever possible and ideally via footpaths and cycle routes; and***

- ***there would be no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or the setting of any listed building in the Parish or the countryside.***

## Policy HWNP10

This policy seeks to resist the change of use of tourist accommodation into permanent dwellings unless it can be demonstrated that the property is no longer viable as a going concern over a period of 18 months. There is little evidence to illustrate what the issues might be beyond reducing the stock of visitor accommodation and little justification for requiring 18 months marketing beyond representing two trading seasons. On the face of it this policy is too inflexible and onerous. Therefore it is recommended that the policy be reworded.

Paragraph 6.12 seems to incorrectly cite Policy LP11 of the emerging Local Plan. Given the stage the emerging Local Plan is at, this Plan cannot be read alongside it.

- **Reword Policy HWNP10 as follows:**

***“The change of use of tourist accommodation to permanent dwellings will only be permitted when it can be reasonably demonstrated that the tourist accommodation is no longer viable. Evidence may include details of the business case and marketing of the property as a going concern at a market price over a period of months normally taken to be representative of two trading seasons.”***

## 7 Community infrastructure

### Policy HWNP11

Community facilities that meet the recreational, educational, social and cultural needs of the community are supported through this policy. The supporting text rightly recognises that needs can change over time and seeks to ‘future proof’ such provision with maximum flexibility.

The second paragraph refers to the use of private facilities for community needs; this is not a development and use of land matter, but one of management. Therefore this paragraph should be moved to the supporting text.

The policy also prevents such development being located in Flood Zones 2 or 3 (with the exception of sports changing room facilities). This accords with the EA’s requirement in relation to SEA, but goes beyond national policy and guidance and therefore should be

deleted to ensure that the policy takes account of national policy and guidance. The modifications recommended are:

- **Delete the second paragraph from Policy HWNP11 and include it as part of the supporting text**
- **Delete the third paragraph from Policy HWNP11**

## **8 Developer contributions for community infrastructure**

### **Policy HWNP12**

CIL is usefully included in the Plan. The policy recognises that 25% of receipts from CIL will be given to the Parish and that priorities will be drawn up and reviewed regularly. However, the policy merely repeats the current factual situation and that the Parish Council will continue to work in partnership with others on infrastructure projects. As it is currently written the policy does not relate to a development and use of land matter and is aspirational. Therefore whilst it would be appropriate to retain this in the Plan as an aspiration it is not a policy that meets the basic conditions.

- **Delete or change Policy HWNP12 into a ‘community aspiration’ or similar ensuring that it is clearly differentiated from the policies in the Plan**
- **Consequential changes will need to be made to paragraph 9.1 which refers to this policy**

## **9 Traffic and transport**

### **Policy HWNP13**

In response to a query, the Parish Council have confirmed that there is a typo in paragraph 9.4: the first “formal” should be informal.

The supporting text to Policy HWNP13 includes, at paragraph 9.6 on page 41, a reference to a planning application at Houghton Grange. This is site specific and does not seem to have any wider relevance to this section. Its inclusion could be regarded as misleading and therefore it should be deleted.

Policy HWNP13 does a number of things; firstly any new development along the A1123, A141 and B1090 are to demonstrate a need (in traffic terms) for any new access points along these roads. It seems that there is a preference to use existing access points and to upgrade these if needs be. Secondly, the policy requires new buildings to be positioned so that natural screening can be maximised. Thirdly, any trees, hedges or

ditches are to be retained except where a new access is made. Finally the policy applies to developments of three or more dwellings and any other development providing 500 square metres or more of new floor space.

The policy appears to apply within and outside the Plan area and of course it cannot apply outside the Parish boundaries. It then sets an onerous task for any prospective developers or applicants as well as on the decision making authorities to make a judgment that might well be unnecessary to undertake. It seems to cover matters that would usually form part of a transport assessment. The NPPF<sup>50</sup> is clear that developments that generate a significant amount of movement should be supported by a transport statement or assessment. This then leads me onto the thresholds of development that the policy introduces. It is not clear to me where this threshold has come from or why it is appropriate for Houghton and Wyton. There are often technical solutions that can satisfactorily overcome highway or traffic movement concerns.

For a number of reasons then the policy and its supporting text does not provide the practical framework for decision-making that the NPPF requires. I am not in a position to suggest a rewording of this policy to bring it in line with the basic conditions based on the information before me. Therefore the only element of the policy that can be retained is paragraph three.

- **Delete Policy HWNP13 with the exception of paragraph three**
- **Consequential amendments will need to be made to the supporting text**

## **Policy HWNP14**

This policy sets out car parking standards for new residential development explaining that there are high levels of car ownership and given public transport in the area, it is reasonable to expect cars will be a main mode of transport for residents and visitors. In principle the setting of a local parking standard is supported by national policy. I also recognise that in certain areas other means of transport cannot always be practical. However, there is little explanation of the rationale for setting the standard as it is put forward and therefore no sense of what impact this would have on the deliverability and viability of new housing or for the village. In addition there may be other solutions to the provision of parking that this policy would discourage from coming forward. Therefore the 'standards' element of the policy should be deleted as it would not support the achievement of sustainable development.

A second element to the policy is the support given to additional car parking for the village. I assume this refers to public car parking. It would be appropriate to retain this element of the policy.

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<sup>50</sup> NPPF para 32

I also notice that the photograph of parking in the village centre on page 43 of the Plan is identified as “Figure 8.1”. First of all other photographs are not identified in this way and secondly this numbering is inconsistent with the other figures in the Plan. This should be remedied in the interests of consistency and clarity. Whilst I have pointed it out here (and I may have missed other instances), this comment does of course apply throughout the Plan and further checks of presentation should be made before the next version of the Plan is finalised. Recommended modifications are on the next page.

- **Delete the first paragraph and all parking standards from Policy HWNP14**
- **Retain the last sentence of the policy and insert the word “*public*” after “...additional...” and before “...car parking...”**
- **Ensure that the identification of photographs and figures is consistent**
- **Consequential amendments to the supporting text will be needed**

### Policy HWNP15

Sustainable modes of transport such as footpaths and cycleways are encouraged by this policy. The supporting text provides a persuasive rationale for the policy’s ambitions. The policy will help to achieve sustainable development. As it meets the basic conditions no modifications to the policy itself are recommended.

However, the supporting text only allows new developments not to provide new footpaths and cycleways where “it is physically not possible to make such provision...” in paragraph 9.14 on page 44. It is also important that such provision does not adversely affect the viability and deliverability of development; so it is necessary to add a further sentence to this paragraph to reflect this and to offer a greater degree of flexibility.

- **Add “...or demonstrably unviable...” after “...physically not possible...” and before “...to make such provision..” to paragraph 9.14 on page 44**

## 10 Flood risk and drainage

### Policy HWNP16

I appreciate that flooding is of major concern to the community. This issue has been discussed earlier in the report in relation to the requirement for SEA. Anglian Water and the EA have made various suggestions for changes to the wording of this policy.

In light of the issues raised generally and more specifically in representations, I consider that the policy should be revised to bring it in line with national policy and guidance and to take account of representations from Anglian Water, the EA and HDC.

- **Delete the first paragraph from Policy HWNP16**
- **Reword the (existing) second paragraph of Policy HWNP16 to: “Development will only be permitted in areas benefitting from defences where the sequential and exception tests are passed and residual risk of flooding has been considered and it can be demonstrated that the development will be safe.”**
- **Amend the (existing) third paragraph to read: “Any development which would reduce the *flood plain* storage capacity of a site will not be permitted unless an alternative storage facility is provided to compensate within the site on a level-for-level and volume-for-volume basis. *Reference should be made to the SFRA maps which define the extent of the functional flood plain and any such facilities should be approved by the Environment Agency or other appropriate body.*”**
- **Amend the (existing) fifth paragraph to read: “Replacement dwellings and buildings *will only be permitted in areas at risk of flooding if it can be demonstrated they will be substantially safer and will reduce flood risk, taking into account the effects of climate change.*”**
- **Amend the (existing) sixth paragraph to read “All developments will be expected to demonstrate they have followed the surface water management hierarchy to ensure that infiltration *and other methods of surface water disposal are considered and provided for before ahead of maintaining any connection to existing surface water sewers.*”**
- **Replace the word “applications” in (existing) eighth paragraph with “permissions”**
- **Consequential changes may be needed to the supporting text**

## 11 Business

### Policy HWNP17

This is a long and complex policy that addresses many different issues. As well as support for new or expanding businesses, strong encouragement is given to start-up businesses. The loss of retail or leisure facilities is resisted unless alternative appropriate provision can be made. The impact of businesses is then considered. Proposals are then said to be favourably considered if they address one of three criteria. Finally, development along the A1123, A141 or B1090 is considered.



The NPPF is clear that the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas should be supported. In addition the retention of local services and community facilities is promoted. Essentially the general thrust of the policy is in line with national policy, but there are certain elements that are too inflexible or overly restrictive. In addition the policy is complex and so in the interests of providing a practical framework, I suggest it is reworded.

Paragraph 6.12 seems to incorrectly cite Policy LP11 of the emerging Local Plan. Given the stage the emerging Local Plan is at, this Plan cannot be read alongside it.

In order for the policy to meet the basic conditions, the following modification is recommended:

- **Reword Policy HWNP17 as follows:**

***“Proposals for new or expanding businesses will be supported provided that they are appropriate to their rural setting and respect the character of the village, the countryside and wider landscape including views in and out of the area. Any such use will need to ensure that its impact on light, noise and air is acceptable.***

***Proposals that provide suitable space for start-up or incubator businesses, develop the Parish’s agricultural base or increase retail space in the village centre are particularly encouraged.***

***The loss of existing retail or other community services and facilities will be resisted unless alternative or enhanced provision is made elsewhere in suitable and accessible locations in the Parish or it can be demonstrated that the use is no longer viable.***

***New development along the A1123, A141 or B1090 should seek to retain existing trees, hedges and ditches wherever possible to protect the rural setting.***

***Any new development should not increase flood risk. Planning applications for development within the Plan area must be accompanied by a site-specific flood risk assessment in line with the requirements of national policy and advice, but may also be required on a site by site basis based on locally available evidence.”***

## **Policy HWNP18**

This policy supports the provision of retail premises such as farm shops in certain circumstances. As the Plan recognises farm shops allow farmers to sell direct to the public which is of benefit to the farmer and the consumer providing a supply of locally

produced fresh food. Planning permission is not always necessary for farm shops or other retail outlets selling produce produced on associated land if, for instance an existing building is used for the sale of goods mainly produced on the farm itself. This is usually a judgment made by the local planning authority based on the particular circumstances of the unit.

This policy contains four criteria that would need to be met for retail units to be supported. The first two relate to what I regard as matters of fact and degree and will largely determine whether planning permission is required, the third relates to the impact on the viability of existing shops in the village; this is not generally regarded to be a planning consideration as the market will determine which might survive and the fourth criterion relates to flooding.

Therefore the conclusion I reach is that this policy is not appropriate for inclusion in the Plan and in order for the Plan to meet the basic conditions, it should be deleted.

- **Delete Policy HWNP18 in its entirety and its supporting text**

## 12 Housing

### Policy HWNP19

The preamble to this policy deals essentially with the needs of the community and the type of housing to be provided. The policy encourages small scale windfall residential development so long as it meets a number of criteria.

Taking each of these criteria in turn, the first one stipulates no more than 4 – 5 dwellings or the plot should be no larger than 0.15 hectare. There is little evidence to indicate why these thresholds have been selected or what the impact might be of introducing such a threshold. To do so could well thwart the achievement of sustainable development.

The second seeks to prevent development in Flood Zones 2 or 3; an issue already discussed in this report at length.

The third criterion expresses a preference for one or two bedroom properties built to Lifetime Homes standards. The NPPF provides for a wide choice of homes. Given the information on demographics and affordable housing put forward this can be justified in terms of encouraging smaller units provided there is some flexibility, but the wording lacks clarity.

The Government has also created a new approach to setting technical standards for new housing development. A Written Ministerial Statement (WMS)<sup>51</sup> made it clear that

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<sup>51</sup> Written Ministerial Statement of 25 March 2015

neighbourhood plans cannot set out any additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings. Optional new technical standards can now only be required through Local Plan policies. The policy therefore cannot require dwellings to be built to Lifetime Homes standards.

The fourth criteria relates to sheltered accommodation for older people, but there are many other types of housing that can also address the needs of older people. This then unnecessarily limits the options and would, in my view, be likely to prevent sustainable development coming forward although I appreciate the sentiment of this criterion. In my suggested modifications I have therefore widened this requirement to maximise options in providing homes for older people.

The fifth criterion concerns the effect on the Conservation Area and listed buildings. This would be a usual planning consideration in any case and it tends, in my view, to confuse the issue when essentially the policy is about the type of housing development the Plan will support.

The last criterion supports self-build which is in line with current Government thinking.

Therefore it will be apparent that the policy needs rewording in order for it to meet the basic conditions. This should also address the concerns raised by HDC.

In addition, paragraph 12.3 refers to Policy HWNP1 and its accompanying figure which I have recommended for deletion and so consequential amendments will be needed.

Representations raise points about the accuracy of paragraph 12.5 and the availability of more up to date information pertaining to paragraph 12.7. These matters should be checked and amended as appropriate in the interests of accuracy.

- **Reword Policy HWNP19 as follows:**

- ***“Residential development on windfall sites in the villages that meets local needs will be supported. In particular, the provision of one or two bedroomed units and housing that meets the needs of older people is particularly encouraged. Self-build units will be supported on appropriate sites.”***

- **Consequential amendments to the supporting text will be needed including ensuring that paragraph 12.14 is brought into line with national policy and advice and reflects recommended changes to the issue of flooding made throughout this report**

## 13 Design of new development

### Policy HWNP20

This policy is long and complex as it refers to the design of new development and outlines nine criteria for new development to address. As the preamble to the policy recognises the NPPF places emphasis on the quality of development and good design is regarded as a key aspect of sustainable development. Alongside this, there is support for the reinforcement and promotion of local distinctiveness. The policy ties in with the objectives of the Core Strategy and saved Local Plan policies support this.

Reference is made in the supporting text to Appendix A which contains information about the character areas identified for the Parish. Whilst an unusual approach has been taken to the definition of these character areas as it is usual to cover the whole built-up area or Parish rather than select very small areas, this information does, in my view, help to articulate those aspects which make up the local distinctiveness of the Parish and are important to the community.

However, some 'tidying up' of the policy is needed for it to provide the practical framework national policy seeks. In addition there needs to be more recognition of flexibility and there is little benefit in repeating requirements that would be the preserve of the local planning authority such as the requirement for a landscaping scheme to be implemented before occupation. Not only would this fall to the local planning authority to police, it is also an unreasonable requirement bearing in mind planting seasons and so on.

Finally as mentioned in the discussion of the previous policy, the Government has created a new approach to setting technical standards for new housing development. Therefore references to energy efficiency should be removed.

I have therefore recommended the policy be reworded to take account of these concerns to bring it in line with the basic conditions. This will also address the concerns of representators.

Paragraphs 13.2 and 13.3 refer to the emerging Local Plan and Building for Life standards. As indicated before, it may be better not to rely on emerging policies. However, for the avoidance of any doubt, the references to Building for Life standards can be retained.

Finally, paragraph 13.11 on page 54 refers to Policy HWNP21. There is no such policy in the submission version of the Plan and I assume this should be a reference to Policy HWNP20.

The suggested modifications are shown on the next page.

- **Reword Policy HWNP20 as follows:**

*“New development will be supported where it can demonstrate that the following criteria are all met:*

- *it respects the character or appearance of the village and its heritage assets including the Conservation Area and the setting of the Great Ouse Valley*
  - *it responds positively to the heritage and distinctive features of any Character Area in which it is situated and pays particular attention to the site’s topography and height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation and materials*
  - *it is of a high quality design and, where appropriate, is of a distinctive and individual character*
  - *it retains and incorporates, where possible, existing natural features such as trees, hedgerows and ponds*
  - *it takes any opportunity available to provide safe, accessible and well-connected footpath and cycle routes to the village centre, and*
  - *where the development is located at the edge of the settlement it takes account of, and respects, the character of adjacent countryside by providing landscaping and / or developing at a lower height as appropriate to reflect its fringe location.”*
- **Consequential amendments to the supporting text will be needed**
  - **Change reference in paragraph 13.11 from “Policy HWNP21” to “Policy HWNP20”**

#### **14 Existing development sites – Parish needs and intentions**

This section refers to two sites: Houghton Grange and Beer’s Garage site. From the information in the Plan both sites have the benefit of planning permission for up to 90 dwellings and four dwellings respectively. The section sets out what can be described as the Parish’s aspirations for both these sites under a heading of “Parish Intention”.

These aspirations are not formulated as site specific policies for the two sites. However, it is not particularly clear what the status of the requirements which are set out are. Given that these sites appear to have the benefit of planning permission, I take this section to be one of aspiration. It is not appropriate to be included as part of the Plan in this format. This section should therefore be moved to a separate and clearly labeled separate section or appendix of the Plan or should be removed in its entirety. This is to ensure that there is no doubt about the status of the contents of this section, particularly in view of paragraph 1.0 and the ‘how to read this document’ section at the start of the Plan.

In addition, paragraph 14.7 refers to sui generis uses and it is not clear to me what this refers to; it seems to be a superfluous reference in any case. This should be remedied in the interests of clarity.

Incidentally paragraph 14.13 on page 57 seems to refer to Beer's Garage site but sits within the Houghton Grange section. This should be remedied in the interests of clarity.

In order to meet the basic conditions, the following modifications are recommended:

- **Move section 14 in its entirety to a separate section (which does not appear as part of the Plan) or appendix of the Plan which is clearly labeled 'community aspirations' or delete in its entirety**
- **Clarify or remove the reference to sui generis uses in paragraph 14.7**
- **Move paragraph 14.13 so that it sits within the correct section**
- **Consequential changes may be required**

## 15 Monitoring and community action plan

Monitoring is an important planning activity and whilst it is not a requirement for neighbourhood plans, despite the lack of any detail, the intentions set out in this section are a welcome addition.

It is not clear to me what paragraph 15.4 refers to. Paragraph 15.5 refers to a Community Action Plan contained in Appendix B.

The section also refers to the community right to bid and lists three assets of community value. This seems to be for information purposes and so can be included in a separate appendix or clearly labeled separate section of the Plan, but should be removed from the Plan itself as this does not relate to development or use of land matters.

- **Clarify paragraphs 15.4 and 15.5 further**
- **Move the part of section 15 headed "Community Right to Bid" in its entirety to a separate section (which does not appear as part of the Plan) or appendix of the Plan which is clearly labeled or delete in its entirety**

## Glossary

A short glossary is usefully included.

## **Appendix A**

Contains information about each of the Character Areas mentioned in connection with Policy HWNP20.

## **Appendix B**

This is the community action plan which covers non planning matters that the Parish Council wish to capture as a result of its work on neighbourhood planning.

## **Appendix C**

Contains a list and map of the listed buildings in the Parish. Again I find the plan hard to read and consideration should be given to whether this can be included in a more legible way. There is no need for this appendix to be included in the Plan, particularly given it does not contain any specific policies on heritage assets and the list may well become out of date over the Plan period. However, I do not consider it necessary for me to make a recommendation about this appendix in relation to the basic conditions. However, if retained it would be useful to add a proviso that information should always be checked with the relevant authority.



## 9.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

I am satisfied that the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Development Plan, subject to the modifications I have recommended, meets the basic conditions and the other statutory requirements outlined earlier in this report.

I am therefore pleased to recommend to Huntingdonshire District Council that, subject to the modifications proposed in this report, the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Development Plan can proceed to a referendum. However, it will be noted that I have also suggested that the local planning authority reconsiders the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment if the Plan is modified in accordance with these recommendations. In this regard please refer to the section on Strategic Environmental Assessment for a more detailed discussion of this issue.

Following on from that, I am required to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan area.

I see no reason to alter or extend the Plan area for the purpose of holding a referendum and no representations have been made that would lead me to reach a different conclusion. I therefore consider that the referendum area be based on the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan area approved by Huntingdonshire District Council on 19 December 2012.

Ann Skippers  
Ann Skippers Planning  
14 December 2015

## Appendix 1 List of Documents specific to this Examination

Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Development Plan Submission Plan May 2015

Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Development Plan Consultation Statement May 2015

Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Development Plan Basic Conditions Statement May 2015

Core Strategy September 2009

Huntingdonshire Local Plan Part One adopted December 1995

Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration adopted December 2002

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 Targeted Consultation 2015

Response to Clarification Questions from the Examiner from HDC and from the Parish Council and documents referred to or linked into in those responses

Officer Position Statement on St Ives West dated 29 September 2014

Judgment [2013] EWHC 1476 Admin

List ends

## Appendix 2 Clarification Questions from Examiner

### Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan Examination Questions of clarification from the Examiner to the PC and HDC

Having completed an initial review of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP), I would be grateful if the Parish and District Councils could kindly assist me in answering the following questions which either relate to matters of fact or are areas in which I seek clarification or further information.

1. Section 4 and Policy HWNP1 of the Plan refer to a built-up area.
  - a) Paragraph 4.3 quotes from the Core Strategy and then the emerging Local Plan. Please indicate where the emerging Local Plan references are from i.e. policy and/or page number for both the quotes on page 15 and the reference to the policy for building in the countryside on page 16
  - b) Can you please confirm whether paragraph 4.4 is also a quote from the emerging Local Plan (it seems to read this way) and if so, again please point me in the direction of where I might find this in the source document
  - c) The built-up area is shown on Figure 3 of page 17 of the Plan. Please confirm the following:
    - Whether Figure 3 is intended to define a built-up area as the figure is titled “indicative”
    - Whether a built-up area boundary is defined in any adopted development plan document and, if so, please let me know which development plan(s) and send me a copy of the defined and adopted built-up area(s) plans
    - Whether the emerging Local Plan seeks to propose a built-up area and if so which version and send me a copy of the area
    - Point out any differences between the adopted plan built-up area, the emerging Local Plan built-up area and the HWNP proposed (if this is the case) built-up area
2. Section 4 and Policy HWNP1 refer to the threat of flooding. Paragraph 4.6 makes reference to the strategy for growth and directing less, more and highly vulnerable land uses away from flood zones 2 and 3. Although the paragraph states this is in accordance with PPG and advice from the Environment Agency, it does not seem to reflect PPG advice that I can find. Therefore please provide me with the relevant extracts or para numbers from PPG and the advice received from the EA to support this paragraph in the Plan and the stance of Policy HWNP1 and other policies in the Plan that prevent development in Flood Zones 3 and 3.
3. The Plan makes references to a proposal for the Great Ouse Valley and Washes to be an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Please could you update me on the latest position?

4. Section 5 refers to two areas of common land; the first along the A1123 and the second along Splash Lane. Common land has a particular meaning and the law restricts the kind of activities that can be carried out on commons. Please confirm that these two areas (shown on Figure 5 and 6 of the Plan) are 'common land' within the usual meaning and provide the register entry for each site (which HDC should hold). If these areas are not 'common land', given there is no description or reference to them in the Plan, please provide me with short factual information on each site including ownership details if possible. The Group may wish to take advice on this from the LPA or their advisers.
5. The supporting text to Policy HWNP3 (local settlement gap) refers to:
  - a) The extent of the St Ives Spatial Planning Area in the Core Strategy. Please confirm whether the SPA has been identified on a plan and if so provide me with a copy of the plan or signpost me to where I might find it
  - b) Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy. Please can HDC confirm whether they regard this policy as a strategic policy
  - c) Please provide me with a copy of the court case judgment referred to in the Plan
  - d) The Plan makes reference (page 21) to previous Inspector's comments relating to HDC Local Plans. Please provide me with the requisite sections of these reports so I can see which Local Plans and policies are being referred to and exactly what the Inspector said
6. There are references throughout the Plan to the Great Ouse Valley as an area of green (space) enhancement in both the Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan. As far as I can see the Core Strategy refers to this area as an area of green space enhancement whilst the emerging LP refers to Strategic Green infrastructure enhancement; am I correct?
7. The preamble to Policy HWNP5 lists a number of significant verges and greens. Please could these be identified on a map(s) clearly labeled so that I can see their location and the extent of these areas? As an aside I am generally finding the figures hard to read and distinguish from the background colour wash and so given this personal difficulty please could this be borne in mind in providing this information to me?
8. Is the agricultural land classification data in Figure 9 on page 34 the most recent available?
9. There are some references throughout the Plan to "allocated sites" (for example paragraph 5.28 on page 35). Please clarify what this refers to given the Plan does not allocate sites itself?
10. Is there a typo in paragraph 9.4 on page 41 of the Plan? Should the sentence about new development taking the opportunity to replace an existing formal access point with a new formal access point be the replacement of an existing *informal* access point?

11. The representation from St Ives Town Council indicates that their comments on the pre-submission version have not been included in Appendix G of the Consultation Statement. The Consultation Statement should contain details of the persons and bodies consulted, explain how they were consulted, summarise the main issues and concerns and describe how these have been considered and, where relevant, addressed. I seek confirmation that the Consultation Statement meets this requirement (Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and a comment from the Parish Council about whether all those responding have been included in it.

It may be the case that on receipt of your anticipated assistance on these matters that I may need to ask for further clarification or that as the Examination progresses other queries may come to light.

With many thanks.

Ann Skippers  
24 September 2015

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**Intelligent Plans**  
and examinations

# **Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015 – 2036**

## **Report on the Examination of the Built up Areas and Anti-Coalescence Policies**

**An Examination undertaken for Huntingdon Council with the support of  
the Houghton and Wyton Parish Council.**

Independent Examiner: Robert Yuille MSc DipTP MRTPI

Date of Report: 20 November 2017

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## Contents

	Page
<b>Main Findings - Executive Summary</b>	3
<b>1. Introduction and Background</b>	3
• Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015 – 2036	3
• The Independent Examiner	4
• The Scope of the Examination	4
• Basic Conditions	6
• Referendum	7
<b>2. Approach to the Examination</b>	7
• Planning Policy Context	7
• Submitted Documents	7
• Site Visit	8
• Written Representations with or without Public Hearing	8
• Modifications	8
<b>3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights</b>	9
• Plan Wide Compliance Issues	9
• Policy Specific Compliance Issues	9
<b>4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions</b>	10
• EU Obligations	10
• Background	10
• Main Issue	12
• Alternative Modification 1: HWNP 1 Built Up Areas	13
• Alternative Modification 2: HWNP3 Anti Coalescence	17
<b>5. Conclusions</b>	20
• Summary	20
• The Referendum	21
<b>Appendix 1: Modifications</b>	22
<b>Map 1</b>	Provided as a separate attachment to the report

## **Main Findings - Executive Summary**

From my examination of the Built Up areas and Anti-Coalescence policies in the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan, taking into account the alternative modifications put forward by Huntingdon District Council and representations made, I have concluded that subject to the policy modifications recommend in this report, those policies meet the Basic Conditions and other relevant legal requirements.

I recommend that the Plan should proceed to Referendum, in accordance with the recommendations made in the Examination Report of 14 December 2015 subject to:

- the modification proposed on page 21 of the first examiner's report being replaced by Alternative Modification 1, subject to the changes proposed in PM1 and PM2 of this report; and
- the modification proposed on page 25 of the first examiner's report being replaced by Alternative Modification 2, subject to the changes proposed in PM3 and PM4 of this report.

## **1. Introduction and Background**

### *Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2036*

- 1.1 The Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan / HWNP) has previously been submitted for an independent examination, which commenced on 14 September 2015. An examination report was produced by Ann Skippers BSc (Hons) Dip Mgmt (Open) PGC(TLHE)(Open) MRTPI FHEA FRSA AoU ('the first examiner') on 14 December 2015 ('the December 2015 Report') setting out her proposed modifications to the Plan.
- 1.2 Following Huntingdon District Council's (the District Council) consideration of the December 2015 Report, it resolved to accept all the first examiner's recommendations except those relating to the Village Limits/Built Up Area (HWNP1) and the Local Settlement Gap (HWNP3). These policies seek to define the built-up area of the Parish and protect the two villages of Houghton and Wyton (which lie side-by-side) from coalescence with the settlement at St Ives, which lies to the east. Working together, the District Council and the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan Working Group have drawn up alternative modifications that seek to address the original concerns of the first examiner and meet the Basic Conditions.
- 1.3 The District Council has consulted on these modifications, and in the light of the responses received, decided it is appropriate to put these two matters to independent examination.

### *The Independent Examiner*

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- 1.4 I have been appointed by the District Council to examine the 'issue', which for the purposes of this examination are the matters of the Built Up areas and Anti-Coalescence policies in the HWNP and the suggested alternative modifications. My appointment has been made with the agreement of the Houghton and Wyton Parish Council ('the Parish Council').
- 1.5 I am a chartered town planner and former government Planning Inspector, with considerable experience in examining development plans and, more recently, neighbourhood plans. I am an independent examiner, and do not have an interest in any of the land that may be affected by the draft Plan.
- 1.6 In undertaking this independent examination, I am not bound by any previous work of the first examiner in relation to Policies HWNP1 and HWNP3. Given that the first examiner's 14 December 2015 Report has been accepted by the District Council in so far as it relates to all issues other than the two matters dealt with by these policies, it is not within my remit to revisit other aspects of the Plan. However, whilst the scope of the examination is confined to these two matters, I will need to consider if there are any consequences arising from the view I take on policies HWNP1 and HWNP3, which may have a direct or cumulative impact on other policies within the Plan. I may further need to consider if any consequential amendments are required to the Plan through modifications.

### *The Scope of the Examination*

- 1.7 Paragraph 13(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) ('the 1990 Act') provides that if
- (a) the local planning authority propose to make a decision which differs from that recommended by the examiner, and
  - (b) the reason for the difference is (wholly or partly) as a result of new evidence or a new fact or a different view taken by the authority as to a particular fact,
- the authority must notify prescribed persons of their proposed decision (and the reason for it) and invite representations.
- 1.8 Paragraph 13(2) of Schedule 4B allows for the exercise of the discretion of the local planning authority in so far as it provides that if the authority considers it appropriate to do so, they may refer the issue to independent examination.
- 1.9 Paragraph 13(3) of Schedule 4B is an enabling provision which provides for the making of regulations about an examination under paragraph 13. However, to date, provision has only been made in relation to the decision

timetable following the completion of the examination of an issue and the procedure for the Secretary of State's (SOS) intervention<sup>1</sup>. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) similarly only refers to this process with regard to the local planning authority's decision timetable and SOS intervention.

1.10 Therefore, in the absence of further procedural regulations or guidance governing an examination under paragraph 13(2), my starting point is Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act, which requires the examiner to consider:

- Whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions;
- Whether the Plan complies with provisions under s.38A and s.38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ('the 2004 Act'). These are:
  - it has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body, for an area that has been properly designated by the local planning authority;
  - it sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land;
  - it specifies the period during which it has effect;
  - it does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development';
  - it is the only neighbourhood plan for the area and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area;
  - whether the referendum boundary should be extended beyond the designated area, should the plan proceed to referendum; and
- Such matters as prescribed in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ('the 2012 Regulations').

1.11 A neighbourhood plan examination is confined to the matters within Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. However, the Plan must also be compatible with the Human Rights Convention (and relevant Protocols).

1.12 From my assessment, it would appear that not all of the requirements in paragraph 8(1) are directly relevant to the examination of an issue under paragraph 13(2). In particular, the overarching plan requirements of

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<sup>1</sup> The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) provide in Regulation 17A(5)(b)(i) that the local planning authority is required to make a decision on recommendations made under a paragraph 13(2) examination within 56 days of receipt of the examiner's report (see also paragraph 13A of Sch.4B). Paragraphs 13B and 13C further deal with Secretary of State intervention.

sections 38A and 38B of the 2004 Act where the first examiner will already have dealt with these in terms of the Plan as a whole i.e. the status of the qualifying body; the neighbourhood plan area; the period of the Plan and the Plan's preparation and consultation. Furthermore, the area in which the referendum is to take place is not an issue which can be considered under paragraph 13<sup>2</sup>.

1.13 In contrast, the consideration of whether the issue relates to a land use planning matter and is not excluded development is relevant, as is the requirement to ensure that the issue is compatible with the European Convention of Human Rights. I deal with the specific application of the procedural legal requirements in more detail in Section 3 of this report.

1.14 As this is an examination under paragraph 13 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act, I shall also consider whether the local planning authority has complied with the prior consultation requirements in paragraph 13(1).

### *Basic Conditions*

1.15 I consider all of the Basic Conditions are potentially relevant to this examination, notwithstanding they refer to the 'plan' rather than the 'issue'. The Basic Conditions are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the neighbourhood plan must:

- Have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area;
- Be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations; and
- Meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.

1.16 Regulation 32 of the 2012 Regulations prescribes a further basic condition for the Plan. This requires that it should not be likely to have a significant effect on a European Site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010) or a European Offshore Marine Site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 2007), either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

### *Referendum*

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<sup>2</sup> See paragraph 13(4) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act.

1.17 I am required to make a final recommendation as to whether the Plan should proceed to referendum, in accordance with the first examiner's recommendations, combined with any modifications I may make as a result of this second examination.

## **2. Approach to the Examination**

### *Planning Policy Context*

- 2.1 The Development Plan for this part of Huntingdonshire, not including documents relating to excluded minerals and waste development, is; the Huntingdonshire Core Strategy adopted in September 2009 (the Core Strategy); saved policies from the Local Plan 1995 (the 1995 Local Plan); and saved policies from the Local Plan Alteration 2002 (the Local Plan Alteration). The Core Strategy sets out the spatial framework for Huntingdonshire's future to 2026.
- 2.2 Consultation was completed on 25 August 2017 on Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036: Consultation Draft 2017 (the emerging Local Plan). The 'Proposed Submission Draft' (Publication Version) is scheduled for consultation in December 2017 and is likely to be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination around Spring 2018. If an emerging Local Plan is in conflict with a neighbourhood plan, there is a risk that, when the Local Plan is adopted, it will undermine the effectiveness of that neighbourhood plan. Having regard for these factors and the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)<sup>3</sup>, I shall take the emerging Local Plan into consideration in this examination where it is relevant to the two policies under consideration.
- 2.3 The planning policy for England is set out principally in the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework'). The PPG offers guidance on how this policy should be implemented.

### *Submitted Documents*

- 2.4 I have considered all policy, guidance and other reference documents I consider relevant to the examination, including those submitted which comprise:
- Houghton & Wyton Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan\*;
  - Independent Examiner's Report, 14 December 2015\*;
  - Alternative Modification 1 – HWNP1 Built Up Areas\*;
  - Appendix A – Methodology for Alternative Modification 1\*;
  - Alternative Modification 2 – HWNP3 Anti Coalescence\*;
  - Consultation Notes for Alternative Modification 2 HWNP3 Anti Coalescence\*;

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<sup>3</sup> PPG Reference ID 41-009-20160211.

- Report on comments made on Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan: Proposed Alternative Modifications examination consultation\*;
- Extracts from the Inspector's Report in to the Local Plan Alteration (2002) – Chapter 1 Settlement Strategy;
- High Court Judgement: Houghton & Wyton Parish Council vs. Huntingdonshire District Council May 2013;
- Appeal Decision – St Ives Golf Club, December 2015;
- The District Council's answers to various questions raised by me. These answers are contained in emails dated 13/09/17, 03/10/17 and 16/10/17\*;
- Plan provided by Design Planning and Economics on 28/09/17 showing the extent of HCA land ownership and the boundaries of its planning permission;\* and
- Plan provided by the District Council on 16/10/17 showing various built up area boundaries and other information\*.

*\*Available on District Council web site<sup>4</sup>*

#### *Site Visit*

2.5 I made an unaccompanied site visit to the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 4 October 2017 to familiarise myself with it, particularly focusing on the extent of the built up area and the land south of the A1123 between the village and St Ives.

#### *Written Representations with or without Public Hearing*

2.6 This examination has been dealt with solely by written representations. I considered hearing sessions to be unnecessary as the consultation responses clearly articulated the objections to the alternative modifications.

#### *Modifications*

2.7 Where necessary, I have recommended modifications to the plan (**PMs**) in this report in order that they meet the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. For ease of reference, I have listed these modifications separately in Appendix 1.

### **3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights**

#### *Plan Wide Compliance Issues*

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<sup>4</sup><http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-planning/>



3.1 As noted in paragraph 1.12 above, I consider that a number of the procedural compliance issues are based on the assessment of the HWNP as a whole and have been dealt with by first examiner in her December 2015 Report, and subsequently agreed by the District Council. I see no reason to disagree with her conclusions. For the sake of completeness these are summarised as follows:

*(i) Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area*

Section 4.0, page 6 of the December 2015 Report confirms that the Parish Council is the qualifying body and the neighbourhood area was duly designated on 19 December 2012 as per Figure 1 on Page 2 of the HWNP. It also confirms the HWNP is the only neighbourhood plan for the area and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area.

*(ii) Plan Period*

Subject to the modification the first examiner recommends in the second bullet point on page 16 of the December 2015 Report, she confirms on page 6 that the plan period is 21 years from 2015 – 2036.

*(iii) Neighbourhood Plan Preparation and Consultation*

Section 6, pages 8-9 of the December 2015 Report covers the HWNP preparation and consultation process, including the Pre-Submission Draft Plan consultation which ran for 7 weeks from 14 November 2014 to 3 January 2015 (Regulation 14) and the Submission Plan consultation (Regulation 16) which ran for a 6 week period from 19 June 2015 to 31 July 2015, thus meeting the legal requirements. The overall conclusion is that there seems to have been a fairly comprehensive campaign in publicising the Plan and, on balance, there seems to have been adequate opportunity for interested parties including land owners to participate.

*Policy Specific Compliance Issues*

3.2 The following legal compliance requirements can be applied specifically to the two policies I am examining:

*(i) Development and Use of Land*

I am satisfied that the matters dealt with by HWNP 1 and HWNP 3 relate to the development and use of land in accordance with s.38A of the 2004 Act.

*(ii) Excluded Development*

Neither HWNP 1 nor HWNP 3 deal with matters which relate to 'excluded development'.

*(iii) Human Rights*

From my own independent assessment, I am satisfied that the matters in HWNP1 and HWNP3 do not breach Human Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).

*(iv) Further Consultation*

The District Council proposes to make a decision which differs to that in the December 2015 Report as a result of a different view taken by the local authority on an issue, which is the matters of the Built Up Areas and Anti-Coalescence policies. A consultation exercise on the alternative modifications to the HWNP (to those proposed in the December 2015 Report) was consulted on from 7 April 2017 to 22 May 2017. 30 responses were received. I am therefore satisfied that the District Council has complied with the requirements in paragraph 13(1) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act.

#### **4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions**

*EU Obligations*

- 4.1 The first examiner deals with these matters on pages 11 to 14 of the December 2015 Report and in essence concludes that a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Plan would not be required although it would be prudent for the District Council to review this in the light of her proposed modifications. She also concludes that a Habitats Regulations Assessment would not be required. Nothing has happened in the intervening period to invalidate these conclusions and I see no reason to disagree with them.

*Background*

- 4.2 Before defining the main issues it is useful to set out the version of Policies HWNP 1 and HWNP 3 contained in the submitted version of the Plan, to summarise what the first examiner concluded about these policies and to set out the version of these policies contained in the Alternative Modifications.
- 4.3 **Alternative Modification 1** relates to Policy HWNP 1 of the Plan, a policy which deals with Built Up Areas. This Policy states:

*There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the built up area which shall be guided by the relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies and other policies in the development plan.*

*Outside the built up area any development is considered to represent development in the open countryside. Such development will be acceptable if it represents a use that supports rural activities or quiet tourism.*

*Across the neighbourhood plan area, there shall be a presumption against all types of vulnerable new development being located in flood zones 2 and 3. This shall include such development within the built-up area.*

Figure 3 shows the extent of the built up area on a plan.

- 4.4 The first examiner proposed that this policy together with its supporting text (which includes Figure 3) be deleted. Her reasons for this are summarised as being:

*'..the lack of evidence for this policy and the very limited explanation of the built up area boundary, its unclear definition on the map and the stance of the policy itself..' <sup>5</sup>*

- 4.5 The District Council in consultation with the Parish Council has not accepted this Proposed Modification. It has put forward Alternative Modification 1 which reads as follows:

*"Policy HWNP1 - Houghton and Wyton built up area*

*A built up area is defined as a distinct group of 30 or more homes and their immediate surroundings.*

*Other areas outside the built up area are part of the open countryside. Proposals for development within the built up area will be guided by the relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies and other policies in the development plan.*

*Proposals for development outside of the defined built up areas will be acceptable where they comply with relevant policies for building in the countryside."*

- 4.6 The boundary of the built up area is shown on a plan attached to Alternative Modification 1. Attached at Appendix A is the *Built up Areas Methodology* – a document that sets out the methodology used to inform the definition of the built up area boundary.
- 4.7 **Alternative Modification 2** relates to Policy HWNP 3 which deals with the Local Settlement Gap between the village and St Ives. This Policy states:

*Policy HWNP 3 – Local Settlement Gap.*

*Within the identified settlement gap, development will not be permitted if it would add to existing sporadic or isolated development or lead to the coalescing of the village with the neighbouring town of St Ives, in turn leading to the loss of the individual identity of Houghton and Wyton.*

The settlement gap is identified on Figure 7.

- 4.8 The first examiner proposed that Figure 7 be deleted and that the wording of the policy be amended to read:

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<sup>5</sup> 14 December 2015 Report. Paragraph at the bottom of page 20 and the top of page 21. Intelligent Plans and Examinations (IPE) Ltd, Regency Offices, 37 Gay Street, Bath BA1 2NT  
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*Development proposals should respect the individual and distinct identities of the village of Houghton and the town of St Ives. Development will not be permitted if, individually or cumulatively, it would result in the loss of the visual and physical separation of these two settlements or lead to their coalescence.*<sup>6</sup>

The reasons given by the first examiner for this proposed modification are summarised in her report as follows:

*'Therefore designation of the gap would prevent, or, at the very least, make it harder for the District Council to plan for the strategic needs of the District, particularly given various constraints including flooding in the area. As a result I consider the proposed gap cannot be said to be in general conformity with the relevant strategic policies in the development plan or pay sufficient regard to national policy and advice or would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.'*<sup>7</sup>

- 4.9 The District Council in consultation with the Parish Council has not accepted this Proposed Modification. Instead it has proposed Alternative Modification 2 which states:

*Policy HWNP3 – Anti –coalescence*

*Development proposals should respect the individual and distinct identities of the village of Houghton and Wyton and the town of St Ives. Development will not be permitted if, individually or cumulatively, it would result in the loss of the visual and physical separation which currently exists between these two settlements, or would lead to their coalescence.*

- 4.10 The main difference between the first examiner's version of this policy and that set out in Alternative Modification 2 is that the latter adds the words *'..which currently exists between...'*. Alternative Modification 2 does not define a settlement gap on a plan. It does however contain a fairly lengthy block of supporting text and a document entitled 'Consultation Notes for Alternative Modification 2 HWNP3 Anti Coalescence'. This document consists largely of a legal opinion expressing the view that Policy HWNP3 complies with the Basic Conditions.

#### *Main Issue*

- 4.11 With this background in mind I consider the main issue in this re-examination to be whether Alternative Modifications 1 and 2 have regard to national policies and advice, are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

#### **Alternative Modification 1 – HWNP 1 Built Up Areas**

- 4.12 In principle there is no objection to making a clear distinction between built up areas and the countryside. There is nothing in the Framework to

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<sup>6</sup> 14 December 2015 Report. Top of page 25.

<sup>7</sup> 14 December 2015 Report. Second paragraph, page 24.

prevent this and such a distinction is made in the development plan. In the 1995 Local Plan this distinction is made by defining on a map what is termed a 'Village Limits' boundary for villages such as Houghton and Wyton.

4.13 This boundary is still part of the development plan by virtue of its being referred to, albeit under the different name of 'Village Environmental Limits', in policies such as saved policy En17 of the 1995 Local Plan. The built up area boundary proposed in Alternative Modification 1 differs somewhat from the equivalent boundary shown in the 1995 Local Plan (see Map 1 provided as a separate attachment to this report) but that is to be expected given that over 20 years have elapsed since the first boundary was defined and the two boundaries have been defined in the context of different policy backgrounds.

4.14 A different approach is taken in the Core Strategy (paragraph 5.15) and in the emerging Local Plan (paragraphs 4.61 – 4.64) which each contain written definitions of the term built up area.

4.15 The definition contained in the Core Strategy is as follows:

*'The definition of the built-up area will be set out in more detail in the Development Management DPD but for the purposes of the Core Strategy it is considered to be the existing built form excluding:*

- *buildings that are clearly detached from the main body of the settlement;*
- *gardens and other undeveloped land within the curtilage of buildings at the edge of the settlement, where these relate more to the surrounding countryside than they do to the built-up parts of the village; and*
- *agricultural buildings where they are on the edge of the settlement.'*<sup>8</sup>

4.16 The emerging Local Plan defines a built up area in the following terms:

*'A built-up area is considered to be a distinct group of buildings and their immediate surroundings that includes 30 or more homes. Land that does not meet the definition of Previously Developed Land, as set out in the Glossary, and relates more to the surrounding countryside than to any buildings, is not part of the built-up area.'*<sup>9</sup>

4.17 As the emerging Local Plan points out there are advantages to such an approach:

*'.....among other benefits, it avoids the perception that any form of development on any land within a drawn boundary would be acceptable and the pressure for every piece of land within the boundary to be developed, thus damaging the loose knit character of many settlements in Huntingdonshire by creating harder, more regular edges to settlements.'*<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Core Strategy. Paragraph 5.15.

<sup>9</sup> Emerging Local Plan. Paragraph 4.61.

<sup>10</sup> Emerging Local Plan. Paragraph 4.62.

- 4.18 However, identifying a boundary on a map is also a valid way of defining a built up area, as indeed has been done in the 1995 Local Plan. I see no objection in principle to a Neighbourhood Plan seeking to add an additional level of detail to the existing and emerging development plan definitions of built up areas by applying them to a particular village and showing the result of this exercise on a plan.
- 4.19 In this context, it is relevant to note that the District Council has changed its position on the advisability of defining a built up area boundary. It advised the first examiner that defining such a boundary ‘..*might be counterproductive*...’<sup>11</sup> although it did not see this as conflicting in any fundamental way with existing policies. Having considered the matter further it now takes the view that to delete such a boundary would result in a plan that would not reflect the community’s views and aspirations<sup>12</sup>. In principle, I see nothing objectionable in this change of stance.
- 4.20 Such a boundary must, of course, be based on sensible principles that have been consistently applied. Attached to Alternative Modification 1 is a document entitled *Appendix A. HWNP Policy 1 Built Up Areas Methodology*. This sets out a number of guiding principles which underpins the definition of the built up area boundary together with implementation notes which assist in determining how these principles will be applied in practice. The document also contains a section called ‘*Methodology in Action*’ which describes, with examples, how the guiding principles have been applied in practice.
- 4.21 The guiding principles identified in the document include the provision that any distinct group of 30 or more dwellings and their immediate surroundings may constitute a separate built up area within the parish; that the built up area boundary will, subject to specified exceptions, follow clearly defined physical features; that sites with existing planning commitments will be included within the built up area boundary and that isolated properties and areas of ribbon or fragmented development which are physically or visually detached from the main built form will be excluded from the built up area as will sections of large curtilages which relate more to the countryside than the built up area.
- 4.22 I see nothing objectionable in these and the other guiding principles identified in the document. They and the implementation notes attached to them simply put flesh on the bones of the definition of built up area boundaries contained in the existing and emerging development plan and they provide some systematic basis for determining whether a site should be in the built up area or the countryside.

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<sup>11</sup> 14 December 2015 Report. Page 20, second paragraph.

<sup>12</sup> District Council email dated 03/10/17.

- 4.23 The point has been made that the *Built Up Areas Methodology* document is not of itself an objective piece of evidence and this is true. But I do not see this as a fundamental criticism, as defining a built up area inevitably involves a series of subjective judgements. For the most part, the judgements made in this instance are uncontentious and having driven and walked around the area, I am satisfied that, by and large, a sensible built up area boundary has been defined and that this boundary is justified by the evidence and explanation set out in the *Built Up Area Methodology* document.
- 4.24 There are, however, two contentious areas. The first relates to the built up area boundary in the vicinity of the dwelling known as The Moorings. The proposed boundary includes the house but excludes the sizeable garden of this property. This garden contains a flood bank beyond which is the River Great Ouse. The flood bank is a clearly defined physical feature and the area of garden it encloses – with its mown lawn and its trees and shrubs – relates more to the character of the built up area than that of the countryside. The built up area boundary in the vicinity of The Moorings should, therefore, be altered to follow the line of the flood bank as indicated in **PM1**.
- 4.25 The second contentious area relates to the proposed boundary in the vicinity of Houghton Grange. Houghton Grange itself is included within the proposed built up area boundary as it has outline planning permission for housing (Ref: 1402210OUT) but the adjoining site, the BBSRC<sup>13</sup> Field, is excluded. For the most part, this is understandable since this land, which consists largely of open pasture leading down towards the River Great Ouse, clearly has more in common with the countryside than the built up area.
- 4.26 However, this field also contains within it a freestanding group of buildings set close to Houghton Road on the northern boundary of the site. These buildings, like the buildings within Houghton Grange, are disused and partially overgrown but, also like the buildings within Houghton Grange, they have not blended into the landscape and should, therefore, be treated as previously developed land.
- 4.27 Nonetheless, this group of buildings is not particularly prominent, being surrounded by trees and brambles, and sits fairly unobtrusively in the surrounding countryside. It is, moreover, much smaller than the group at Houghton Grange and it is not physically linked to Houghton Grange. These are all cogent reasons for not including them within the built up area boundary. While it is true that part of this group, as well as a portion of land between it and Houghton Grange, are included within the boundary of the outline planning permission at Houghton Grange, the

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<sup>13</sup> Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council.



current indications are that it will not be built on but will simply be used to provide access. On balance, therefore, I am satisfied that there are sufficient grounds for excluding this land from the built up area.

- 4.28 I also note that land to the south of the main house at Houghton Grange is excluded from the built up area although it is within the boundary of the planning permission for Houghton Grange. Once again, I consider that there are cogent reasons for this - these being that there is currently no indication that this land would be built on and, having visited the site, I am satisfied that the character and appearance of this area relates more to the countryside to the south than to the built up area to the north.
- 4.29 Before concluding on this matter, it is necessary to look at the terms of Policy HWNP1 as put forward in Alternative Modification 1. These simply give a brief definition of the term built up area, state that areas outside that boundary are part of the open countryside and make clear what policies will apply to the built up area and open countryside. There is no mention of sustainable development and flooding, matters which were mentioned in the previous version of this policy and which were of concern to the first examiner. I am satisfied that the terms of policy HWNP1 as now proposed are appropriate although they lack an element of precision in that they do not cross refer to the built up area boundary shown on the map. This deficiency would be remedied by making that reference as shown in **PM2**.
- 4.30 Drawing together my findings on Alternative Modification 1, I am satisfied that, subject to the changes I have proposed, adequate evidence for and explanation of the built up area boundary proposed is contained in the *Built Up Areas Methodology* document contained at Appendix A to this modification. I see nothing in national policy and advice or in the strategic policies of the development plan which preclude the definition of a built up area boundary for Houghton and Wyton nor have I seen any compelling evidence that the boundary proposed would hinder the achievement of sustainable development. Alternative Modification 1, as modified, would, therefore, meet the Basic Conditions.

### ***Alternative Modification 2 – HWNP3 Anti Coalescence***

- 4.31 The undeveloped gap between St Ives and Houghton and Wyton has been referred to in various terms in a range of planning documents and by various Planning Inspectors in different reports and decision letters. However, while the retention of this gap is of considerable importance to the local community, it does not feature unequivocally in any development plan policy.

- 4.32 The nearest that any development plan policy comes to safeguarding this gap is in saved policy En15 of the 1995 Local Plan. This policy states that: *"On open spaces and gaps for protection identified on the inset maps development which would impair their open nature will not normally be allowed."* However, as the Inspector at the former St Ives Golf course appeal noted, by including the word *"normally"* this policy allows for exceptions but does not indicate the circumstances in which they may arise<sup>14</sup>. He also points out that the policy notation for En15 only extends partway across the frontage of the gap between St Ives and Houghton and Wyton<sup>15</sup> – something which I find surprising if this policy were indeed intended to safeguard the whole of the gap between the two settlements. He also took the view that neither the policy nor its supporting text indicated that the intended role for this policy was to preserve the separate identity of settlements<sup>16</sup>. I agree.
- 4.33 That is not to say that this gap should not receive some form of policy protection. Certainly, that is the wish of the community of Houghton and Wyton – and if this is to be done it is appropriate that it be done through a neighbourhood plan. Such a policy must, however have regard to the need to provide housing in the area.<sup>17</sup>
- 4.34 As has been established earlier in this report, the first examiner was satisfied that what she termed an anti-coalescence policy was justified but did not consider that the Local Settlement Gap defined in the submitted version of the Plan would meet the basic conditions. Her concern was that it would *"... prevent, or, at the very least, make it harder for the District Council to plan for the strategic needs of the District..."*<sup>18</sup>.
- 4.35 It is relevant to ask whether the same applies to the wording of Policy HWNP3 proposed in Alternative Modification 2. The District Council has confirmed that in its view Policy HWNP3 as now proposed *"...is not considered to have a material effect on the ability of the District Council to plan for the strategic needs of the district."* and points out that in the latest draft of the emerging Local Plan it is only intended to accommodate 400 houses in this area rather than 500 as proposed in an earlier draft<sup>19</sup>.
- 4.36 This statement warrants closer examination. Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy states:

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<sup>14</sup> Appeal Reference APP/H0520/W/15/3007954. Paragraph 21.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. Paragraph 22.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. Paragraph 28.

<sup>17</sup> Paragraph 16 of the Framework.

<sup>18</sup> 14 December 2015 Report. Page 24, second paragraph.

<sup>19</sup> District Council's email 3 October 2017.

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

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

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

- 4.37 The general location of the significant greenfield development to the west of St Ives is shown on the Key Diagram by way of an arrow pointing westwards out of the town towards Houghton and Wyton.
- 4.38 In the emerging Local Plan it is proposed to accommodate 400 homes within the site defined in Policy SI 1 and shown on Map 1 provided as a separate attachment to this report. This site consists of 5 parcels of land, these being;
- firstly, the former St Ives Golf Course which has planning permission for 184 dwellings and a new country park (Ref: 1301895OUT) which was granted on appeal and is now under construction;
  - secondly, The How which has a resolution to grant planning permission for 7 dwellings (Ref: 1201890FUL and Ref: 1201891FUL);
  - thirdly, the BBSRC Field which has an undetermined planning application for housing and other uses (Ref: 1301056OUT);
  - fourthly Houghton Grange, which has outline planning permission for an unspecified number of houses but which the District Council estimate could accommodate 90 dwellings (Ref: 1402210OUT); and
  - fifthly, a county wildlife site which presumably has limited potential to accommodate housing.<sup>20</sup>
- 4.39 All these sites, with the exception of The How (the position of which can be deduced) are shown on Map 1 provided as a separate attachment to this report to this report. The BBSRC Field is referred to on this map as the Local Settlement Gap. Broadly speaking the Houghton Grange site is the western part of site SI 1 to the west of the Local Settlement Gap and to the north of the County Wildlife Site.
- 4.40 In other words, out of the 400 houses to be provided between St Ives and Houghton and Wyton, planning permission for some 281 dwellings has been granted or resolved to be granted on three of the five sites which make up this land. Of the remaining two sites, one is a county wildlife site which has limited potential for housing. This leaves the BBSRC Field as the only land at present which does not have either a planning permission, a resolution to grant planning permission or a restrictive policy designation attached to it. It is, therefore, on the face of it, the

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<sup>20</sup> District Council's email 16 October 2017.

only land on which the remaining 119 or so houses allocated to this area could be sited.

- 4.41 I can understand the desire of the community to provide protection for the BBSRC Field. While there is other undeveloped land to the west of Houghton Grange, the BBSRC Field is the most prominent area of open countryside between St Ives and Houghton and Wyton and, when viewed from the road between the two, it gives long distance views towards the River Great Ouse. But Policy HWNP3 as now proposed includes the phrase;

*Development will not be permitted if, individually or cumulatively, it would result in the loss of the visual and physical separation which currently exists between these two settlements, or would lead to their coalescence. (Emphasis added)*

- 4.42 As it could be argued that any development would result in some loss of visual or physical separation as it now exists, this comes close to placing an embargo on development on the BBSRC Field.
- 4.43 Decisions as to which parcels of land should be developed in this area are to be made in the emerging Local Plan and that plan could change its approach to such development. It may be that the District Council intends to provide elsewhere for the remaining 119 or so houses allocated to this area. Additionally, or alternatively, it might be intending to reduce this number. However, it has given no indication that this is the case in either the emerging Local Plan or in the evidence to this examination. It is likely, therefore, that some difficult judgements will need to be made in that emerging plan as to where to provide for the number of houses required by Policy CS2 while treating the BBSRC Field as the cornerstone of the anti-coalescence Policy HWNP 3.
- 4.44 On the evidence available to me, however, I consider that the wording of Policy HWNP 3, which seeks to safeguard the visual and physical separation between the settlements which currently exists, would, to paraphrase the words of the first examiner, prevent, or at least make it harder for, the District Council to plan for the strategic needs of the District.
- 4.45 In this respect Policy HWNP 3 as now proposed would fail to meet the Basic Conditions in three respects. It would fail to have regard to national policy which includes the requirement to boost significantly the supply of housing<sup>21</sup>; it would not be in general conformity with Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy which allocates about 400 homes to a significant greenfield development to the west of St Ives and, consequently, it would not contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

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<sup>21</sup> Paragraph 47 of the Framework.

- 4.46 I consider that these defects would be remedied by deleting the words “*which currently exists*” as shown in **PM3**. This would be a return to the policy wording proposed by the first examiner and, in my judgement, would give the District Council sufficient leeway to make the difficult decisions it faces.
- 4.47 Moving on to another matter. It has been pointed out that the supporting text to a planning policy is relevant in determining the proper application of that policy, albeit that this text is not part of the policy<sup>22</sup>. It is, therefore, relevant to this examination to consider the supporting text to Policy HWNP 3 contained in Alternative Modification 2.
- 4.48 While this text makes several references to the BBSRC Field remaining the ‘cornerstone’ of this policy and being ‘*at the heart of that area essential to ensuring anti-coalescence*’ it does not refer to the need to provide for housing. In this respect, this supporting text is unbalanced and it should include a reference to the requirement for housing in the area as shown in **PM4**.

## 5. Conclusions

### *Summary*

- 5.1 My examination has investigated whether the matters dealt with in the policies HWNP 1 and HWNP 3 meet the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. I have had regard for all the responses made following consultation on the alternative modifications proposed to the two policies and the other evidence documents submitted.
- 5.2 I have made recommendations to change the Alternative Modifications. With these changes, I am satisfied Policies HWNP 1 and HWNP 3 meet the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements.

### *The Referendum*

- 5.3 I recommend that the Plan should proceed to referendum in accordance with the recommendations made in the December 2015 Report, subject to:

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<sup>22</sup> Legal Principle 1 of the Consultation Notes for Alternative Modification 2 HWNP 3 Anti-Coalescence.

- the modification proposed on page 21 of the first examiner's report being replaced by Alternative Modification 1, subject to the changes proposed in **PM1** and **PM2** of this report; and
- the modification proposed on page 25 of the first examiner's report being replaced by Alternative Modification 2, subject to the changes proposed in **PM3** and **PM4** of this report.

*Bob Yuille*

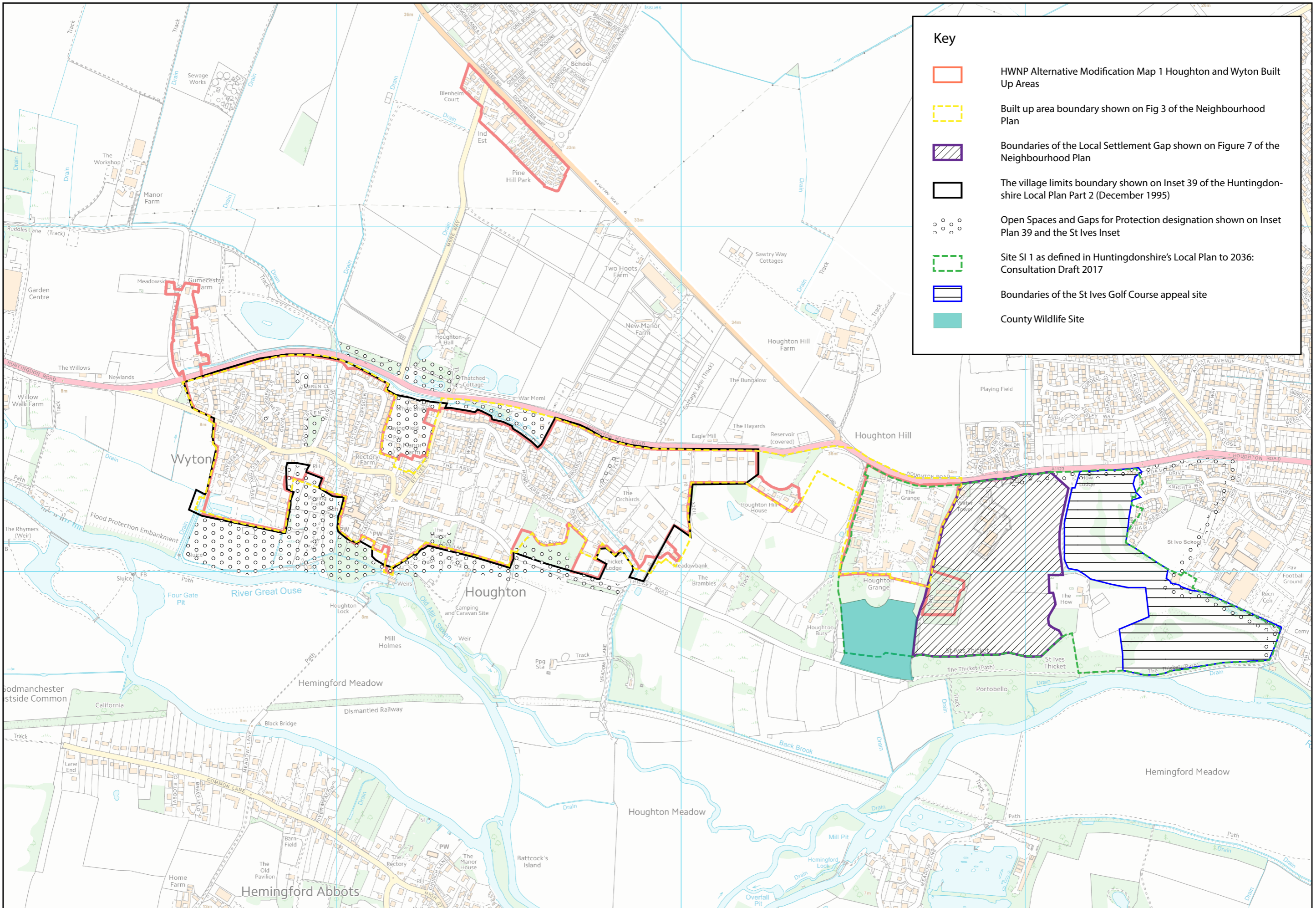
Examiner

## Appendix 1: Modifications

Proposed modification number (PM)	Page no./ other reference	Modification
PM1	The map attached to Alternative Modification 1	<i>The built up area boundary shown on this map should be modified to include part of the garden to The Moorings as shown on the map attached to the representation made by Mr David Mead on behalf of Mr William King.</i>
PM2	Policy HWNP 1	<b><i>The built up area boundary for Houghton and Wyton is shown on Figure....</i></b> (The map attached to Alternative Modification 1 needs to be given a number)
PM3	Policy HWNP 3	<b><i>Policy HWNP 3: Anti - Coalescence</i></b>  <b><i>Development proposals should respect the individual and distinct identities of the village of Houghton and Wyton and the town of St Ives. Development will not be permitted if, individually or cumulatively, it would result in the loss of the visual and physical separation which currently exists between these two settlements, or would lead to their coalescence.</i></b>
PM4	Policy Justification to Policy HWNP 3	<u>Add the following paragraph at the end of this section</u>  <b><u>The aim of preventing the coalescence of St Ives and Houghton and Wyton has, however, to be balanced against the fact that Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy allocates about 400 houses to a significant greenfield development to the west of the town. Planning permission has been granted for some of these houses a number of which have been built. Decisions as to where the remainder of these houses will</u></b>



		<b><u>be located will be made in the emerging Local Plan.</u></b>
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**Key**

- HWNP Alternative Modification Map 1 Houghton and Wyton Built Up Areas
- Built up area boundary shown on Fig 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Boundaries of the Local Settlement Gap shown on Figure 7 of the Neighbourhood Plan
- The village limits boundary shown on Inset 39 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Part 2 (December 1995)
- Open Spaces and Gaps for Protection designation shown on Inset Plan 39 and the St Ives Inset
- Site SI 1 as defined in Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036: Consultation Draft 2017
- Boundaries of the St Ives Golf Course appeal site
- County Wildlife Site

## **Draft Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan Decision Statement**

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1. Following independent examination Huntingdonshire District Council's Cabinet has decided to accept the examiner's recommended modifications and the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1. The Houghton and Wyton neighbourhood area was designated on 19 December 2012 under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012). The plan area covers the village of Houghton and Wyton and is contiguous with the parish council's administrative boundary.
- 2.2. Houghton and Wyton Parish Council, as the qualifying body, submitted the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan and its supporting evidence to Huntingdonshire District Council in June 2015. The statutory six week submission consultation was held from 19 June to 31 July 2015.
- 2.3. Huntingdonshire District Council, in discussion with Houghton and Wyton Parish Council, appointed an independent examiner, Ann Skippers MRTPI, to review whether the submitted Neighbourhood Plan met the Basic Conditions as required by legislation. Ms Skippers issued her report on 14 December 2015 which recommended that the Neighbourhood Plan, subject to the modifications proposed in her report, met the Basic Conditions and should proceed to referendum.
- 2.4. Following discussions with the qualifying body it was decided that most of the Examiner's recommendations would be accepted in full. The exceptions were those relating to the Village Limits/ Built Up Area (HWNP1) and the Local Settlement Gap (HWNP3).
- 2.5. Alternative modifications that sought to address the concerns of the Examiner, meet the Basic Conditions and reflect both the views of the residents of Houghton and Wyton and the spirit of the submission neighbourhood plan were drawn up.
- 2.6. Following consultation on the alternative modifications the independent examination was reopened with a new examiner, Mr Robert Yuille MSc DipTP MRTPI. Mr Yuille issued his report on 20 December 2017 which recommended that the alternative modifications, subject to proposed modifications, met the Basic Conditions. Therefore the Neighbourhood Plan, incorporating the accepted modifications from the original examiner's report and the alternative modifications (incorporating modifications from the second examiner's report) should proceed to referendum.
- 2.7. The Basic Conditions are:
  - Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan
  - The making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development

- The making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority
  - The making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, European Union (EU) obligations and
  - Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plan.
- 2.8. Regulations 32 and 33 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012) (as amended) set out two basic conditions in addition to those set out in primary legislation and referred to above. These are:
- The making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects
  - Having regard to all material considerations, it is appropriate that the neighbourhood development order is made where the development described in an order proposal is Environmental Impact Assessment development (this is not applicable to this examination).

### **3. Decision**

- 3.1. Huntingdonshire District Council's Cabinet considered the recommendations on 18 January 2018 and agreed to accept the recommendations from the Examiners' reports and approve the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to referendum.
- 3.2. The modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan, as needed to ensure it meets the Basic Conditions and in accordance with the Examiner's recommendations are listed in the following tables.

Examiner's Recommended Modifications received 14 December 2015

Location	Page	Modification
Introduction	1	Change the date from "April 2012" to "2011" at the end of paragraph 1.1
	1	Change the date from "2014" to "2015" in paragraph 1.4
Various	Various	Ensure that the contents page, section headings and numbers as well as figures together with paragraph 1.11 on page 3 are consistent and tie up with each other and accurately reflect the Plan's contents
Various	Various	Remove any references throughout the Plan to allocated sites or similar as appropriate (please note that this recommended modification is not repeated at every instance and so applies to the Plan as a whole)
Local Context	6	Improve the clarity of Figure 2 on page 6 and ensure it is the most up to date plan of the Conservation Area
Local Context	7	Delete paragraph 2.22 or revise and update the wording and move this issue to a separate aspirations section or document
Various	Various	Remove all other references to the proposed AONB throughout the Plan (please note that this recommended modification is not repeated at every instance and so applies to the Plan as a whole)
Local Context	8	Update paragraph 2.29 on page 8
Local Context	8	Make it clear in paragraph 2.30 on page 8 that the claims about the access are opinions or add in the evidence which supports these claims
Local Context	10	Delete paragraph 2.38 on page 10 or ensure that any repetition is removed between this paragraph and earlier ones
Vision and Objectives	12	Correct typo in paragraph 3.1; "the" instead of "he"
Vision and Objectives	13	Delete paragraph 3.8 on page 13
Vision and Objectives	13	Check the figure of 150,000 visitors cited in paragraph 3.11 for accuracy and make any necessary changes
Vision and Objectives	14	Reword objective 1 to read: "To protect and enhance the green spaces of importance within the parish and to resist the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land wherever possible."
Vision and Objectives & various	14 & Various	Delete objective 13 (consequential amendments will be needed)
Vision and Objectives	14	Reword objective 17 to read: "To steer new development to areas of lower flood risk as far as possible."
Village Limits/ Built Up Area	17	Delete Policy HWNP1 and its supporting text
Natural Environment	19	Make Figure 4 more legible and simpler
Natural Environment	19 & 20	Delete Figures 5 and 6 showing common land
Natural Environment	20	Policy HWNP2 should be reworded as follows:

Location	Page	Modification
		"All new development should protect and, wherever possible, enhance biodiversity and establish, enhance or extend ecological corridors and the connectivity between them. Development on land within or outside a SSSI likely to have an adverse effect on a SSSI interest, either individually or cumulatively, should not normally be permitted. Where an adverse effect is likely, permission should only be granted where the benefits of the development, at this site, clearly outweigh both the impacts that it is likely to have on the site's features and any wider impacts on the national network of SSSIs."
Natural Environment	20 & various	Consequential amendments to the supporting text will be necessary
Natural Environment	21	Reword Policy HWNP 3 as follows: "Development proposals should respect the individual and distinct identities of the village of Houghton and the town of St Ives. Development will not be permitted if, individually or cumulatively, it would result in the loss of the visual and physical separation of these two settlements or lead to their coalescence."
Natural Environment	22	Delete Figure 7 on page 22
Natural Environment	23	Revise Figure 8 on page 23 so that the area of Local Green Space retained is clearly shown and easily distinguishable from the background colour wash (or remove the colour wash) and ensure that the name of the LGS is the same as in the text (or vice versa)
Natural Environment	27	Delete The Elms and the BBSRC field as Local Green Spaces from Policy HWNP4 and undertake consequential amendments to the supporting text and figure
Natural Environment	27	Replace the sentence "...and will be strongly protected from development:..." in Policy HWNP4 to "...and will be protected from development other than in very special circumstances:.."
Natural Environment	27	Change the reference in Policy HWNP4 from "Figure 4.3" to "Figure 8" (or ensure consistency)
Natural Environment	32	Reword Policy HWNP5 as follows: "The green areas and verges identified on Figure X [or on pages XXXX] are valued for their biodiversity and contribution to the village's character and distinctiveness. Development that protects and enhances the openness and biodiversity of these areas will be supported. Development that would detract from the special characteristics or biodiversity of these areas will be resisted."
Natural Environment	32 & various	Consequential amendments to the supporting text and a decision on how best to identify the areas concerned will be needed
Natural Environment	34	Reword Policy HWNP6 as follows: "Development is expected to protect and enhance biodiversity assets including species-rich meadows, the River Great Ouse and areas of semi-natural habitat associated with the river. If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, permission will be refused."
Natural Environment	34, 20 &	Consider any overlap with (the modified) Policy HWNP2 and amend supporting text as necessary

Location	Page	Modification
	various	
Natural Environment	34	Amend text in paragraph 5.24 on page 34 to refer to "Figure 9" rather than "Figure 5.5"
Natural Environment	34	Ensure that Figure 9 is up to date or refer to the most recent classifications in the supporting text and avoid the need for a figure as this could be out of date quickly
Natural Environment	35	Delete paragraphs 5.26, 5.27 and 5.28 on page 35
Natural Environment	35	Reword Policy HWNP7 as follows: "Development of the best and most versatile agricultural land (as defined in the NPPF) will normally be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that significant development of agricultural land is necessary and no other land of a poorer agricultural quality is available."
Tourism	37	Reword Policy HWNP9 as follows: "Proposals for new or expanded accommodation for tourists will be supported provided that the following criteria are met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the impact on the existing road network would be acceptable; and</li> <li>• pedestrian and cycle access to services in the village is provided wherever possible and ideally via footpaths and cycle routes; and</li> <li>• there would be no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or the setting of any listed building in the Parish or the countryside."</li> </ul>
Tourism	38	Reword Policy HWNP10 as follows: "The change of use of tourist accommodation to permanent dwellings will only be permitted when it can be reasonably demonstrated that the tourist accommodation is no longer viable. Evidence may include details of the business case and marketing of the property as a going concern at a market price over a period of months normally taken to be representative of two trading seasons."
Community Infrastructure	39	Delete the second paragraph from Policy HWNP11 and include it as part of the supporting text
Community Infrastructure	39	Delete the third paragraph from Policy HWNP11
Developer Contributions for Community Infrastructure	40	Delete or change Policy HWNP12 into a 'community aspiration' or similar ensuring that it is clearly differentiated from the policies in the Plan
Traffic and Transport	41	Consequential changes will need to be made to paragraph 9.1 which refers to this policy
Traffic and Transport	42	Delete Policy HWNP13 with the exception of paragraph three
Traffic and Transport	42 & various	Consequential amendments will need to be made to the supporting text
Traffic and Transport	43	Delete the first paragraph and all parking standards from Policy HWNP14
Traffic and Transport	43	Retain the last sentence of the policy and insert the word "public" after "...additional..." and before



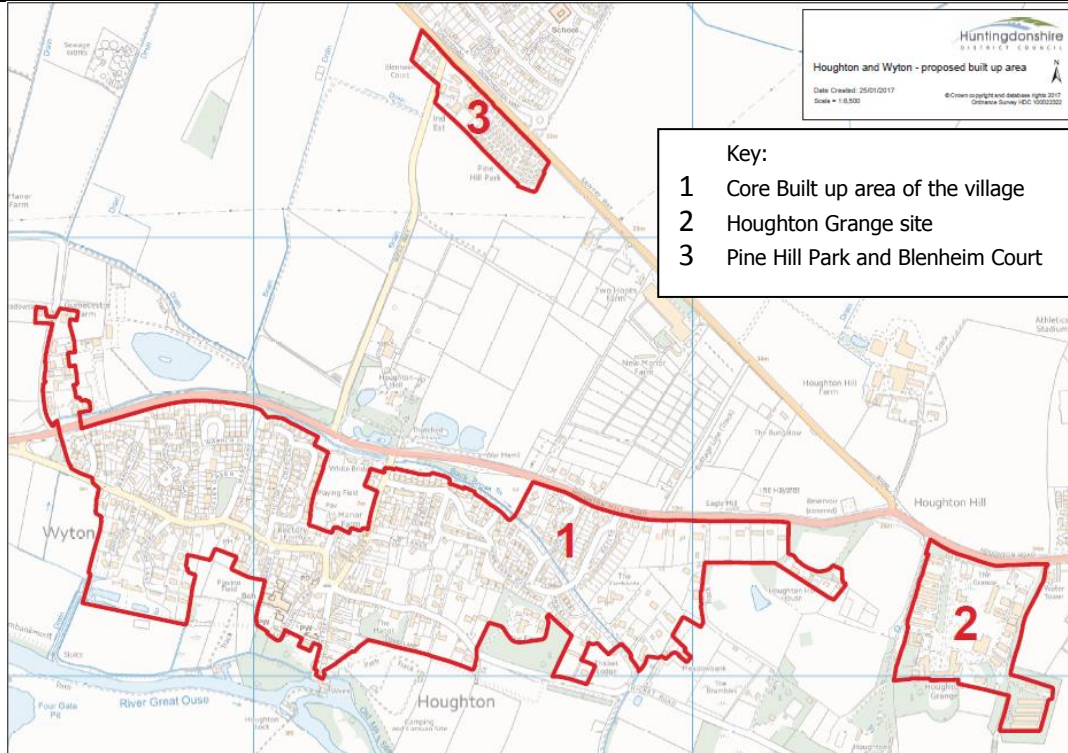
Location	Page	Modification
		"...car parking..."
Traffic and Transport	43	Ensure that the identification of photographs and figures is consistent
Traffic and Transport	43 & various	Consequential amendments to the supporting text will be needed
Traffic and Transport	44	Add "...or demonstrably unviable..." after "...physically not possible..." and before "...to make such provision.." to paragraph 9.14 on page 44
Flood Risk and Drainage	46	Delete the first paragraph from Policy HWNP16
Flood Risk and Drainage	46	Reword the (existing) second paragraph of Policy HWNP16 to: "Development will only be permitted in areas benefitting from defences where the sequential and exception tests are passed and residual risk of flooding has been considered and it can be demonstrated that the development will be safe."
Flood Risk and Drainage	46	Amend the (existing) third paragraph to read: "Any development which would reduce the flood plain storage capacity of a site will not be permitted unless an alternative storage facility is provided to compensate within the site on a level-for-level and volume-for-volume basis. Reference should be made to the SFRA maps which define the extent of the functional flood plain and any such facilities should be approved by the Environment Agency or other appropriate body."
Flood Risk and Drainage	46	Amend the (existing) fifth paragraph to read: "Replacement dwellings and buildings will only be permitted in areas at risk of flooding if it can be demonstrated they will be substantially safer and will reduce flood risk, taking into account the effects of climate change."
Flood Risk and Drainage	46	Amend the (existing) sixth paragraph to read "All developments will be expected to demonstrate they have followed the surface water management hierarchy to ensure that infiltration and other methods of surface water disposal are considered and provided for before ahead of maintaining any connection to existing surface water sewers."
Flood Risk and Drainage	46	Replace the word "applications" in (existing) eighth paragraph with "permissions"
Flood Risk and Drainage	45	Consequential changes may be needed to the supporting text
Business	48	Reword Policy HWNP17 as follows: "Proposals for new or expanding businesses will be supported provided that they are appropriate to their rural setting and respect the character of the village, the countryside and wider landscape including views in and out of the area. Any such use will need to ensure that its impact on light, noise and air is acceptable. Proposals that provide suitable space for start-up or incubator businesses, develop the Parish's agricultural base or increase retail space in the village centre are particularly encouraged. The loss of existing retail or other community services and facilities will be resisted unless

Location	Page	Modification
		<p>alternative or enhanced provision is made elsewhere in suitable and accessible locations in the Parish or it can be demonstrated that the use is no longer viable.</p> <p>New development along the A1123, A141 or B1090 should seek to retain existing trees, hedges and ditches wherever possible to protect the rural setting.</p> <p>Any new development should not increase flood risk. Planning applications for development within the Plan area must be accompanied by a site-specific flood risk assessment in line with the requirements of national policy and advice, but may also be required on a site by site basis based on locally available evidence."</p>
Business	49	Delete Policy HWNP18 in its entirety and its supporting text
Housing	52	<p>Reword Policy HWNP19 as follows:</p> <p>"Residential development on windfall sites in the villages that meets local needs will be supported. In particular, the provision of one or two bedroomed units and housing that meets the needs of older people is particularly encouraged. Self-build units will be supported on appropriate sites."</p>
Housing	50, 51 & various	Consequential amendments to the supporting text will be needed including ensuring that paragraph 12.14 is brought into line with national policy and advice and reflects recommended changes to the issue of flooding made throughout this report
Design of New Development	55	<p>Reword Policy HWNP20 as follows:</p> <p>"New development will be supported where it can demonstrate that the following criteria are all met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it respects the character or appearance of the village and its heritage assets including the Conservation Area and the setting of the Great Ouse Valley</li> <li>• it responds positively to the heritage and distinctive features of any Character Area in which it is situated and pays particular attention to the site's topography and height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation and materials</li> <li>• it is of a high quality design and, where appropriate, is of a distinctive and individual character</li> <li>• it retains and incorporates, where possible, existing natural features such as trees, hedgerows and ponds</li> <li>• it takes any opportunity available to provide safe, accessible and well connected footpath and cycle routes to the village centre, and</li> <li>• where the development is located at the edge of the settlement it takes account of, and respects, the character of adjacent countryside by providing landscaping and / or developing at a lower height as appropriate to reflect its fringe location." </li></ul>
Design of New Development	53 & 54	Consequential amendments to the supporting text will be needed
Design of New Development	54	Change reference in paragraph 13.11 from "Policy HWNP21" to "Policy HWNP20"

Location	Page	Modification
Existing Development Sites – Parish Needs and Intentions	56 & 57	Move section 14 in its entirety to a separate section (which does not appear as part of the Plan) or appendix of the Plan which is clearly labelled 'community aspirations' or delete in its entirety
Existing Development Sites – Parish Needs and Intentions	56 & 57	Clarify or remove the reference to sui generis uses in paragraph 14.7
Existing Development Sites – Parish Needs and Intentions	57	Move paragraph 14.13 so that it sits within the correct section
Existing Development Sites – Parish Needs and Intentions	56 & 57	Consequential changes may be required
Monitoring and Community Action Plan	58	Clarify paragraphs 15.4 and 15.5 further
Monitoring and Community Action Plan	58	Move the part of section 15 headed "Community Right to Bid" in its entirety to a separate section (which does not appear as part of the Plan) or appendix of the Plan which is clearly labelled or delete in its entirety

#### Alternative modifications for policies HWNP 1 and HWNP 3

Location	Modification
Section 4, Village Limits/Built Up Area, pages 15 to 17	<p><b>Alternative Modification 1 - HWNP 1 Built Up Areas</b></p> <p>The following content replaces Figure 3: Indicative Built Up area of Houghton and Wyton and policy HWNP1 – Houghton and Wyton village limits/built up area.</p> <p><b>Policy justification</b></p> <p>The NPPF makes clear distinctions between built up areas and the countryside. To assist with interpretation of the neighbourhood plan's policies, built up areas have therefore been defined and mapped; all land outside the defined boundary is deemed to be countryside and subject to policies influencing development outside the built up area.</p>



**Policy**

**Policy HWNP1 - Houghton and Wyton built up area**

A built up area is defined as a distinct group of 30 or more homes and their immediate surroundings.

Other areas outside the built up area are part of the open countryside.

Proposals for development within the built up area will be guided by the relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies and other policies in the development plan.

Proposals for development outside of the defined built up areas will be acceptable where they comply with relevant policies for building in the countryside.

<b>Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP1</b>	<b>1,2,3,10,16</b>
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Section 5, Local Settlement Gap, pages 21 to 22

**Alternative Modification 2 – HWNP 3 Anti Coalescence**

The following content replaces Local Settlement Gap paragraphs 5.5 to 5.7, policy HWNP3 – Local Settlement Gap and Figure 7: local Settlement Gap.

## Prevention of coalescence with St Ives

Working together with policy HWNP1, this policy seeks to protect the village character and distinctiveness by retaining and enhancing a clear and obvious open land gap between the village and neighbouring market town of St Ives.

Historically the land identified in Development Plan documents separating Houghton & Wyton from St.Ives has comprised that land extending east of Houghton Grange and being made up of the St.Ives Golf Course, BBSRC Field and Thicket Wood.

Previous Inspectors of Development Plan documents have carefully described and defined the area in question using various terms such as ‘green gap’, ‘open gap’; ‘separation’ and ‘green wedge’. They have valued its importance using comments that it ‘should not be impinged upon’, ‘not compromised’ and ‘should be protected’, including that it was ‘vital’.

The Inspector of the Core Strategy 2009 stated that ‘separation should be retained’ and during preparation of the plan, the SHLAA 2009 specifically excluded the BBSRC field from development for this reason.

Whilst recognising the vital importance of maintaining a gap between village and town, subsequent plans have allowed some development of the town westwards and onto the northern section of old St.Ives golf course. In so doing this has reduced the area of land capable of physically separating the communities.

The depletion of historic land area once making up the ‘green gap’ now means that the BBSRC field occupies the only undeveloped frontage adjoining the A1123. It represents the last undeveloped and largely open area of agricultural and grassland countryside east of the village, as well as running north to south, uninterrupted from the A1123 south to the Thicket.

As a consequence the BBSRC field has gained importance in ensuring anti coalescence is maintained.

Whilst the BBSRC field together with the Thicket wood immediately to the south of it, remains the cornerstone of this policy, it should be noted that the surrounding areas of land which knit together in a patchwork across Houghton Hill, and continue to include the remaining undeveloped southern slopes of the old golf course (although not within the designated area of this Neighbourhood Plan) ; the county wildlife site (south of Houghton Grange); as well as the albeit secondary, more manicured gardens belonging to the scattering of houses west of Houghton Grange; are all now increasingly important in helping to maintain the perception of separation.

Whilst recognising an increased reliance upon the wider area working together to deliver the objective of anti coalescence, the Core Strategy 2009 does not include a specific anti-coalescence policy which brings these areas together and defines them as a gap.

The importance to the community of anti coalescence between Houghton and Wyton the western edge of St Ives has historically been very significant. This continues to be the case as evidenced through the funding of a court case, a petition of over 700 signatures and many letters to the District Council on the subject as well as the Neighbourhood Plan surveys and consultations. It is the opinion of the community of Houghton and Wyton that, with the growth of neighbouring St Ives, assimilation would not be possible without totally destroying the historic character of the parish and the settlements.

It is therefore the purpose of HWNP policy 3 to define and protect those areas of land responsible for delivering both the actual and perceived anti coalescence of village and town as experienced from road, footpaths, meadow or river.

## Policy justification

Huntingdonshire is characterised by a variety of individual towns and villages. However, as stated in the Local Development Scoping Report 2007 which informed the Core Strategy 2009, the extent of urban development over the past 50 years has transformed the appearance of its market towns and has also had a major impact on many of the villages. It went on to say that in some cases this has led to the incorporation of previously distinct settlements such as Eaton Socon (St. neots) and Hartford (Huntingdon).

Houghton and Wyton can contribute to maintaining this rich tapestry by way of ensuring the continued separation between the built up area of the village and the town of St Ives. This will help to protect the special character of Houghton and Wyton which has a clear and distinct identity as a village from that of St Ives as a market town.

The landscape of Houghton Hill is valued as a significant and unique topographical feature in the area forming a key element in long distance views across the Ouse Valley and contributing to the setting of both Houghton and Wyton and St Ives.

Historically Houghton Hill House and Houghton Grange stood in extensive grounds somewhat detached from the eastern end of Houghton. Housebuilding since the 1950s has extended the village eastwards such that Houghton Hill House is now connected to the eastern end of the defined built up area. Houghton Hill house has an entrance from the A1123 with a section of landscaped garden with ornamental tree cover fronting the road and helping to partially conceal the house.

Next to this is Houghton Grange which has been identified as an allocated development site within the Core Strategy. This site is detached from the core village and when developed will be large enough to create its own built up area. The woodland belt surrounding the site on three sides to the south, east and west, does screen views of the site. This is particularly important on the eastern flank and to the south where it links to Houghton Meadow county wildlife site and leads down to countryside footpaths. On the northern edge of the site, two large listed gate houses front onto the road on either side of a long wide entrance. A water tower is also situated on the north-eastern corner next to the A1123 and both form landmarks when travelling along this road. To the north of the A1123 recent development in St Ives has extended westwards such that it now directly abuts the extensive open farmland rising to the north of Houghton Grange; however, this land lies within the parish of Wyton on the Hill and is outside the scope of this neighbourhood plan.

Westward of Houghton Grange, a scattering of individual properties and gardens create a patchwork and populate the ridge and lower slopes before connecting with the built up area of the core village.

The eastern edge is separated from St Ives by a more open and larger tract of land, known as the BBSRC Field. It is the only significant natural grassland area left between the village and the town. It is also the last remaining area of open frontage along the A1123 affording glimpses of long distance views from the road. Taken together with the Thicket wood it is the only area of land which runs uninterrupted by housing north to south from the road to the valley floor. It does contain two small groups derelict buildings on its western edge, formerly used in association with Houghton Grange as a poultry research station. One of these groups is attached to the south western corner of Houghton Grange and has been included within the built up area specified in Policy HNWP1. Once again this is heavily screened from the southern approaches by mature trees.

The District's historical Development Planning documentation stretching back over 20 years has consistently recognised the BBSRC field and Thicket wood as being at the heart of providing the important and substantial separation of Houghton & Wyton from St.Ives.

In the development of the Core Strategy 2009 the BBSRC Field is expressly treated by the source material for Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy as being unsuitable for residential development, precisely because of its importance in forming the landscape gap between St Ives and Houghton.

Further support for the above interpretation comes from the Core Strategy's express saving of Policies EN 15 and EN17 of the 1995 Local Plan.

With the granting of planning permission and current building programme for the old St.Ives golf course, the remaining land i.e. the BBSRC field and Thicket wood, has become significantly more important to maintain separation. However, it is also much more apparent that in order to maintain a meaningful perception of separation, both visually and physically, this now has to work in conjunction with other areas of undeveloped and unallocated land lying between the two settlements.

This policy recognises this need, ensuring that coalescence with St Ives is prevented and the special character of Houghton and Wyton is therefore retained. In doing so it puts the BBSRC field and Thicket wood at the heart of that area essential to ensuring anti coalescence, together with the surrounding area of the County wildlife site (south of Houghton Grange) and the gardens west of Houghton Grange (but excluding the built up areas defined in HWNP1).

### Policy

#### Policy HWNP3 – Anti –coalescence

Development proposals should respect the individual and distinct identities of the village of Houghton and Wyton and the town of St Ives. Development will not be permitted if, individually or cumulatively, it would result in the loss of the visual and physical separation which currently exists between these two settlements, or would lead to their coalescence.

**Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP3**

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9,**

#### Proposed Modifications from the Examination of the Built up Areas and Anti-Coalescence Policies received 20 November

Proposed modification number (PM)	Page no./ other reference	Modification
PM1	The map attached to Alternative Modification 1	<i>The built up area boundary shown on this map should be modified to include part of the garden to The Moorings as shown on the map attached to the representation made by Mr David Mead on behalf of Mr William King.</i>



PM2	Policy HWNP 1	<b><i>The built up area boundary for Houghton and Wyton is shown on Figure....</i></b> (The map attached to Alternative Modification 1 needs to be given a number)
PM3	Policy HWNP 3	<p><b><i>Policy HWNP 3: Anti - Coalescence</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Development proposals should respect the individual and distinct identities of the village of Houghton and Wyton and the town of St Ives. Development will not be permitted if, individually or cumulatively, it would result in the loss of the visual and physical separation <del>which currently exists</del> between these two settlements, or would lead to their coalescence.</i></b></p>
PM4	Policy Justification to Policy HWNP 3	<p><u>Add the following paragraph at the end of this section</u></p> <p><b><u><i>The aim of preventing the coalescence of St Ives and Houghton and Wyton has, however, to be balanced against the fact that Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy allocates about 400 houses to a significant greenfield development to the west of the town. Planning permission has been granted for some of these houses a number of which have been built. Decisions as to where the remainder of these houses will be located will be made in the emerging Local Plan.</i></u></b></p>

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Panel	Study	Date	Status	Action	Date for Future Action
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189	Economy & Growth	Forward Programme		Below are a list of reports to be presented at future Panel meetings:		
		January 2018		Civil Parking Enforcement Presentation	R.T.A. Associates (External)	16/01/18
				Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan	C Kerr – Planning Service Manager (Policy)	"
		February 2018		Local Plan Update and Infrastructure Planning	C Kerr – Planning Service Manager (Policy)	01/02/18
				Memoranda of Understanding with the Local Enterprise Partnership	A Moffat – Head of Development	"
		March 2018		Endorsement of the Local Plan	C Kerr – Planning Service Manager (Policy)	08/03/18
				Community Infrastructure Levy – Update on spend	C Kerr – Planning Service Manager (Policy)	"
			Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013-2023	S Bedlow – Economic Development Manager	"	

Economy & Growth	Strategic Review of Car Parking	03/11/16	Following Cabinet's agreement to set up a Strategic Task and Finish Group, the Panel discussed the Strategic Review of Car Parking. The Panel appointed Councillors D B Dew, R Fuller, I D Gardener and T D Sanderson to the group.		
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Panel	Study	Date	Status	Action	Date for Future Action
		<p><b>06/04/17</b></p> <p><b>05/10/17</b></p>	<p>A project overview and scoping document was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>The Car Parking Vision was presented to Overview and Scrutiny and then to Cabinet on 12th October when it was approved.</p>	<p>It was agreed that the Task and Finish Group will not be led by Overview and Scrutiny; however the Panel will be responsible for the scrutiny of the Task and Finish Group's work. To date the Group have held four meetings to finalise the Car Parking Vision.</p> <p>Work on the Strategy is progressing. The Group has held two meetings (October and November) since the Vision was presented to Members. The strategy is due to be presented to the Panel in June.</p>	<p><b>07/06/18</b></p>
<p>061 Economy &amp; Growth</p>	<p>Local Plan To 2036</p>	<p><b>06/10/16</b></p> <p><b>12/12/17</b></p>	<p>Members agreed to keep the Local Plan to 2036 on the work programme. A task and finish group has not be established however the Panel have agreed that the Chairman should become the Panel expert on the topic.</p> <p>The Panel received and discussed the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.</p>	<p>The Panel is to receive a Local Plan prior to its endorsement by Council.</p>	<p><b>08/03/17</b></p>
<p>Economy &amp; Growth</p>	<p>Devolution</p>	<p><b>06/10/16</b></p>	<p>Members agreed to keep Devolution on the work programme however before appointing a Panel expert, Members would like to invite the relevant Executive Councillor responsible to a future Panel meeting to update the Panel on what work has been done so far.</p>		

Panel	Study	Date	Status	Action	Date for Future Action
		02/11/17	The Panel are to receive an update on the work of the Combined Authority from Councillors R B Howe and T Hayward.	The Panel are to receive an six month update on the work of the Combined Authority.	07/06/18
Economy & Growth	Reports Due and Regular Items		Below are a list of reports to be presented at future Panel meetings:		
191	Representatives on External Organisations	Annual	Selected Members represent the Council on various External Organisations. The Panel received updates at its meetings in November 2016 and February 2017.	Next report is due at the Panel meeting in December 2017.	06/12/18
	Marketing Strategy Work Programme	Annual	The Panel have requested annual updates on the work programme.	Report was presented in July 2017 and the next one is due at the Panel meeting in July 2018.	06/12/18
Communities & Environment	Forward Programme		Below are a list of reports to be presented at future Panel meetings:		
	January 2018		Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency Funding	Cambridgeshire County Council and Clinical Commission Group (External)	09/01/18
			Citizens Advice Bureau – Presentation	Citizens Advice Bureau (External)	"
			Corporate Enforcement Policy – Discussion Paper	C Stopford – Head of Community	"
			Huntingdonshire Living Well Area Partnership	J Wisely – Head of Leisure and Health	"

Panel	Study	Date	Status	Action	Date for Future Action
	February 2018		Community Resilience Plan (Portfolio Holder Update)	Cllr A Dickinson – Executive Councillor	<b>06/02/18</b>
	March 2018		Luminus/Places For People Presentation	Luminus/Places for People (External)	<b>06/03/18</b>
			Final report of the Tree Group	Tree Group (Cllrs Alban, Chapman, Davies and Tavener)	"
	April 2018		Hinchingbrooke County Park	N Sloper – Head of Operations	<b>03/04/18</b>
			Paxton Pits	N Sloper – Head of Operations	"
Communities & Environment	Future of Hinchingbrooke Country Park, Paxton Pits, Godmanchester Nursery and Public Rights of Way	<b>01/11/16</b>	The Panel received an exempt report on the contractual arrangements and potential improvement programme of Hinchingbrooke Country Park. The Cabinet received the same report but including the Panel's comments at its meeting in November 2016.	The Cabinet made a decision on the report. The decision remains confidential whilst negotiations are taking place.	
		<b>07/03/17</b>	Cambridgeshire County Council's Highways Maintenance Manager, Mr Jonathan Clarke, was in attendance to update Members on the maintenance of Huntingdonshire's Public Rights of Way.	A report on Hinchingbrooke Country Park is expected at the Panel meeting in April 2018.	<b>03/04/18</b>
				A report on Paxton Pits is expected at the Panel meeting in April 2018.	<b>03/04/18</b>
				A report on Godmanchester Nursery is expected at the Panel meeting in June 2018.	<b>June 2018</b>

Panel	Study	Date	Status	Action	Date for Future Action
Communities & Environment	Community Resilience Plan including relationships with Parish and Town Councils and the County Council	<b>04/07/17</b>	The Executive Councillor for Community Resilience and Well-Being gave Members an update on the Community Resilience Plan and encouraging Members to become ambassadors for the Council.	The Portfolio Holder has agreed to attend the Panel meeting in January to update Members on the work carried out.	<b>06/02/18</b>
Communities & Environment	Reports Due and Regular Items				
193	Representatives on External Organisations	<b>Annual</b>	Selected Members represent the Council on various External Organisations. The Panel received updates at its meetings in November 2016 and March 2017.	Next report is due at the Panel meeting in December 2018.	<b>04/12/18</b>
	Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership	<b>04/10/16</b>	Annual review of the work of the Partnership. The 2016/17 report is scheduled to be presented to the Panel in June 2018.	A six month update report is due at a future meeting of the Panel.	<b>05/06/18</b>
	Corporate Enforcement Policy	<b>06/12/16</b>		The Panel are to consider a discussion paper at the meeting in January.	<b>09/01/18</b>
	Air Quality in Huntingdonshire	<b>05/09/17</b>	The Panel received a presentation from the Senior Public Health Manager – Environment and Planning at Cambridgeshire County Council on Air Quality in Huntingdonshire.	The Panel resolved to revisit the issue at a future Panel meeting.	<b>To be decided</b>



Panel	Study	Date	Status	Action	Date for Future Action
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194	Performance & Customers	Forward Programme			
		January (10th) 2018	Draft Revenue Budget 2018/19 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2022/23	C Mason – Head of Resources	10/01/18
		January (31st) 2018	Final Revenue Budget 2018/19 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2022/23	C Mason – Head of Resources	31/01/18
			Integrated Performance Report 17/18 – Quarter 3	D Buckridge – Policy, Performance and Transformation Manager (Scrutiny)	"
			Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19	A Forth – Finance Manager	"
			Corporate Risk Register	D Harwood – Audit and Risk Manager	"
			CCTV Commercialisation Business Case (Exempt Item)	C Stopford – Head of Community	"
		March 2018	Lettings Policy Review	J Collen – Housing Needs and Resource Manager	07/03/18
			Twelve Month Review of Bearscroft Farm Local Lettings Plan	J Collen – Housing Needs and Resource Manager	"
		Document Centre Commercialisation Business Case (Exempt Item)	C Stopford – Head of Community	"	

Panel	Study	Date	Status	Action	Date for Future Action
Performance & Customers	One Leisure Value For Money	<p><b>05/07/17</b></p> <p><b>12/09/17</b></p>	<p>The Panel agreed to create the Task and Finish Group. The following are Members of the Group: Councillors R C Carter, D B Dew, Mrs L A Duffy, M Francis, Mrs D C Reynolds and R J West.</p> <p>The first meeting of the Task and Finish Group was held.</p>	<p>A second meeting was held in November. The Group has decided to question previous Portfolio Holders. Also a substantial amount of evidence has been presented to the Group for review and their findings will be presented to the Panel in their final report.</p>	<b>07/03/18</b>
Performance & Customers	Social Value In Procurement			A report has been draft and will be presented to a meeting of the Panel.	<b>To be decided</b>

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