

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH)** will be held as a **REMOTE MEETING VIA ZOOM** on **WEDNESDAY, 7TH OCTOBER 2020** at **6:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

AGENDA

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 10)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) meeting held on 16th September 2020.

Contact Officer: A Green 01223 752549

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 11 - 18)

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.

Contact Officer: H Peacey 01223 752548

4. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 19 - 22)

The Panel are to receive the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

Contact Officer: A Green 01223 752549

5. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY GOVERNANCE (Pages 23 - 52)

The Panel will receive a report on the Community Infrastructure Levy Governance.

Contact Officer: C Kerr 01480 388430

6. "PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE" WHITE PAPER CONSULTATION RESPONSE
(Pages 53 - 82)

The response for the “Planning for the Future” White Paper consultation will be presented to the Panel.

Contact Officer: C Kerr 01480 388430

7. HOUSING STRATEGY 2020-2025 (Pages 83 - 122)

Members are to receive the Housing Strategy 2020-2025.

Contact Officer: D Edwards 07768 238708

8. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ON COUNCIL OWNED SITES (Pages 123 - 146)

A report on housing development on Council owned sites will be presented to the Panel.

Please note that the appendices are confidential (Part 2). Should Members want to discuss these then the meeting will have to enter into confidential (Part 2) session.

Contact Officer: D Edwards 07768 238708

29th day of September 2020



Head of Paid Service

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Non-Statutory Disclosable Interests

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

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Arrangements for these activities should operate in accordance with [guidelines](#) agreed by the Council.

Please contact Mr Adam Green, Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny), Tel No. 01223 752549/e-mail 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](#), together with a link to the Broadcast of the meeting.

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 (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH) held as a remote meeting via Zoom on Wednesday, 16th September 2020

PRESENT: Councillor E R Butler – Vice-Chairman, in the Chair.

Councillors B S Chapman, J C Cooper-Marsh, D B Dew, I D Gardener, M S Grice, A Roberts, S Wakeford and D J Wells.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors, S J Corney, Dr P L R Gaskin and J P Morris.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors R Fuller, J A Gray and J Neish.

19 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 8th July 2020 and 28th July 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

20 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

21 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 had been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st September 2020 to 31st December 2020.

22 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21, QUARTER 1

With the aid of a report by the Chief Finance Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Council's financial performance for quarter 1 of 2020/21 was presented to the Panel.

In summarising the report, the Chief Finance Officer informed the Panel that the Council had experienced a loss of revenue as well as extra expenditure as a result of the pandemic and subsequent lockdown. There would be compensation from the Government but the details were yet to be finalised. The accuracy of the budget estimates were dependent on whether there would be a second wave of Covid-19 and reintroduction of restrictions.

Members were informed that the estimated £2.9m deficit was not as bad as originally feared. The Council had been able to assist many residents and had provided support packages for businesses. The Council had also received emergency funding to cover unexpected expenditure.

Councillor Cooper-Marsh asked what the impact of a second lockdown or local lockdown would be upon the finances of the Council. The Panel was informed that the impact would be dependent on the support the Council would offer to vulnerable residents and whether there were any further restrictions on leisure services, which would impact on One Leisure.

A concern was raised by Councillor Cooper-Marsh regarding the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on next year's Council Tax and particularly whether it would be likely to rise to cover lost income. In response, the Panel was reassured that Council Tax could not rise any further than the statutory maximum.

In following on, Councillor Wells asked whether the budget forecast included any predicted future losses in relation to One Leisure income particularly as a result of any capacity limits that might have to be implemented. In response, Members were informed that the forecast included future losses and that estimates were made based on a slow recovery. However, there was a compensation scheme under which leisure facilities could claim 75p for every £1 of income lost.

Councillor Dew questioned whether the perceived lack of daytime bookings was accounted for in budget estimates. The Chief Finance Officer stated that estimates were as accurate as they could be and would therefore account for variances in attendance.

The discussion moved onto the Commercial Investment Strategy (CIS). Councillor Roberts asked what impact the pandemic would have on it and any future investments. The Panel was reassured that rental income was higher than the same period the previous year despite the fact that the council had not added to its acquisitions. In addition, the Executive Councillor confirmed that it was unlikely that there would be any CIS purchases in the current economic climate.

The Council's social obligations in its role as a landlord of CIS properties was raised by Councillor Wakeford. The Panel was informed that under the ICS the Council operated on a commercial basis but that it was aware of its social obligations. These were met through engagement with tenants and the Commercial Estates Team worked hard in establishing which of them required assistance.

Councillor Chapman enquired whether the capital value of the Council's CIS properties had fallen or was expected to fall. It was confirmed that some values had fallen but that the Council did not invest in the properties for their capital values but rather for the rental revenues.

Councillor Chapman then raised the issue of the reintroduction of car parking charges and asked whether there was scope to reduce the charges in order to assist retail in the District's market towns. In response, Members were informed that some retail areas were suffering before the pandemic and that the important aim was to diversify town centres as studies showed these fared better than those that offered a purely retail experience.

With the aid of a report by the Performance and Data Analyst (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Council's performance for quarter 1 of 2020/21 was presented to the Panel. The Chief Operating Officer informed the Panel that the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted many areas and that all the key actions and corporate indicators that were rated red were attributed to the pandemic and associated lockdown. Members were reminded that throughout the pandemic the Council had continued to provide services as well as assistance to vulnerable residents.

Councillor Chapman thanked the Council for the way it had worked with volunteer groups throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Councillor Wakeford enquired whether the Council could continue the additional homelessness support once the Covid-19 pandemic was over. In response, the Panel was informed that Huntingdonshire normally had low levels of homelessness and the challenge was to identify good temporary accommodation. The provision of additional support was something that could be considered.

24 CORPORATE PLAN REFRESH 2020/21

With the aid of a report by the Business Intelligence and Performance Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Corporate Plan Refresh 2020/21 was presented to the Panel.

Councillor Roberts asked how important partnership working would be going forward. In response, the Panel was informed that partnership working was crucial for the Council in order to fulfil the aims of the Corporate Plan. There were significant problems which required the Council to work with partners to resolve them for the benefit of Huntingdonshire residents.

RESOLVED

- a) that the Corporate Plan Refresh be endorsed, and
- b) that the Cabinet be recommended to endorse the proposed list of key actions and performance indicators for 2020/21.

25 A141 AND ST IVES STUDY

Consideration was given to a report by the Service Manager Growth (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which were appended the findings of the A141 Huntingdon Capacity Study and the St Ives Transport Study.

The Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning informed Members that the studies started in April 2018 and that the aim was to look at ways to increase capacity and unlock areas for growth. In addition, it was noted that where the report mentioned 'Quick-Wins' they only related to St Ives. The Service Manager Growth added that the study had identified that there would be problems in unlocking Wyton for growth and therefore the area was not included within the Local Plan.

Councillor Gardener raised a concern over the possibility of a lack of capacity on the B-roads around the A141 once the upgrade had been completed. In response, Members were reassured that phase two of the study would involve more in-depth analysis to ensure the local road network had sufficient capacity to cope. It was noted that this would also include changing prioritisation of some routes to ensure the majority of the traffic was directed where it was intended.

Councillor Dew asked whether the study had considered rerouting Harrison Way in order to make access to St Ives easier. In response, Members were informed that any such suggestions would be considered during a more in-depth St Ives study. The current study only reviewed the current situation and did not look at future capacity.

The Panel supported the contents of the report and

RESOLVED

To recommend that the Cabinet

- a) endorses the results of the A141 Study
- b) endorses the results of the St Ives Transport Study
- c) approves the list of proposals identified in the St Ives study and supports CCC in their submission to the Combined Authority for funding, and for consultation and delivery should funding be secured, and
- d) approves the CPCA recommendation of a new dedicated strategic study for St Ives.

26 ENGLAND'S ECONOMIC HEARTLANDS CONSULTATION RESPONSE

With the aid of a report by the Service Manager Growth (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Council's response to the England's Economic Heartlands Consultation was presented to the Panel.

In introducing the item, the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and the Service Manager Growth explained to the Panel that what was presented was a response to a consultation and that the Council was a consultee.

Councillor Cooper-Marsh asked about the East West Rail project. Members were reminded that that whilst England's Economic Heartlands would like oversight of East West Rail, it was not the lead authority and, instead, was a consultee. It was confirmed that the East West Rail consortium would lead on that project.

Councillor Wells suggested that the response should emphasise that the Huntingdonshire section of the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro (CAM) should be given priority. In response, the Panel was informed that the Combined Authority were currently reviewing CAM as a whole project and that the Executive Councillor continued to emphasise the need to prioritise the Huntingdonshire section.

Councillor Gardener raised a concern regarding HGVs using minor routes as short cuts and sought assurance that the response would emphasise there was a need for official routes for HGVs. In response, it was noted that the consultation as a whole took a strategic approach across the Cam-Ox corridor and that

particular incidents of HGVs using minor routes, particularly through villages, should be taken up with the relevant Highway Authority.

Following on, Councillor Chapman raised a concern that additional traffic coming into Huntingdonshire as a result of the decisions made in the Bedford Borough Council Local Plan had not been taken into consideration. The Panel was informed that the District Council was consulted as a neighbourhood consultee but that Bedford Borough Council would also have to consult with Cambridgeshire County Council as well, particularly if there were highway implications within the Local Plan.

27 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

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

Chairman

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

Prepared by: Councillor R Fuller, Executive Leader of the Council
 Date of Publication: 23 September 2020
 For Period: 1 October 2020 to 31 January 2021

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

Councillor Details		Councillor Contact Details
Councillor Mrs M L Beuttell	Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment	Care of Huntingdonshire District Council Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon PE29 3TN Tel: 01480 388388 E-mail: Marge.Beuttell@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor S Bywater	Executive Councillor for Community Resilience and Well-Being	9 Crabapple Close Sawtry Huntingdon PE28 5QG Tel: 07984 637553 E-mail: Simon.Bywater@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor R Fuller	Executive Leader of the Council and Executive Councillor for Housing and Economic Development	8 Sarah Grace Court New Road St Ives Huntingdon PE27 5DS Tel: 01480 388311 E-mail: Ryan.Fuller@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Councillor J A Gray	Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources	Vine Cottage 2 Station Road Catworth Huntingdon PE28 OPE Tel: 01832 710799 E-mail: Jonathan.Gray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor D Keane	Executive Councillor for Corporate Services	1 Bells Villas Mill Street Houghton Cambridgeshire PE28 2BA Tel: 01480 467147 E-mail: David.Keane@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor J Neish	Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning	7 Willow Green Needingworth St Ives Cambridgeshire PE27 4SW Tel: 01480 466110 E-mail: Jon.Neish@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor K Prentice	Executive Councillor for Leisure and Regulatory Services	2 Ushers Court 89 Great North Road Eaton Socon St Neots PE19 8EL Tel: 01480 214838 E-mail: Keith.Prentice@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

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Notice is hereby given of:

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

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

Agendas may be accessed electronically at the [District Council's website](#).

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

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

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

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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.

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 (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Community Chest Grant Aid Awards 2020/21	Grants Panel	2, 14 & 28 Oct 2020 11 & 25 Nov 2020 9 & 23 Dec 2020		Claudia Deeth, Community Resilience Manager Tel No: 01480 388233 or email: Claudia.Deeth@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		R Fuller & S Bywater	Customers and Partnerships
Community Infrastructure Levy Governance***	Cabinet	22 Oct 2020		Clara Kerr, Service Manager - Growth Tel No: 01480 388430 or email: Clara.Kerr@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J Neish	Performance and Growth

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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 (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
"Planning for the Future" Consultation Response***	Cabinet	22 Oct 2020		Clara Kerr, Service Manager - Growth Tel No: 01480 388430 or email: Clara.Kerr@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J Neish	Performance and Growth
Free Strategy***	Cabinet	22 Oct 2020		Tamsin Miles, Arboricultural Officer Tel No: 01480 388679 or email: Tamsin.Miles@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J Neish	Customer and Partnerships
Housing Strategy to 2025	Cabinet	22 Oct 2020		David Edwards, Corporate Director (Interim) Tel No: 01480 388832 or email: David.Edwards@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		R Fuller	Performance and Growth

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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 (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Housing Development on Council Owned Sites##	Cabinet	22 Oct 2020	Report available but the Appendices will be exempt.	Adrian Davey, Housing Delivery Consultant Tel No: 07947 816050 or email: Adrian.Davey@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	3	R Fuller	Performance and Growth
Healthy Open Spaces and Play Strategy	Cabinet	22 Oct 2020		Helen Lack, Development Manager Tel No: 01480 388658 / email Helen.Lack@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		M L Beuttell	Customers and Partnerships
Approval of Council Tax Base 2021/22	Chairman of Corporate Governance and Section 151 Officer	8 Dec 2020		Amanda Burns, Revenues and Benefits Manager Tel No: 01480 388122 or email: Anmanda.Burns@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J A Gray	Performance and Growth

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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 (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Waste Minimisation Strategy***	Cabinet	10 Dec 2020		Neil Sloper, Head of Operations Tel No: 01480 388635 or email: Neil.Sloper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		Mrs M L Beuttell	Customer and Partnerships
Lackden Neighbourhood Plan	Cabinet	10 Dec 2020		Clare Bond, Planning Policy Team Leader Tel No: 01480 388435 or email: Clare.Bond@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J Neish	Performance and Growth
Lettings Policy Review	Cabinet	10 Dec 2020		Jon Collen, Housing Needs and Resource Manager Tel No: 01480 388220 or email Jon.Collen@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		R Fuller	Customers and Partnerships

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Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/21

Performance and Growth

Topic	Membership & Scope	Lead Officer	Progress
Housing Strategy to 2025	Councillor A Roberts Councillor S Wakeford Councillor D Wells Councillor Mrs S R Wilson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment and make suggestions on the emerging Housing Strategy. 	David Edwards/Liz Bisset	<p>6th August 2020 – A meeting took place with Members; the Interim Corporate Director (Place), David Edwards and Liz Bisset. The vision for the strategy was outlined and Members had an opportunity to comment and make suggestions.</p> <p>Next Step The completed strategy will be presented to the Panel at the meeting on 7th October.</p>
Transport Strategy	Councillor S J Criswell Councillor I D Gardener Councillor P L R Gaskin Councillor M S Grice	Nigel McCurdy/David Edwards	Study has not commenced.
Asset Management Strategy	Councillor I D Gardener Councillor D A Giles	Jackie Goldby/Justin Andrews	Study has not commenced.

Customers and Partnerships

Topic	Membership & Scope	Lead Officer	Progress
Digital Strategy	Councillor D Tysoe	Tony Evans	<p>Next Step The Assistant Director – Transformation will attend the Panel meeting on 8th October where a discussion will take</p>

			place.
Climate Change Strategy	Councillor T D Alban Councillor Mrs J Tavener Councillor Mrs S R Wilson	Neil Sloper	18th October 2020 – The Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) attended the Centre for Public Scrutiny and Local Government Association Scrutinising Climate Action Webinar on 18th September. Next Step The remit for strategy development has not been established. In absence of this it is recommended that Members review examples of climate change studies conducted at other local authorities.
Waste Strategy	Councillor Ms A Dickinson Councillor D A Giles Councillor Mrs S Smith Councillor Mrs S R Wilson	Neil Sloper	Study has not commenced.
Lifelong Health – Part Two	Councillor S J Criswell Councillor Mrs A Dickinson Councillor K P Gulson Councillor Mrs S Smith Councillor Mrs J Tavener Councillor Mrs S R Wilson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify ways of developing better health outcomes for residents. • Identify the benefits of a whole system approach for the Council. 	Oliver Morley	12th September 2019 – The Panel received the final report of Part One and agreed to continue the study under the guise of ‘Part Two’. 14th October 2019 – The Task and Finish Group met with Liz Robin, Public Health. 10th December 2019 – Following the presentation of the Part One report to Cabinet and the meeting with the Director of Public Health, the Task and Finish Group met to refocus the scope of

			<p>the study. The study will now focus primarily on collaboration with Parish & Town Councils and community groups in order to improve residents' physical activity and well-being.</p> <p>13th January 2020 – The Task and Finish Group received a presentation from Active Lifestyles and assessed the interaction the service has with Parish & Town Councils and community groups.</p> <p>28th January 2020 – Alyce Barber, Community Development Officer, attended and informed Members of her work with projects that helps build social contact, builds support networks and addresses mental health issues. Members will also discuss the evidence that links an individual's mental health with physical health.</p> <p>12th February 2020 – The Task and Finish Group received and discussed a number of case studies.</p> <p>Next Step – The Group will conduct an evidence review in October/November 2020.</p>
Healthy Open Spaces and Play Strategy	Councillor Mrs A Dickinson Councillor K P Gulson Councillor Mrs S Smith	Helen Lack	11th March 2020 – A meeting took place with Working Group Members, the relevant Executive Councillors, Helen

	<p>Councillor Mrs J Tavener Councillor Mrs S R Wilson</p>		<p>Lack and Sarah Wheale-Smith of PleydellSmithyman so that Members could give their views on the draft Strategy.</p> <p>29th July 2020 – A second meeting took place with Working Group Members, Helen Lack and Sarah Wheale-Smith of PleydellSmithyman. Members were shown the executive summary and a full draft of the Strategy.</p> <p>Next Step The Healthy Open Spaces and Play Strategy is to be presented to Members at the Panel meeting on 8th October 2020.</p>
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Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Community Infrastructure Levy Governance

Meeting/Date: Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) – 7th October 2020

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning

Report by: Service Manager Growth

Wards affected: All

RECOMMENDATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to review and comment on the Cabinet report attached at Appendix A.

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Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Community Infrastructure Levy Governance
Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 22nd October 2020
Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning
Report by: Service Manager Growth
Wards affected: All

Executive Summary:

This report sets out the details of a proposed new process for the governance of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies received by the Council. It provides a summary of the background relating to funding through the Council's CIL budget and the reasons the system for allocating these funds is no longer considered best suited to meet the Council's strategic aims.

CIL funding is divided into three 'pots.' One is the 'Meaningful Proportion' that is allocated to Town and Parish Councils to spend; the second a 'Strategic' portion that is allocated by the Council; and a final small pot, defined in legislation, to cover the administration of running the Charging Authority. This report primarily focuses on the process for allocation of the 'Strategic' portion but also includes details of how monies for non-Parished areas will be allocated.

The proposed process enables the control of the allocation of CIL funds from the Strategic Proportion and to better align funding with the Council Corporate objectives, particularly supporting delivery of growth within the district. It provides a degree of flexibility that is not currently available. It proposes that proposals seeking £50,000 or less be agreed by Corporate Director (Place) and the Service Manager (Growth) in consultation with the Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning. Where more than £50,000 funding is being sought, Cabinet would be required to approve the allocation. On a twice annual basis, the Council will encourage and consider the submission of applications for CIL funding (except in 2020-21 when, due to the time elapsed, one round is proposed).

A proforma, to be completed by those seeking CIL funding, and guidance has been updated to reflect the proposed new processes. The guidance is updated to assist Town and Parish Councils in understanding their obligations in relation to CIL spend.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet is recommended to support the introduction of a new process for the allocation of CIL funding, including:

1. Introduction of a new application form and guidance (Appendices 2 & 3).
2. Delegating authority to the Corporate Director (Place) and the Service Manager (Growth) in consultation with the Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning for allocation of CIL funding for smaller funding applications in the Local Bids category (£50,000 or less) including those from non-parished areas. Those decisions will be notified to Cabinet twice yearly.
3. Approving the process requiring applications requesting more than £50,000 in the Strategic Bids category to be approved by Cabinet.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To review and agree future governance arrangements for the spending of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Huntingdonshire District Council implemented CIL in May 2012. CIL governance was originally agreed by Cabinet in October 2012 and subsequently updated in December 2015 working with the Huntingdonshire Growth & Infrastructure (HG & I) group, which made recommendations to Cabinet. Over time, issues relating to governance arrangements have been identified, prompting a review of these.

2.2 Local authorities must spend the levy on infrastructure needed to support the development of their area. This helps to deliver across a number of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities for 2018 – 2022 but specifically:

- Support development of infrastructure to enable growth
- Improve the supply of new and affordable housing, jobs and community facilities to meet current and future need

2.3 CIL collected is broken down into funding 'pots' including administration costs (up to 5%), 'Meaningful Proportion' to Town/Parish (15 – 25%) and 'Strategic Proportion' (70-80%).

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

3.1 As there is no 'best practice for CIL governance, other Charging Authority arrangements have been analysed and a few options have been considered (see Appendix 1). It was considered that Option 4, where all governance would be undertaken by the Council, is most appropriate to safeguard delivery of its priorities. Most of the Strategic Portion would be allocated by Cabinet to projects linked to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or for projects within the HDC Corporate Plan related to growth. The remaining amount would be allocated through delegated authority to enable smaller scale bids, usually with quicker delivery times, to be considered.

3.2 The table, below, sets out the proposed process:

STAGE 1	PROJECT PROPOSALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite submission of proposals (date to be confirmed).• Applicants complete form and submit with supporting evidence (6 weeks).
STAGE 2	CONSIDER PROJECT PROPOSALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Officer's review proposals (1 month).• For non-parished areas, if no project is proposed for funding received, officers would suggest an appropriate infrastructure project for consideration.• Officer's report to Planning Service Manager (Growth) & Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning / Cabinet recommending successful

3.3

		proposals.
3 t h e r p o i n t s	STAGE 3 APPROVAL OF PROPOSALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Bid proposals (£50,000 or less) including those proposed for non-parished areas to be considered by the Corporate Director (Place) and the Service Manager (Growth) in consultation with the Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning. The total amount of funding to be considered for allocation in a financial year will not exceed £500,000 and any decisions made since the last reporting period shall be reported to Cabinet as part of the next Strategic bid allocation report. Strategic Bid proposals to be considered by Overview & Scrutiny & Cabinet (more than £50,000 funding requested) (timescale to be confirmed).
4	STAGE 4 CONTRACTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract written, signed and sealed (timescale to be confirmed).
5 t e :	STAGE 5 PAYMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue payment to success projects (timescale to be confirmed). Notify and advise, where possible, unsuccessful projects (timescale to be confirmed).

- a) The application form and guidance have also been updated (see Appendices 2 and 3). The guidance explains:
 - The Statutory Requirements and what can CIL be spent on.
 - Governance Arrangements for the Strategic fund, including for non-parished areas, and for Neighbourhood allocations.
 - The Decision-making Process (see 3.2, above).
 - It explains that a contract (if non-HDC projects) is required once a funding decision has been made.
 - It sets out the monitoring and review processes.
- b) The process would be overseen by the Implementation Team (Growth).
- c) Twice yearly opportunities to apply (one in the year 2020-21 due time lapsed and practicalities).
- d) Exceptionally, urgent requests could be considered outside of this twice-yearly cycle, following the prior agreement of the Executive Councillor for Planning. If the request is for less than £50,000 it would be considered at the earliest opportunity by the Leader, Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning, Corporate Director (Place), and Service Manager – Growth. If a request is for more than £50,000 and considered to be urgent it would be considered at the next monthly Cabinet meeting.

3.4 Applications would be assessed based on factors including:

- a) HDC's Corporate Objectives, Local Plan objectives, Infrastructure Delivery Plan and other projects that support demonstrable growth in the District.

- b) Levering in other monies or where CIL will result in match funding will be viewed favourably.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 4.1 The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

5. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 5.1 The key impact from not reviewing the governance process will be the potential for certain infrastructure projects not being delivered due to CIL funding not being allocated appropriately and in a timely manner.
- 5.2 Service areas will be required to make applications for funding which, in some cases, may be abortive work if unsuccessful; and partnership challenges due to non-allocation of funding to their priorities could follow. By being clear about the process and where the Council's priorities lie, such issues can be minimised or avoided. Officers will continue to liaise with colleagues and partners to assist them where needed.

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 The following actions are proposed:
 - a) Update the CIL webpages (prior to the first round commencing in the Autumn).
 - b) Notify partners of the process (Autumn 2020).
 - c) Invite submission of projects for funding, including from those who have already contacted officers (Autumn 2020, thereafter, twice-yearly).
 - d) Recommendations for funding of projects considered by the Corporate Director (Place), Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning, and Service Manager - Growth (if for £50,000 or less) or Cabinet (if it is for over £50,000.00) for approval for the release of further funds at the earliest opportunity (late 2020 - early 2021, thereafter twice-yearly).
 - e) Partners informed of decisions (early 2021, thereafter twice-yearly) and contracts agreed for infrastructure delivery to commence.

7. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 7.1 The allocation of CIL links to the Council's priorities for 2018-2022 including those relating to growth, health and well-being, and infrastructure.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Regulation 59 (1) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) require a charging authority to apply CIL to funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure to support the development of its area. It may also, under

Regulation 59 (3) support infrastructure outside its area where to do so would support the development of its area.

- 8.2 Passing CIL to another person for that person to apply to funding the provision, improvement, replace, operation and maintenance of infrastructure is also permitted under Regulation 59 (4).
- 8.3 Section 216 (2) of the Planning Act 2008 as amended by Regulation 63 of the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 (as amended) stated that infrastructure” includes [*and is therefore not limited to*]:
- (a) roads and other transport facilities,
 - (b) flood defences,
 - (c) schools and other educational facilities,
 - (d) medical facilities,
 - (e) sporting and recreational facilities,
 - (f) open spaces
- 8.4 The levy may not be used to fund affordable housing.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Resources required are for officer time and include:
- a) Existing resources of the Implementation Team, which is part of the Growth Service for administration.
 - b) Other sections within the Council - preparation of funding applications.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 10.1 The proposed process is considered the best option available to ensure that CIL funds are allocated according to the Council’s priorities and allows some flexibility to ensure that there is appropriate distribution of funding.

11. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 - Options Explored
Appendix 2 - New Application Form
Appendix 3 - Updated Guidance

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

National Planning Policy Framework

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Section 216 of Planning Act 2008

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/29/section/216>

The Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2019, which amend the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (“the 2010 Regulations”) which were introduced through the Planning Act 2008.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/948/contents/made>

Huntingdonshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan

<https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/2694/infrastructure-delivery-plan.pdf>

Huntingdonshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan – Infrastructure Schedule
<https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/2693/infrastructure-schedule.pdf>

Huntingdonshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan Addendum
<https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/2861/infrastructure-delivery-plan-addendum.pdf>

Corporate Plan 2018 – 2022 (as refreshed September 2020 – see Agenda Item 3)

<http://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=256&MId=7791&Ver=4>

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APPENDIX 1: CIL Governance Options

Option	Benefits	Risks
<p>Option 1. Services and potentially other relevant bodies bidding for funds for priority projects as identified in the IDP and the HDC Corporate Plan related to growth. Bids considered by the Huntingdonshire Growth & Infrastructure (HG&I) group to make recommendations to Cabinet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allows CIL money to be targeted towards highest priority infrastructure in line with Council objectives. ▪ Should help ensure CIL money is spent in a timely manner to deliver necessary infrastructure rather than sitting in an account earning little interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education and transport schemes may always be higher priority than other schemes. This could mean some important, but less urgent or lower priority schemes never get to the top of the funding list. ▪ Requires service areas to engage in bidding which in some cases may be abortive work. ▪ HDC have limited control due to the governance voting via the HG&I. Although ultimately it would fall to Cabinet, the non-acceptance of HG&I recommendations would require feedback, create reputational risk and take further time.
<p>Option 2. The majority of available CIL funds (amount to be agreed) is allocated through a priority bidding process relating to defined projects in the IDP linked to information on the timing of construction. Bids considered by the HG&I to make recommendations to Cabinet. Of the remaining amount, a smaller agreed proportion is allocated to each service area or other relevant body.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides flexibility to allocate funds to priority projects for the majority of CIL income. ▪ Ensures that some funding is available to all service areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires service areas to engage in bidding which in some cases may be abortive work. ▪ A form of weighting/points system would need to be agreed, which makes the process more complex than other options and could result in recommendations not being in line with HDC aspirations at the time. ▪ HDC have limited control due to the governance voting via the HG&I. Although ultimately it would fall to Cabinet, the non-acceptance of HG&I recommendations would require feedback and take further time.
<p>Option 3. An agreed percentage proportion for each service (e.g. education, libraries, built sports, community facilities) or other relevant body (health, police etc).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Each service gets an identified percentage amount of funding relevant to the infrastructure type e.g. education might receive 25% whilst libraries 5%. ▪ There is certainty within each service knowing what proportion they are guaranteed. ▪ No need for a bidding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allocation on this basis would be unlikely to reflect the actual needs and spending priorities over a given period. ▪ Might take service areas a long time to accrue enough money for their projects, delaying delivery. ▪ May not provide sufficient funding for some key service areas such as transport and education that may need larger proportions to reflect the scale and priority of projects to be

	<p>process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transport and Education get larger proportions of the funds which would better reflect known spending needs 	<p>delivered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Once percentage set, HDC could lose control of how that money is then spent within the district on what it feels are the priorities for that infrastructure type. ▪ Does not allow flexibility to match spending with changing needs over time. ▪ Does not ensure timely delivery if monies issued to the service with no contractual agreement for delivery of specific projects. ▪ Does not leave any funding left for specific local priorities or unexpected / changing needs.
<p>Option 4. Similar to option 2, The majority of available CIL funds is allocated relating to defined projects either in:</p> <p>a) the IDP as an infrastructure type or project, linked to information on the timing of construction; and/or</p> <p>b) relating to projects within the HDC Corporate Plan related to growth. Projects proposals – not bids - to be submitted with project detail, including a Business Plan [ideal to have but to date been difficult to get so probably do not want as a full requirement] where feasible, to be considered by the Implementation Team (Growth) for recommendation to Cabinet. Of the remaining amount a smaller agreed proportion is allocated to enable smaller scale bids, usually with quicker delivery times, to be considered with delegated authority to PSM (Growth) in liaison with portfolio holder.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides flexibility to allocate funds to priority projects for the majority of CIL income. ▪ Ensures that some funding is available to all service areas. ▪ Enables HDC to be fully in control over the allocation of funding. ▪ Through the submission of a project proposal, rather than a formal bidding round, there is more flexibility on allocation as opposed to it being tied to a set criterion and scoring system. ▪ Provides flexibility to respond to local priorities including AGS themes and any additional new areas of work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires service areas to engage in bidding which in some cases may be abortive work. ▪ Could cause partnership challenges due to non-allocation of funding to their priorities ▪ More complex than option 3.

CIL: Project Funding Application

General Nature of Project	1.	<p>Organisation:</p> <p>Lead contact's name, email and tel. no.:</p>
	2.	Project name:
	3.	Project Type:
	4.	Brief description:
	5.	Project Location / Coverage (Spatial Planning Area / Key Service Centre / Local Service Centre / Other):
Project Requirement	6.	How delivery of the project links to the Local Plan for Huntingdonshire and / or provides infrastructure to support development within Huntingdonshire. Is it critical, essential or desirable (refer to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan)?
	7.	How delivery of the project addresses the additional demands placed on infrastructure as a result of new development. Outline the number of units delivered / people / businesses affected by the project.

	8.	Confirmation on whether the delivery of the project includes maintenance of existing infrastructure or addresses deficiencies in existing infrastructure provision, and if so, what.
Linkages	9.	Links to other Projects:
	10.	Links to your organisation's strategies/priorities:
	11.	Links to HDC Corporate Plan strategic priorities, objectives, key actions and performance indicators:
Milestones and Timing	12.	Status or stage the project has reached:
	13.	Proposed Delivery Milestones (including Years):
Costs and Funding	14.	Capital Cost identified (broken into components where possible):
	15.	Identified Funding Source (Committed and / or Potential). Please provide confirmation if funding has been secured:
	16.	Has any other request for funding been turned down, if so why?
	17.	Amount of CIL Funding Requested:

	18.	Will the project generate income for its ongoing running and maintenance costs, if not how will revenue be funded?
Project Risk	19.	Project Risks and Implications
	20.	Are you legally entitled to undertake the project?
	21.	If your project involves building, do you own the land?
	22.	If your project involves building, has planning permission been granted, if so, please provide the application reference number.

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- Applying for Strategic CIL funds
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- Once the Funding Decision has been made

Governance Arrangements - Neighbourhood Allocations

- Monitoring and Review Arrangements
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- Eligible Projects
- Once the Funding Decision has been made

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- CIL Governance Framework

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1. Introduction

Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) adopted the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) with effect from 1st May 2012.

CIL is paid to Huntingdonshire District Council by developers after their planning permissions are commenced. Since CIL was implemented, it has become a significant means by which Huntingdonshire District Council is able to collect and pool developer contributions to deliver infrastructure improvements.

CIL is governed by the CIL Regulations 2010 (amended). In Huntingdonshire, CIL is charged on all development types in accordance with the Charging Schedule; for some developments this may result in a zero charge, for example, B use classes are £0 rated.

CIL is just one funding stream that can be used, in conjunction with others, to fund infrastructure projects. Alongside CIL, S106 obligations still exist. S106 obligations are required in line with the Developer Contributions SPD to mitigate the impact of the development. These can result in financial contributions or in-kind provision of infrastructure needs to mitigate the impacts of developments and to secure on-site developer requirements, such as the provision of affordable housing. Examples of how infrastructure projects can be funded can be seen in Figure 1.

This document details the governance arrangements in place at Huntingdonshire District Council for the allocation and spending of CIL. These parameters for the governance arrangements of CIL were agreed by Cabinet in **2020

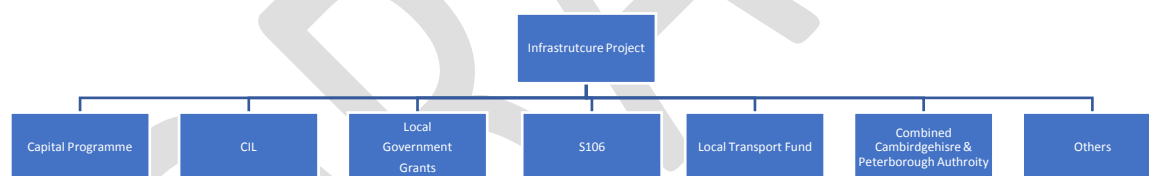


Figure 1: Funding Sources for Infrastructure

2. Statutory Requirements

Huntingdonshire District Council is the designated Charging and Collecting Authority. As a Charging Authority the Council has an obligation to:

- Prepare and publish the CIL Charging Schedule
- Determine CIL spend, ensuring it is used to fund the provision, improvement, replacement, operation, or maintenance of infrastructure to support development of its area
- Report publicly on the amount of CIL revenue collected, spent, and retained each year.

Huntingdonshire District Council is required in the CIL Regulations to identify the types of infrastructure or projects it wishes to fund in whole or in part by CIL monies and report this in the annual Infrastructure Funding Statement, with effect from December 2020. These will usually be based upon Local Plan and the Corporate priorities of Huntingdonshire District Council.

Huntingdonshire District Council's CIL Charging Schedule and annual report detailing CIL receipts, balances and expenditure for each financial year can be found on the Council's CIL webpage: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/community-infrastructure-levy-cil/>

3. What can CIL be spent on

CIL Regulations set the context for the spending of CIL funds on infrastructure. The regulations encourage the accumulation of CIL funds into a 'pot'. Unlike other obligations or charges, CIL spending does not need to be directly related to the donor development and can address infrastructure needs in general across the Council's administrative area.

The key points set out by the CIL Regulations (see Regulation 59 (1)) and Guidance (see Paragraph: 144 Reference ID: 25-144-20190901) relating to CIL funding are:

- CIL should be spent on infrastructure including roads and other transport, schools and other education, community facilities, health, sport / recreation, and open spaces.
- The infrastructure funded must support the development of the area.
- CIL can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing infrastructure, if needed to support the needs arising from development.
- CIL and Section 106 can be used as different funding streams to deliver the same infrastructure project.

As per the CIL Regulations and Guidance, CIL is proportioned and allocated using the following approach:

- Up to 5% is retained by Huntingdonshire District Council to cover administrative costs (including but not limited to consultation on the levy charging schedule, collection of CIL, enforcing CIL, legal costs and reporting on CIL activity).
- 15%, known as the Neighbourhood Allocation, is established for spending within the neighbourhood of the contributing development (up to a maximum of £100 per existing Council Tax dwelling). This allocation can either be transferred to the relevant Parish Council or retained by Huntingdonshire District Council to be spent on neighbourhood projects where the development is not in a Parish. This allocation rises to 25% and is not capped when a Parish has a Neighbourhood Plan in place. At the present time, Godmanchester, Houghton and Wyton, Huntingdon, and St Neots have adopted Neighbourhood Plans; plans are being developed in eleven other areas. Figure 1, below, sets out the relationship between CIL and Neighbourhood Plans.
- Up to 80%, known as the Strategic Allocation, is retained by Huntingdonshire District Council to allocate to projects in accordance with the Council's Infrastructure Development Plan.

It is very unlikely that CIL will generate enough funds to completely cover the cost of new infrastructure needed to fully support planned development. As such, there will be competing demands for this funding. It is important, therefore, to ensure that there are robust, accountable, and democratic structures in place to ensure the spending of CIL funds are prioritised in the right way.

The sections that follow set out the governance arrangements and approach for how decisions are made on the prioritisation and spend of CIL.

Parish council	Neighbourhood plan	Levy
✓	✓	25% uncapped, paid to parish each year
✓	X	15% capped at £100/dwelling (indexed for inflation), paid to parish each year
X	✓	25% uncapped, local authority consults with community about how funds can be used, including to support priorities set out in neighbourhood plans
X	X	15% capped at £100/dwelling (indexed for inflation), local authority consults with community to agree how best to spend the neighbourhood funding

(Ministry of Housing, 2019) Paragraph: 145 Reference ID: 25-145-20190901

Revision date: 01 09 2019

Figure 2: Figure: relationship between the levy and neighbourhood plans in England

4. Governance Arrangements - HDC Allocation

The majority of CIL funds, the HDC Allocation, will be retained by Huntingdonshire District Council for spending on infrastructure in accordance with the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Statement (from December 2020).

The allocation of these funds will be made through a twice annual application process, which will ultimately be agreed either by the Corporate Director (Place), Service Manager – Growth in consultation with the Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning or will be considered by the Council's Cabinet, depending on the amount of funding sought. A diagrammatic summary of the governance framework for CIL is set out in Appendix 1, which shows the spending and reporting arrangements that are in place.

Annually, Huntingdonshire District Council will publicise the amount of CIL funding collected as per statutory requirements. On a twice annual basis, the Council will encourage and consider the submission of application forms, requesting CIL funding for the delivery of infrastructure projects. Proposals may be considered out of these time slots if there are exceptional circumstances to do so and if in agreement with Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning.

Key internal and external stakeholders responsible for delivering the infrastructure identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Statement will receive direct notification of the opportunity to request CIL funding. Information about the opportunity will also be available on the Council's website.

Applications will be made on a standard online template issued by Huntingdonshire District Council (see Appendix 2) and will request key information about the infrastructure project, including:

- What is the infrastructure project
- How the project relates to the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Statement
- Why the project is required (justification)
- Cost of the project
- Timing for project delivery
- Funding from other sources

Application Forms will then be reviewed by Council officers, who will ensure that all submitted forms include the key information required, meet the basic criteria and are therefore eligible for consideration for CIL funding.

The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan and, after 30 December 2020, the Infrastructure Funding Statement set out the infrastructure projects that are eligible for Strategic CIL funding. Only infrastructure that support the growth outlined in the Council's adopted Development Plans are included or other infrastructure projects that have come forward that support growth.

In order for a project to be considered for CIL funding, the following eligibility criteria need to be met:

- The application form has been completed satisfactorily
- The organisation has the legal right to carry out the proposed project
- The project is clearly defined as 'Infrastructure' as per the CIL Regulations
- The project is listed in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan / Infrastructure Funding Statement or is for infrastructure that supports growth of the area.

Once the application forms requesting CIL funding have been validated by a Council Officer, initial assessment of the projects will then take place. The projects will be assessed based on the following headings:

- The need for the project
- The public benefit of the project
- The deliverability of the project
- The value for money that a scheme provides

Projects will be viewed favourably if they lever in other funds that would not otherwise be available, particularly where those funds may not be available in future years, or where it makes use of match funding.

The outcome of this review of applications for funding off less than £50,000 will then be reported to the Corporate Director (Place), Service Manager – Growth, Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning. Decisions on applications seeking funding of £50,000.00 or less will be made at this point and reported for information to Cabinet twice per year. All other applications (more than £50,000.00) will be reported to Cabinet to decide. Cabinet will also be informed of the decisions already made on smaller applications in order to ensure it has the full picture.

The Corporate Director (Place), Service Manager – Growth in consultation with the Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning, and Cabinet are required to reach a balanced judgement over which projects to fund. They are requested to provide an explanation as to how that decision was reached. Cabinet will be informed of any decisions made since the last reporting period as part of the next Strategic bid allocation report. Stakeholders will be informed of decisions reached, and funds will be allocated accordingly.

There may be occasions where the release of additional CIL funds are required for urgent or unforeseen infrastructure requirements. In these cases, a decision on an application will be made by either the Corporate Director (Place), Service Manager – Growth in consultation with the Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning (if for £50,000 or less) or Cabinet (if it is for over £50,000.00) for approval for the release of further funds at the earliest opportunity.

Successful applicants of CIL funding will be expected to maintain communication with Huntingdonshire District Council on the progress of their project after a decision has been made to provide funding. Where funding has been agreed 'in principle' or where staged payments are agreed, the scheme applicant will be expected to provide information to justify funding being transferred.

Applicants should continue to provide information until the scheme has been completed and all CIL funding has been spent. As a minimum, an annual report, providing information on the progress of each scheme that funding has been allocated to, will be needed. A requirement to submit this information forms part of the agreement (Contract) that successful external applicants are required to sign between themselves and Huntingdonshire District Council.

5. Governance Arrangements - Neighbourhood Allocations

The CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) require the 'meaningful proportion' to be used to support the development of the local area by funding:

- The provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or
- Anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.

This provides Town/Parish Councils with a much more flexible approach for spending their CIL receipts in comparison to the powers of the District Council.

Such wider spending powers for the Town/Parish Council allow the local community to decide what they need to help mitigate the impacts of development in their area.

This may be for a local project, or the Parish may decide to contribute their proportion of the funding to the more strategic projects which are being supported by the District Council, such as an education expansion project required that will support their locality – Town and Parish Councils will need to decide what their infrastructure priorities are. They will need to consider that if they do not put forward potential support to strategic projects, that could result in not enough funding being available. Therefore, there will be difficult decisions for them to make.

Any spend of CIL funding must fit within the usual powers of the Town/Parish Council and their Powers of Competence.

Where the infrastructure to be supported is not permissible due to the responsibilities of the Parish / Town Council then this may still happen by agreeing for the money to remain / be passed back to the District Council for them to have spent in accordance with the wishes of the local community.

Decisions on the expenditure of the 'meaningful proportion' funds are at the Parish Council's discretion, if it is in accordance with the CIL regulations.

If a Town/Parish Council has failed to spend CIL funds transferred to them within a period of 5 years from the date of initial receipt, or has not applied the funds in accordance with the Regulations then the District Council can serve a notice on the Town/Parish Council requiring it to repay some or all of the receipts that had been transferred to them.

The District Council is required to make payment in respect of CIL it receives from 1 April to 30 September to the Town/Parish Council by 28 October of that financial year, and pay the CIL received from 1 October to 31 March by 28 April of the following financial year.

To ensure transparency Town/Parish Councils must publish each year by December 31st, in line with regulatory requirements, the previous financial years information on:

- Total CIL receipts.
- Total expenditure.
- A summary of what the CIL was spent on.
- The total amount of receipts retained at the end of the reported year from that year and previous years.

Reports should be placed on Town/Parish Council's website and a copy of the report is required to be sent to the District Council. Where a Parish/Town does not have a website the District Council can, upon request, publish this information on its website on the Town/Parish Council's behalf – for transparency, the District Council will publish all annual reports on its website. The CIL report must be published and sent to the District Council no later than 31st December following the reported year (the financial year). Town and Parish Councils are encouraged to use the reporting template provided by Huntingdonshire District Council.

Non-parished areas

There are eight non-parished areas within Huntingdonshire District covered by Parish Meetings. The 15% Neighbourhood Allocation, or "Meaningful Proportion", in these areas will be held separately by Huntingdonshire District Council but still has to be spent in agreement with the locality in which the development generating the funds is based.

CIL Meaningful Proportion collected for non-parished areas must be spent in accordance with Regulation 59F as below:

- '(3) The Charging Authority may use the CIL to which this regulation applies, or cause it to be used, to support the development of the relevant area by funding-*
- a) the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or*
 - b) anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area'*

The process for spend of non-parished meaningful proportion will require officers in the Implementation Team to identify projects through the HDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan or Infrastructure Funding Statement, relevant Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), Parish Website, or with HDC's Community Development Team to establish if there is a Parish Plan.

Once the project is decided, the Parish Meeting will be asked to submit a plan for delivery of the agreed project including key milestones with a timetable, detailing any other funding to be provided, when this is to be available and also advising when the funding will be drawn down for each milestone, i.e. each instalment payment, when applicable. If no other funding is identified at this time the parish must provide a timetable for when this will become available.

The process for dealing with these is as per that set out in section 4 of this guidance. In accordance with Regulation 59E, funds must be spent within a 5-year period from receipt. The Council must report separately within the published Annual Report details of the amount of funds received and how they are spent.

6. Monitoring and Review Arrangements

Huntingdonshire District Council is committed to ensuring the use of CIL is open and transparent. To this end, Huntingdonshire District Council will, as required by the CIL Regulations, publish an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS), replacing the CIL Annual Monitoring Report. These will set out, as a minimum:

- A report relating to the previous financial year on the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- A report relating to the previous financial year on section 106 planning obligations.
- A report on the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure that the authority intends to fund wholly or partly by the levy (excluding the neighbourhood portion).

The IFS will be published by Huntingdonshire District Council no later than 31 December each year starting in 2020.

Once the Funding Decision has been made Huntingdonshire District Council will continue to monitor the operation and implementation of CIL. The Council may periodically review of the Charging Schedule, which includes the CIL rates applicable at the time.

As noted, above, Parish Councils are also required to report on their CIL spending. The report must include—

- the total CIL receipts for the reported year.
- the total CIL expenditure for the reported year.
- summary details of CIL expenditure during the reported year including—
 - (i) (i)the items to which CIL has been applied.
 - (ii) (ii)the amount of CIL expenditure on each item.
- details of any notices received in accordance with regulation 59E, including—
 - (iii) (i)the total value of CIL receipts subject to notices served in accordance with regulation 59E during the reported year.
 - (iv) (ii)the total value of CIL receipts subject to a notice served in accordance with regulation 59E in any year that has not been paid to the relevant charging authority by the end of the reported year.
- the total amount of—
 - (v) CIL receipts for the reported year retained at the end of the reported year.
 - (vi) CIL receipts from previous years retained at the end of the reported year.

The Parish or Town Councils must publish online their CIL annual report, unless they request that the report is published on the District Council's website, and a copy of the report must be sent to the Huntingdonshire District Council, no later than 31st December following the reported year.

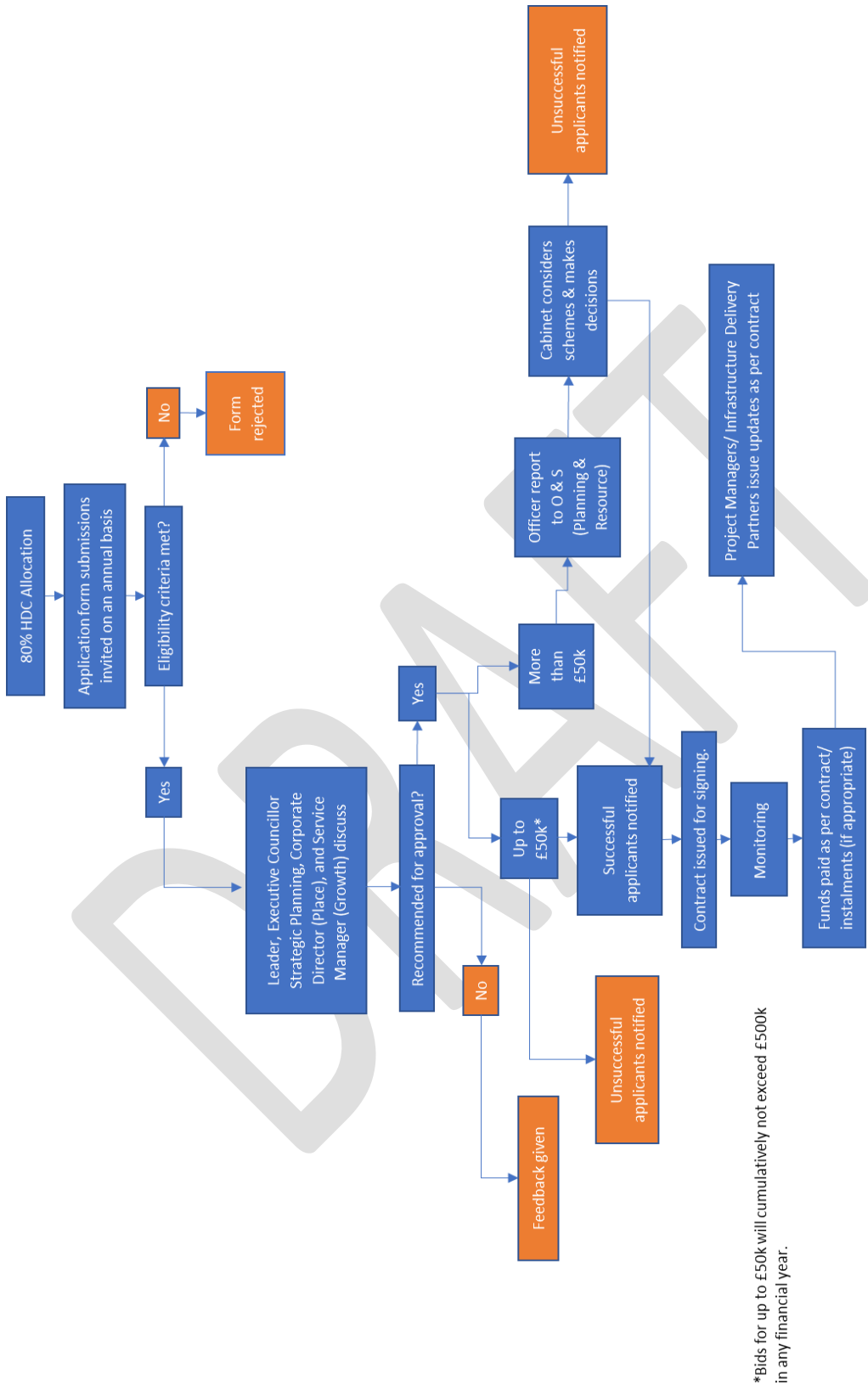
If you have any questions about this guidance, or CIL generally, please contact Huntingdonshire District Council's Implementation Team by email at implementation@huntingdonshire.gov.uk, by calling 01480 388424, or in writing to:

Implementation Team,
Planning Services,
Pathfinder House,
St Mary's Street,

Huntingdon,
PE29 3TN

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APPENDIX ONE - Governance Framework for CIL HDC Allocation



APPENDIX TWO – APPLICATION FORM FOR CIL FUNDING

CIL: Project Funding Application

General Nature of Project	1.	<p>Organisation:</p> <p>Lead contact's name, email and tel. no.:</p>
	2.	Project name:
	3.	Project Type:
	4.	Brief description:
	5.	Project Location / Coverage (Spatial Planning Area / Key Service Centre / Local Service Centre / Other):
Project Requirement	6.	How delivery of the project links to the Local Plan for Huntingdonshire and / or provides infrastructure to support development within Huntingdonshire. Is it critical, essential or desirable (refer to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan)?
	7.	How delivery of the project addresses the additional demands placed on infrastructure as a result of new development. Outline the number of units delivered / people / businesses affected by the project.

	8.	Confirmation on whether the delivery of the project includes maintenance of existing infrastructure or addresses deficiencies in existing infrastructure provision, and if so, what.
Linkages	9.	Links to other Projects:
	10.	Links to your organisation’s strategies/priorities:
	11.	Links to HDC Corporate Plan strategic priorities, objectives, key actions and performance indicators:
Milestones and Timing	12.	Status or stage the project has reached:
	13.	Proposed Delivery Milestones (including Years):
Costs and Funding	14.	Capital Cost identified (broken into components where possible):
	15.	Identified Funding Source (Committed and / or Potential). Please provide confirmation if funding has been secured:
	16.	Has any other request for funding been turned down, if so why?
	17.	Amount of CIL Funding Requested:
	18.	Will the project generate income for its ongoing running and maintenance costs, if not how will revenue be funded?

Project Risk	19.	Project Risks and Implications
	20.	Are you legally entitled to undertake the project?
	21.	If your project involves building, do you own the land?
	22.	If your project involves building, has planning permission been granted, if so, please provide the application reference number.

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Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: “Planning for the Future” White Paper Consultation Response

Meeting/Date: Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) – 7th October 2020

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning, Councillor Jon Neish

Report by: Planning Policy Team Leader

Wards affected: All

RECOMMENDATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on the proposed consultation response to the “Planning for the Future” White Paper from the Cabinet report attached at Appendix 1.

Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: “Planning for the Future” White Paper Consultation Response

Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 22nd October 2020

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning, Councillor Jon Neish

Report by: Service Manager - Growth

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

A White Paper “Planning for the future” was published for consultation commencing on 6th August 2020. Fundamental reforms to the planning system in England are proposed. These include proposals for Local Plan reform and changes to both developer contributions and development management. The proposals would require primary legislation to bring them forward followed by secondary legislation along with further changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

The ‘Planning for the future’ reforms would have substantial implications for how the planning system would operate in Huntingdonshire and throughout England. They would alter the strategic planning relationship with neighbouring authorities and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority by removing the formal ‘duty to cooperate’ when preparing development plans. The proposed changes would have significant impacts on the nature, timing and amount of public engagement opportunities in the planning system and alter the role of elected members in the decision-making processes for both the Local Plan and for development management applications.

The reforms would have significant financial implications too, potentially substantially increasing the costs of preparation of the Local Plan and associated documentation, whilst reducing income from planning application fees.

This report provides an overview of the proposed changes although it should be noted that the consultation document focuses on 24 relatively high level proposals for change which will need substantially more detail before more certainty can be obtained on the full implications for Huntingdonshire. The proposals are accompanied by 25 questions on which the government is seeking responses.

The proposed responses to the questions are presented in a bullet point format as they are still in development at the time of publication of this report. They will be presented in a more formal, paragraph based style when submitted to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government after agreement with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy.

The consultation runs until 30th October 2020 and full details of the consultation document can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

To provide comments on this consultation and the proposed responses and to delegate authority to finalise and submit the Council's consultation responses to the Service Manager – Growth and the Planning Policy Team Leader in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an outline of the proposals set out in the government's White Paper 'Planning for the future' and draft consultation responses highlighting how the proposals might affect the district and the Council's corporate priorities and objectives. Approval is sought for the detailed responses and their submission to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Consultation on a White Paper proposing substantial changes to the planning system was launched on 6th August 2020 and closes on 30th October 2020. A briefing note was sent to all Councillors on 8th August accompanied by a briefing note sent to all Parish Council to raise awareness with them of the consultation and encourage Parish councils to consider the proposals and respond individually. This set out the fundamental nature of the proposed reforms, the three key foci for change, indications of the anticipated delivery of reforms and how the White Paper sat amongst two other consultations issued concurrently.

3. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE WHITE PAPER – AN OVERVIEW

- 3.1 As a White Paper this provides the basis for consultation before proposals for future legislation are set out in a draft Bill. It seeks a fundamental reform of the planning system and replacement of all current plan-making law in England.
- 3.2 The government contends that the current planning system is complicated and often results in delays in delivering new homes. The White Paper proposes a complete overhaul of the planning system with the aspiration of transforming the way communities are shaped and increasing the number of new homes built and the speed at which they are delivered.
- 3.3 The proposals are very heavily dominated by housing provision and the revisions to Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 agreements. It gives little or no attention to the local economy, the interrelationship between development and infrastructure, the natural environment and open space, the quality of life for local people, and other necessary matters such as minerals and waste planning. The key proposals are summarised below.
- 3.4 Local Plans will become the focus of public involvement in the planning system with reduced opportunities for consultation at the planning application stage. The White Paper indicates local planning authorities should radically rethink how they engage with the public during preparation of the Local Plan, however, no proposals for how this might be achieved are put forward. There is a great emphasis on taking a digital approach to engagement.

- 3.5 The 'Duty to Cooperate' with neighbouring authorities is removed with no clear proposals on how cross boundary strategic planning could be effectively achieved. The White Paper acknowledges that further consideration will be needed on how strategic cross-boundary issues can be planned for and the appropriate scale at which plans should be prepared in areas with significant strategic challenges.
- 3.6 The current Examination system would be replaced by a single statutory 'sustainable development' test. This would replace the current tests of soundness, the Sustainability Appraisal and consideration of deliverability. No clarity is provided on how the approach would allow for consideration of alternative strategies or development proposals.
- 3.7 The primary focus of Local Plans will be to identify areas for development and protection. Local Plans will designate land into one of three categories:
- Growth areas 'suitable for substantial development' where development will be approved with the equivalent of outline permission being established at Local Plan stage
 - Renewal areas 'suitable for development' where development proposals which meet design and other prior approval requirements will be deemed to gain automatic consent; other development will need to seek planning permission via an application
 - Protected areas where development will be restricted as a result of their environmental or cultural characteristics, including conservation areas, areas of flood risk and areas of open countryside. Some protected areas will be designated at the national level.
- 3.8 In designated Growth Areas for substantial development it is suggested that detailed planning permission might be obtained in one of three ways:
- A reserved matters process for outstanding matters
 - A Local Development Order be prepared by the Council in parallel with the Local Plan and linked to a masterplan and design codes
 - For exceptionally large sites a Development Consent Order under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects route could be taken
- 3.9 Local Plans will be expected to be visual and map based. They should be supported by a new standard template and based on the latest digital technology.
- 3.10 Development management policies will primarily be established at a national level with the National Planning Policy Framework becoming the primary source of development management policies. Local Plans will be expected to set clear rules rather than policies for different types of development. This limited role will focus on necessary site or area specific requirements such as height, scale and density of development within growth or renewal areas.

- 3.11 To support the transition to the new system a statutory timetable is set out for preparation of Local Plans. The timetable will vary depending on the age of the authority's adopted Local Plan. Where the Local Plan is more than 3 years old a maximum of 30 months will be allowed from the date the legislation is brought into force to prepare, submit, examine and adopt a new plan. Where a Local Plan has been adopted within the previous 3 years or has already been submitted for examination a maximum of 42 months is allowed. The timeline for updating Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 under the proposals would depend upon the date at which new legislation is brought into force. Three years from the date of its adoption would be 15th May 2022.
- 3.12 A radical digital-first approach is proposed to modernise the planning process both for Local Plans and for decision-making. This will involve facilitating people's inputs to the planning system via social media and mobile phones. Planning application processing software should be modernised and routine processes automated to speed up decision-making.
- 3.13 The White Paper heavily emphasises the government's intentions to enhance the focus on design and sustainability. Mandatory national policy will be used to address climate change mitigation and adaptation and facilitate environmental improvements. The proposals emphasise environmental sustainability, however, economic and social aspects of sustainability are neglected.
- 3.14 Neighbourhood plans are to be retained but the proposals explore whether their scope should be narrowed to focus more on design issues which poses a potential disincentive to Town and Parish Councils to prepare them.
- 3.15 The proposals suggest a significantly enhanced role for design guides and codes to provide certainty and reflect local character and preferences about the form and appearance of development. These should be prepared in conjunction with the local community to ensure residents can shape the design of future development. Once in place, design codes will be binding. The expectation is that these will be produced in tandem with the Local Plan either for including within it or as supplementary planning documents. The White Paper suggests automatic planning permission be granted for proposals which reflect local character and preferences. Each local authority would be expected to have a chief officer for design and place-making.
- 3.16 Within 'Renewal areas' pattern books of acceptable designs could be used to allow pre-approval of popular and replicable designs. A limited nationally set list of form-based development types would be approved and benefit from permitted development rights. Local orders could be made to modify these based on local evidence of what options are most popular with local residents.
- 3.17 The proposals highlight the imperative of having the right people and skills within local authority planning departments to be able to

successfully implement the reforms. The need for design skills features heavily in the proposals. The White Paper states that the government will develop a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector. The proposals anticipate some ability to refocus professional skills by stream-lining processes allowing for a more proactive approach to planning.

- 3.18 A fundamental revision of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 obligation mechanisms for funding infrastructure is also included in the White Paper. These will be combined into a single nationally set value-based flat rate charge, although the White Paper does note that either a single, or varied rates could be set. The aspiration is for this 'Infrastructure Levy' to deliver more revenue for infrastructure and on-site affordable housing provision than currently and remove the need for negotiation of consideration of site viability. Current CIL exemptions may be removed.
- 3.19 A revised standard method for calculating housing requirements is proposed aimed at stopping housing supply being a barrier to building new homes. The number would be set nationally as a means of distributing the national housebuilding target of 300,000 new homes per year and would be a binding figure to be provided through Local Plans. Land constraints and opportunities should be factored in when requirements are identified. The 5 year housing land supply test would be removed but the housing delivery test would remain.
- 3.20 Speeding up the delivery of housing is also a key factor in the proposed reforms. Masterplans and design codes prepared for substantial development sites should facilitate more rapid delivery by inclusion of a variety of development types suitable for provision by different builders to allow multiple phases to come forward together.

DRAFT RESPONSES

- 3.21 The White Paper contains 24 formal 'Proposals' of changes to be made with varying levels of detail set out under each as to what the intention of the proposal is, why the change is sought and how new legislation might effect change. Some sections also include alternative options on how changes might be made. Accompanying the proposals are 25 questions, many with multiple parts. An initial response of 'yes/ no/ not sure' is sought for many followed by a request for provision of a supporting statement setting out the rational for the response. Five questions (Q 4, 15, 16 and 21) seek identification of priorities when considering a particular factor.
- 3.22 Proposed responses to the White Paper have been prepared and are attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 4.1 The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

5. KEY IMPACTS

- 5.1 Substantial impacts will arise from implementation of the proposals in the White Paper. As this is a consultation document and the proposals may be revised and will require further legislative changes to facilitate their delivery the exact impacts and risks cannot currently be identified. As drafted the proposals could have significant impacts by increasing the cost of Local Plan production, reducing revenue from planning applications, result in greater uncertainty over the delivery of affordable housing and replace the locally prepared Community Infrastructure Levy with a national approach.

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN

- 6.1 If the recommendations are approved a formal response will be submitted before the close of the consultation period on 30th October 2020.

7. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 7.1 The proposals contained within the White Paper will ultimately have significant implications for the Corporate Plan and its objectives which will cut across the 'People' and 'Place' aspirations of the Corporate Vision and how the Council will achieve its aspirations regarding 'Becoming a more Efficient and Effective Council'. However, as a consultation document the implications are uncertain as yet.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None at this time as this is a consultation response.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None at this time as this is a consultation response. However, resource implications will be substantial if the proposals in the White Paper are taken forward into legislation exactly as drafted. Local Plan preparation and examination will be substantially more expensive due to the need to prepare detailed design codes and guides as part of the process. The resultant reduction in outline planning application fees arising from 'Growth Area' status being ascribed to strategic scale development proposals will negatively impact on Development Management receipts. Substantial investment will be required into technology both for hardware and software to meet the machine readable aspirations of all policy documents and planning applications.

10. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The White Paper proposals focus very heavily on housing provision and the environmental aspects of sustainable development. Very little detail is set out on how the economic and social aspects of sustainable

development will be taken into account in the new system which may reduce the level of consideration paid to the health implications of new development proposals.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 11.1 The White Paper provides the potential to fundamentally alter the way the planning system operates throughout England. The introduction to the White paper sets out a series of criticisms of the current planning system. It is acknowledged in the draft responses that some elements have been overly complex and lengthy. However, the current planning system consistently delivers more planning permissions nationally than are built, indicating that other factors are impeding delivery.
- 11.2 The proposed changes would have substantial implications for how the planning system would operate in Huntingdonshire. They would alter the strategic planning relationship with neighbouring authorities and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.
- 11.3 They could substantially increase the costs of preparation of the Local Plan and associated documentation whilst reducing income from planning application fees. The changing emphasis between Local Plans, design and development management would necessitate a significant re-prioritisation of resources within the Planning teams.
- 11.4 The proposed changes would have significant impacts on the nature, timing and amount of public engagement opportunities in the planning system. They would alter the role of elected members in the decision-making processes for both the Local Plan and for development management applications.
- 11.5 It is recommended that Cabinet provide comments on the proposed responses to this national consultation and delegate authority to agree and submit the Council's final consultation responses to the Service Manager – Growth and the Planning Policy Team Leader in consultation with the the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning.

12. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Huntingdonshire District Council's draft Consultation Response to the 'Planning for the future' White Paper.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>

CONTACT OFFICER

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APPENDIX 1: DRAFT PROPOSED CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO THE WHITE PAPER 'PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE'

The full document can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>

The consultation closes on **29th October 2020**.

Note: The below responses are in draft format for the purposes of consideration by Overview and Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) Panel. A full response will be provided for consideration through Cabinet.

1. What three words do you associate most with the planning system in England?

- Sustainability
- Democracy
- Community engagement

2(a). Do you get involved with planning decisions in your local area?

[Yes / No]

- This response is on behalf of the Local Planning Authority Huntingdonshire District Council.

2(b). If no, why not?

[Don't know how to / It takes too long / It's too complicated / I don't care / Other – please specify]

- N/A

3. Our proposals will make it much easier to access plans and contribute your views to planning decisions. How would you like to find out about plans and planning proposals in the future?

[Social media / Online news / Newspaper / By post / Other – please specify]

- Email at local.plan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk and development.control@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

4. What are your top three priorities for planning in your local area?

[Building homes for young people / building homes for the homeless / Protection of green spaces / The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change / Increasing the affordability of housing / The design of new homes and places / Supporting the high street / Supporting the local economy / More or better local infrastructure / Protection of existing heritage buildings or areas / Other – please specify]

All of the above and more are priorities within Huntingdonshire but if only three priorities were to be chosen, they would be:

- affordable housing,
- supporting the local economy and
- the environment, biodiversity and action on climate change.

5. Do you agree that Local Plans should be simplified in line with our proposals? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

No.

- The principle of simplifying Local Plans is commendable, however, it is essential to ensure all issues required by national legislation are addressed. The proposals as drafted do not do this so either corresponding amendments to other legislation will be required or further material retained within them.
- The White paper is not clear about the fact that key aspects of current plan preparation and decision making will continue to be integral to the system. Consequently, it gives the impression that there will be much less work to preparing plans than will in fact be the case.
- It will continue to be crucial that a clear strategy is set out for the area, which addresses the key issues and explores the real choices available, to set out the framework which underpins all that follows.
- There is no mention of how alternatives will be considered but this is essential to ensure that any plan provides the best available growth strategy. Developers and landowners will want to have their sites fairly and transparently considered. Such important decisions will need to be properly evidenced.
- The large-scale designation of zonal areas of planning will present many issues in for larger rural planning areas in terms of numbers and boundaries and the extensive resources required to establish the 'rules' that will guide the submission of a planning application. Each designation will require significant supporting detail to ensure high quality, locally appropriate development.
- Designating areas front loads the Local Plan further which means that significant additional funding and resources will be required to prepare local plans with no prospect of income generation.
- Designating areas in this way also restricts the development industry by limiting the scope and layout of developments to those agreed in the Local Plan. This could extend the duration and cost of examinations and reduce the ability to respond to changing circumstances over time.
- There is concern that this approach overlooks small-scale development in rural communities to support local services and communities. It states that small sites can be identified within or on the edge of villages. Further clarity is required to make the most of the transformative impacts small scale sustainable growth can have on local communities under this approach and how rural districts like Huntingdonshire can best utilise these three land types to support sustainable development across the district and respond to varying contexts, needs and opportunities.
- The requirements for assessments (including on the environment and viability) are proposed to be updated. It is expected that significantly more assessments would be required especially in relation to more in depth site specific assessment. This could potentially require extensive guidance to avoid lengthy interrogation at examination. As a full list of evidence based requirements is not listed in the document it is difficult to assess the impact of this measure.
- It is unclear how other planning applications that are not identified in the plan fit into this system e.g. how would expansion or diversification for

rural businesses be accounted for if they are within a designated protected area.

- Development management income will be reduced through reduced demand for pre-application advice and outline applications.

6. Do you agree with our proposals for streamlining the development management content of Local Plans, and setting out general development management policies nationally?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

No

- The removal of general development management policies from local plans restricts the opportunity for Local Authorities to provide locally specific solutions to ensure sustainable development.
- The proposals go too far in removing development management policies from Local Plans as it effectively assumes that all that will be needed to be able to deal with planning applications will be the assignment of sites to the three proposed categories, masterplans and design codes and the proposed national development management policies.
- Some development management policies are unsuitable for forming national level rules. These include policies which quantify requirements such as the percentage of affordable housing, those which delineate the area over which a policy will apply and those which respond to specific local circumstances.
- There is a significant risk that national policies would be so generic that they will be of little practical use in determining actual planning applications and may not provide adequately locally responsive guidance.
- Proposals do not identify how optional building regulations could be taken into account.
- Determination of small scale applications such as householder applications or infill development with locally led solutions will become more difficult unless a neighbourhood plan is in place and has clear policies against which to determine development. However, neighbourhood plans are not mandatory and are not required to include everything which would be in a current Local Plan, therefore they would offer some but not a comprehensive alternative for local development.

7(a). Do you agree with our proposals to replace existing legal and policy tests for Local Plans with a consolidated test of “sustainable development”, which would include consideration of environmental impact?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

Not sure

- A single test is supported in principle but should ensure that not only environmental but also the economic and social aspects of sustainable development are addressed. The White Paper places a very strong

emphasis on the environmental aspects of sustainability but neglects the economic and social aspects of sustainable development.

- The proposal for a single sustainable development test leaves significant uncertainty over whether there will be testing of whether:
 - Appropriate alternative approaches have been considered to ensure that the plan proposes a coherent strategy for the area supported by locally produced evidence
 - The plan conforms with national policy and legislation
 - Identified needs can be successfully delivered, particularly within the shortened plan period and the challenge of replacing site specific development allocations with broad growth or renewal areas.
- Removal of the current test of conformity with national policy could give the Inspector significant challenges if faced with a local Plan which clearly did not meet national policy.
- The alternative proposal of identifying a stock of reserve sites poses many questions on how this could be achieved within the three categories proposed.

7(b). How could strategic, cross-boundary issues be best planned for in the absence of a formal Duty to Cooperate?

- An equivalent to the Duty to Cooperate should be instated to ensure that cross boundary issues including major infrastructure, strategic sites, landscape impact, environmental concerns and climate change are addressed. It is also important that that development in one local authority is not counter-productive to development in another as this could impact on market absorption rates in both authorities.

8(a). Do you agree that a standard method for establishing housing requirements (that takes into account constraints) should be introduced? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

Yes but,

- Use of a standard methodology should, in theory, be beneficial as it provides greater clarity and certainty, would help speed up local plan examinations and provide a responsive distribution of housing nationally. However, once constraints are taken into account, as proposed, many local authorities will be unable to accommodate their calculated need and without a formal duty to cooperate no mechanism is presented by which unmet need would be redistributed.
- It is difficult to understand how qualitative constraints would be able to be incorporated into a mathematical calculation. The assessment of the constraints would require qualitative and quantitative evidence to justify an amendment to the standard method figures.
- Clarity would be required over how the land requirements for types of development other than housing would be quantified without substantial evidence and work to assess needs or targets to be set.
- The suggestion that a Local Plan should focus on meeting needs for just a 10 year minimum period rather than the current 15 years is opposed as this will not encourage provision of a long-term sustainable development strategy.

8(b). Do you agree that affordability and the extent of existing urban areas are appropriate indicators of the quantity of development to be accommodated?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

Yes but,

- They should not be used in isolation or as sole indicators. This approach over-simplifies the decisions made on where development is appropriate and most needed to contribute towards sustainable development.
- This approach gives the affordability indicator too much influence on determining housing numbers where there may not be land to meet the target. For example, London Boroughs and areas with environmental designations protected under law.
- Other indicators such as constraints, current infrastructure capacity, population profiles and land availability must also be used to fully assess where development can sustainably be placed when meeting the overall set target.
- The suggestion that flood risk be set as an absolute constraint gives cause for concern where the majority of the district's man towns all face significant flood risk and a balance between flooding and prevention or mitigation as provided for in the NPPF's sequential approach could provide solutions facilitating development in sustainable locations.

9(a). Do you agree that there should be automatic permission for areas for substantial development (Growth areas) with faster routes for detailed consent?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

No

- The decision on where growth areas will be identified will need to be taken first to ensure an equitable consideration of all potential large scale development proposals. The scale of work required to achieve the equivalent of growth area status and thereby outline planning permission will be substantial and may serve as a significant deterrent to developers and promoters of large scale strategic sites without the certainty of a pre-existing in principle allocation.
- To facilitate a successful outline planning permission matters fundamental to the grant of permission must be addressed and resolved at that time, they cannot be left for reserved matters. For the plan to confer outline planning permission all such matters would need to be resolved at the time the decision is made to allocate land as a growth area. To ensure such outline permissions are deliverable would, in all likelihood, necessitate more work than to demonstrate the acceptability in principle of a development allocation within the present Local Plan system.
- Elected members and community groups will be aware that there is no further opportunity to address matters relating to the principle of development will be concerned to ensure that nothing of relevance is missed or inadequately covered. This will increase the scrutiny applied to proposals for growth areas which is inadequately provided for in the proposed public engagement arrangements.

- Concern that a lot of work that is usually done by applicants at outline planning application stage will be transferred to LPAs who also miss out on the associated outline planning fees.
- Outline planning permissions for strategic scale development proposals usually include a significant number of necessary conditions addressing issues which will need to be resolved. A mechanism will be required to bring these into the Local Plan which could take the form of site specific requirements but their scope will need to go beyond that suggested in the White Paper.
- The White Paper indicates that the plan would set out suitable uses and limitations on height and density if needed but does not reflect on all the other plan making considerations commonly covered when land is allocated such as the proportion of affordable housing, supporting infrastructure, areas to be reserved for open space or noise attenuation, prior investigation for archaeology or heritage assets and areas for flood protection measures.
- Concern that by granting automatic permission for substantial development will not allow the flexibility currently allowed in Local Plans and would make it difficult for the resulting proposal to reflect changing economic circumstances. For example, if the condition of a listed building on a substantial development deteriorates or if the identified use within the masterplan is no longer appropriate or viable.
- The practical question of how biodiversity net gain will be addressed will need to be resolved. Details of a developer's overall scheme will be required to be able to demonstrate that the means of achieving net gain on site are deliverable before the outline permission is created through designation as a growth area.

9(b). Do you agree with our proposals above for the consent arrangements for *Renewal* and *Protected* areas?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

Not sure

- If Councillors are to have less discretion and planning application stage, they may need to take additional time during the Local Plan preparation phase to be absolutely certain proposals are right slowing down plan preparation.
- Concern that using national policy to determine general development management matters does not allow for local contexts, design etc. to be sufficiently considered, particularly for renewal areas.
- Concerns arise over how villages would be addressed within the proposed system. Criteria definition approach is currently applied in Huntingdonshire to the built up area. To have to delineate specific boundaries around over 80 villages would add considerably to the scale of work required in Local Plan preparation and to the duration of the examination as a vast number of landowners could reasonably be expected to challenge which category their land is designated as depending on their preferences towards development or protection.
- For this to work it will be critically important to get clarity on the following points:
 - Planning Matters / issues that will be classed as 'binary issues' (ie either 'yes' or 'no' matters)

- Planning Matters / issues that will be covered in a 'rule book'/design codes
- The remaining Planning Matters / issues that are balanced matters/discretionary/ site-specific technical issues.
- Within existing built up area development proposals usually have implications for adjoining properties which, along with other material considerations are addressed through the detailed consideration of the scheme. There is a lack of clarity over how detailed concerns might be addressed without which Councillors maybe reluctant to designate renewal areas within a Local Plan.
- To ensure sufficiently nuanced development schemes are delivered rather than designate single large areas to a particular status many smaller areas are likely to be necessary. Only through this can local characteristics be adequately responded to.
- A limited range of examples are set out to illustrate the nature of land that would be considered suitable for designation as a protected area. Clarity will be required on the approach to typical urban fringe uses such as sports grounds and whether they would justify being designated as protected areas on the basis that they re not identified for growth or renewal.
- Green infrastructure within urban areas appears to be at significant risk through application of the three categories. Playing fields, parks, amenity greenspace and allotments are all of value to community life and people's well-being. The implication is that they would be included within renewal area but within these there would be a presumption in favour of development which could give rise to substantial losses of these valuable assets.
- Conservation areas are noted as an example of a protected area. Large parts of many town and village centres are designated as conservation areas. The proposals would give rise to conflict over the status of such areas, particularly for instance, where town centres might be appropriate for designation as a growth or renewal area but also as a protected area.

9(c). Do you think there is a case for allowing new settlements to be brought forward under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

Not sure

- Disadvantage could be the lack of local control over location of a new settlement and loss of the ability to work with neighbouring LPAs to ensure competing schemes are avoided where this might be detrimental to the delivery of one or both.
- Advantage may be if this guaranteed funding for infrastructure to unlock development.
- There is likely to be conflict between some protected areas and aspirations for growth within them. For instance, conservation areas are proposed to be classed as protected areas but all of Huntingdonshire's town centres are also designated as conservation areas which could significantly impeded growth within them.

10. Do you agree with our proposals to make decision-making faster and more certain?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

No

- It is agreed that there are elements of the planning system that could be amended to assist in quicker and more certain decision-making, however, the Council has concerns over some of the proposals to modernise the planning systems outlined in the White Paper.
- Standardisation and simplification of planning applications is supported where the replacement proposals will result in an equal or better level of community service, development quality and efficient decision making.
- Proposals for data rich, machine readable applications are supported along with digital innovation. However, there is a complete lack of clarity on the provision of new software and digital capacity across LPAs. This has a significant impact on the potential delivery timelines for new processes.
- More complex planning applications typically comply with some policies and conflict with others raising issues specific to the individual location and scheme necessitating a balance being drawn when reaching a decision on a proposal. It should be clearly recognised that automation of determination of planning applications would not be appropriate in such circumstances.
- Given budgetary constraints the proposals will force LPAs to prioritise which aspects of the new system to invest in first.
- The standardisation of technical supporting information could increase the quality of some submissions and provide a consistent baseline against which to determine planning applications and address some of the causes of delays in the planning system. However, limitations may lead to omission of technical information which is significant to the decision making process.
- There is a significant risk of marginalising sectors of the community who are unable to access digital information.
- The proposals wish to incorporate greater technology to speed up decisions-making by quickly determining if planning proposals are within the rules.
 - This approach would probably work best with permitted development
 - There may be time and resource implications that would need to be addressed to incorporate the system and it would need to be flexible enough to take into account Local Plan designations and neighbourhood plans as they are approved.
 - It is unclear how effective this would be for major development and it is anticipated that case by case judgement still be required for those applications where the standard rules do not apply.
- At planning application stage there is likely to be forensic examination of a scheme's level of compliance with masterplans and design codes from people who remain opposed to the principle of the development. Such objections will need careful consideration so the aspiration to reduce the workload involved and speed up determine of applications may not be achieved, particularly for contentious proposals.

- The suggestion is put forward that where a planning application is not determined within the specified time limit the fee should automatically be refunded. This is unreasonable as in many cases the delays arise from poor quality or absent information from applicants or from issues raised by consultees which then need further investigation. This could result in the perverse outcome of substantially more applications being refused rather than the necessary time being taken to negotiate changes which would improve the quality sufficiently to allow the proposal to be approved.

11. Do you agree with our proposals for digitised, web-based Local Plans? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

Yes but,

- The principles are supported provided that alternative access forms are retained to prevent marginalisation of communities who cannot access digitally provided services. From a digital perspective software must also be disability accessible e.g. be able to be used by the blind or those with sight impairments.
- To promote consistency nationally led and locally informed software should be commissioned. This would aid developers looking at proposals across wider areas and save time and money in commissioning new systems whilst stimulating the economy by providing a national open data source for entrepreneurs and researchers.
- The same concept should also be applied to digital consultation software.

12. Do you agree with our proposals for a 30 month statutory timescale for the production of Local Plans? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

No.

- Whilst supporting the aspiration to speed up the preparation of Local Plans the Council has significant concerns about the resource implications to achieve this ambition and the lack of flexibility it provides to respond to changes in circumstances or particularly contentious issues raised by local communities.
- Very significant concern should be expressed over the likely incompatibility between the timescales proposed and the ability to ensure substantial community engagement in the preparation of the local plan. No opportunity is presented for public engagement on a full draft plan stage where normally the community, landowners and developers make substantial representations on the detailed contents of the plan leading to amendments and resolution of many issues before submission. Without this opportunity there is a strong likelihood that local communities will feel disenfranchised from the system.
- The burden of resolving all the detailed issues raised will fall to the examination of the plan and be removed from the control of locally elected Councillors who may wish to propose changes to the submitted plan in light of comments received. Given that this will be

the only opportunity for all comments on the actual content of draft plan to be considered it is expected that developer, landowner, stakeholder and residents' comments will be extensive. The anticipated timetable of just 9 months for all comments to be considered and resolved by the Inspector and a report issued seems unrealistic.

- The proposals do not address whether there could really be a material reduction in the amount of evidence required to produce a robust Local Plan so any savings in time and cost for this may not be realistic. The need to prepare detailed design codes alongside the Local Plan for any growth areas will add to the burden of supporting material required.
- In the first instance a greater amount of time to develop a new style local plan would be required to adapt to a new process and to understand the evidence required. In addition, adequate time for the Government to implement, refine and publish appropriate and clear guidance, standard templates and digital tools (if taken forward) would be required.
- As the proposal stands at the moment the Government expects all local plans to be adopted around the same time, there is significant concern that there is not sufficient capacity at the Planning Inspectorate to process this number of plans within the timescale due to resource issues. This wave of plans being submitted for examination would also recur frequently due to the need to regularly review plans.

13(a). Do you agree that Neighbourhood Plans should be retained in the reformed planning system? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

Yes

- Neighbourhood plans should be retained to maintain community empowerment and any changes made to the Local Plan system should be reflected in the Neighbourhood Planning system to ensure they remain compatible.
- If the revised Local Plans do not have locally specific development management policies, then Neighbourhood Plans would be the only option to set detailed local policies for sustainable development. Determining small scale applications such as householder applications or infill development with locally led solutions would be more difficult unless a Neighbourhood Plan has clear policies to determine development criteria. As neighbourhood plans are not mandatory this could result in inconsistent decision making.
- It is unclear whether the planning system will set the same standardisation proposals and timelines to Neighbourhood Plans to ensure they are of a minimum quality.
- There is little guidance in the White Paper to address what should be included within a Neighbourhood Plan.

13(b). How can the neighbourhood planning process be developed to meet our objectives, such as in the use of digital tools and reflecting community preferences about design?

- A more digital system will be beneficial to some but will alienate sections of the community.
- Not all neighbourhood plan groups will have the resources to utilise digital tools, some would be keener than others and there may be greater demand for consultants to assist groups with this.
- Including design guides and development management policies within neighbourhood plans may lead to a tendency towards safe architecture excluding innovation. It is believed that the Local Authority is best placed with the local knowledge and expertise to guide neighbourhood planning groups in policy development. There is a risk otherwise that Neighbourhood Plans may become too generic.
- It is unclear whether LPAs will still be required to support neighbourhood plan groups especially in relation to setting local policies that correspond to national policies in the absence of LPA development management policies. More guidance will be required to support Neighbourhood Planning Groups.
- The proposal for pilot projects and data standards to assist neighbourhood planning groups make better use of digital tools is supported.

**14. Do you agree there should be a stronger emphasis on the build out of developments? And if so, what further measures would you support?
[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]**

Yes

- Increased delivery rates and provision of a diverse range of types, sizes and tenures of properties that respond to the needs of the local community area supported. However, delivery must not be sped up at the expense of high-quality sustainable developments.
- Within growth areas additional complexities will be experienced in the planning and delivery process. Where multiple housebuilders may be delivering properties concurrently it will be essential to ensure adequate integration of infrastructure and seamless transition between parcels within and adjoining the development. This is important to deliver the overall development vision and a sustainable development integrated both internally and into the wider area.
- Delivery must be undertaken at a sustainable pace. For instance, for large scale strategic sites involving potentially several thousand new homes, it would be unsustainable to build new homes before there is sufficient community and transport infrastructure in which to provide for the increase in population and support neighbouring communities and community resilience.
- Greater emphasis must be made on ensuring planning permissions that are granted are implemented and ultimately delivered. To do this, changes to planning conditions and legislation could be made whereby developments must be completed within a specified number of years following commencement unless there are robust reasons it was not able to (an appropriate timeframe could be set based on the scale of development permitted).
- The current system is a permissive one within which 90% of planning applications are approved. In the year to June 2019, 377,000 full

residential planning consents were granted across England. If these planning consents were all turned into homes, nearly two million houses could be delivered over the course of just five years. According to the TCPA, there is also a cumulative backlog of over 800,000 permissioned homes that have never been built. The LGA puts the figure at closer to 1,000,000. In more cases than not the issue is a result of landowners, developers and promoters. Evidence suggests that housebuilders have around 1 million unimplemented building plots with planning in addition to thousands of hectares of 'strategic' land in their land banks.¹ By 'stockpiling' land and options house and land prices are kept artificially high by ensuring that the supply of land is constrained undermining the strategic planning of Local Authorities objectives of building sustainably located developments and housing at affordable levels.

15. What do you think about the design of new development that has happened recently in your area? [Not sure or indifferent / Beautiful and/or well-designed / Ugly and/ or poorly-designed / There hasn't been any / Other – please specify]

- Propose no comment from HDC, this question is geared towards the general public's opinion of the planning system.

16. Sustainability is at the heart of our proposals. What is your priority for sustainability in your area? [Less reliance on cars / More green and open spaces / Energy efficiency of new buildings / More trees / Other – please specify]

The options focus on more environmental sustainability proposals. It would be useful to highlight social and economic ones too which tie in with political objectives. Other priorities would include access to services and facilities to ensure community resilience, accessible and adaptable homes and energy efficient homes.

Scant reference is made to the importance of nature, wildlife and accessible green spaces to enhancing both the environment and social sustainability of areas. There is no indication of how natural and accessible green spaces can be accommodated within the proposed Growth areas or Renewal areas.

17. Do you agree with our proposals for improving the production and use of design guides and codes? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

- Support the idea of improving the production of design guides and codes and for greater local involvement in their production particularly for neighbourhood plans to enable richer policies and guidance at the most local level to empower communities.
- Proposal states that design codes will only be given weight if they can demonstrate they have undergone community consultation and have used empirical evidence. Further clarity is required on what level of evidence is needed to demonstrate that these have been achieved. This could be an additional resource implication on neighbourhood plan groups and LPAs. Will this be open to challenge by applicants who

disagree with the principles in the design code/guide and face planning refusal?

- Concern exists over the use of national guides and codes as these will not reflect local contexts and may result in uniform developments across the country with no reflection of their locality. These are likely to result in conservative design solutions suppressing innovation and modern design and negatively impacting on introduction .
- Will improving the production of design codes/guides include any time limits – for example, the guide/code must have been produced within x years otherwise outdated ones may be used which are no longer reflective of the local area or promote design that is no longer popular.

18. Do you agree that we should establish a new body to support design coding and building better places, and that each authority should have a chief officer for design and place-making?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

No

- A new body to support design coding and building better places is unnecessary. There are ample existing skills amongst professional bodies covering urban design, conservation, planning, infrastructure and landscaping to facilitate the level of improvements sought provided local authorities are adequately funded to implement them.
- It is the role of an individual local authority to determine the structure of its Chief Officers; this should not be determined nationally.

19. Do you agree with our proposal to consider how design might be given greater emphasis in the strategic objectives for Homes England?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

Yes

- An increased role for Homes England in championing high quality design is to be commended. However, this should not be at the expense of sustainable development or a reduction in infrastructure provision.

20. Do you agree with our proposals for implementing a fast-track for beauty?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

No

- The proposals appear to massively over-simplify the reality of the development management decision making process. There are many aspects other than external appearance which need to be taken into consideration before a judgement can be reached on whether a development proposal is appropriate.
- The promotion of 'popular and replicable' forms of development through additional permitted development rights is likely to hinder rather than, as suggested support, innovation in housebuilding and use of modern construction methods leading instead to introduction of standardisation forms of development with little or no regard for their local context.
- Approving a development based on the national design guide or pattern book in the absence of local design guide is concerning. The buildings constructed may not be suitable or out of context with the local area

particularly over time as areas evolve. Decisions on whether developments meet the design code or local context should be made at local authority level. An application containing a 'beautiful' home must still go through community consultation and policy analysis, potentially meaning that the application is not fast tracked. Although this ensures checks and balances are in place.

- Some flexibility will be required for anomalies not covered in the code and how can it be addressed these have been sufficiently consulted on – do these anomalies then undermine the weight of the code in decision making. However, if all eventualities are covered then the code become very long and perspective.
- There is considerable lack of clarity in the proposals, particularly regarding the level of detail required for masterplans and design codes for growth areas.
- It is unclear how a fast track to beauty will be enforced and whether specific evidence would need to be provided to ensure developers are meeting the design codes or pattern books.
- In relation to Proposal 17: Conserving and enhancing our historic buildings and areas in the 21st century and Securing consent for routine works it is noted that there is already a scheme (consent orders) for this but little appetite. If the scope of these orders were increased this could cause significant harm.
- It is not supported that suitably experienced architectural specialists could earn autonomy from routine listed building consents as this would present a conflict of interest by representing their client and at the same time doing the best for the building. There is also an insufficient number of suitable specialists.

21. When new development happens in your area, what is your priority for what comes with it?

[More affordable housing / More or better infrastructure (such as transport, schools, health provision) / Design of new buildings / More shops and/or employment space / Green space / Don't know / Other – please specify]

Our priorities for development within the district are to create sustainable developments, not just environmentally but also economically and socially. Priorities include the provision of:

- Affordable housing
- Associated infrastructure provision to support all forms of development including health, education and community uses.
- Green infrastructure
- Services and facilities to ensure community resilience

22(a). Should the Government replace the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning obligations with a new consolidated Infrastructure Levy, which is charged as a fixed proportion of development value above a set threshold?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

Not sure

- Huntingdonshire was one of the first authorities to become a CIL charging authority. The CIL has worked well alongside S106 and ensured effective collection of monies to support the delivery of necessary infrastructure. The twin tracking of CIL and S106 based on viability allows a clear system that has the flexibility to work for the benefit of the local area and the specifics of a site.
- Developers, particularly of strategic sites, often like the certainty that provision of key infrastructure themselves through S106 provides as it ensures gives them security that infrastructure will be delivered in a timely manner which is a significant selling point when marketing the site.
- Concern is expressed over the potential longevity of any revised scheme given the number of changes to the CIL scheme since its introduction in 2012. There is a significant risk that landowners will withhold land from coming forward for development if they consider the new levy to be too burdensome and wait for another change in approach. This could be severely detrimental to the delivery of new development.
 - Whilst it is agreed in some areas that S106 agreements can cause delay legal agreements can be very straight forward in the majority of cases. At Huntingdonshire District Council a standard S106 is available to be used and could be completed very quickly if it was not for developers/legal advisors trying to re-negotiate that standard wording and/or triggers. Similarly for strategic sites a standard agreement is available as the backbone of the finally agreed document, although it is accepted that strategic sites are very complex and, as such, will need further detail and consideration for the benefit of both the LPA and the developer.
 - It is unclear what the benefit will be to existing Charging Authorities if a new consolidated levy is introduced. What evidence is there that the level of monies or provision of infrastructure will remain the same or increase through a consolidated Infrastructure Levy? The current system enables a suitable blend of CIL and site specific mitigation. If all is covered in a nationally set Infrastructure Levy, LPAs will need to be reassured that this will only help to maintain or improve the infrastructure delivery for their area.
 - A significant proportion of infrastructure is currently provided (delivered) by the developers of a site rather than supplying money. There is no clarity over how or whether this will be captured appropriately under the new proposals. Developers are often more able to deliver a range of infrastructure items, to an agreed specification, at a more competitive price than the LPA/infrastructure provider due to the economies of scale they have in their purchase power.
 - What assessments have been undertaken to consider the minimum threshold level below which the levy would not be charged and for those over it would only be charged on what is over? Where reference to this reflecting average build costs per square metre, how would this be determined? Currently build costs are very different between smaller and larger developers, with the later having considerable economies of scale reducing value. In addition, just within housing alone there are differing costs depending on nature of development such as estate build. No details of how this is to be calculated with worked examples is given. Huntingdonshire District Council is a pro-growth authority but this needs to be sustainable growth supported by all necessary infrastructure that

every new unit brings with it. The CIL at present ensures that all new housing is liable irrespective of size, recognising that all have an infrastructure requirement. Unless this is to be met by the developer, will the government be providing the funding to meet this need?

- It is noted that the aim is to increase revenue levels but that is at national level. How would this be guaranteed for all areas as oppose to as a collective nationally?
- Removing S106 totally from the planning process will impede delivery of the Government's First Homes scheme which is wholly reliant on the S106 system. The proposals within the 'First Homes Summary of responses to the consultation and the Government's response' document notes that "Further proposals are being developed for an Infrastructure Levy, which would replace the Community Infrastructure Levy and section 106 planning obligations." However, the level of detail expanding on this within the Planning for the Future white paper provides no way to effectively assess how Local Authorities will be able to secure First Homes without a S106 agreement as a transitional approach is not set out in the white paper.

22(b). Should the Infrastructure Levy rates be set nationally at a single rate, set nationally at an area-specific rate, or set locally?

[Nationally at a single rate / Nationally at an area-specific rate / Locally]

- A nationally set Infrastructure Levy rate raises many areas of concern. No detail is provided to show how this would work within a LPA or any comparison given of how the result of that would compare to the current system and ensure the provision of the necessary infrastructure to support the growth of the area.
- How would the Levy be calculated? How would that take account of the huge variances not only nationally, regionally but also across counties. Furthermore, many Charging Authorities have introduced zones to take into account the varying values within their own district. If this isn't done then to achieve affordability across an area, the areas able to meet a higher requirement, whilst maintaining an acceptable profit level, will be asked for less due to the rate being reduced to ensure the less valuable areas can afford to pay. How is it proposed that the land value uplift is calculated? Again, worked examples of this for areas would be helpful to be able to provide a clearer response to the consultation.
- How will consideration of the final value be ensured to be accurate if that was used? It is already known that developers will look to reduce the value but saying that certain standard fixture and fittings (a necessity of a unit) will be provided at cost or outside sale value due to tax threshold requirements.
- When will the Levy for a development be set? Will it be set at the point of planning permission or if not until occupation at that time? The important to note that if a rate is set at the point of permission but the development of a phase is not built until a number of years later, or even over a decade later on a strategic site, the cost of infrastructure at that point could be much higher. Would this be able to be indexed to the date of occupation?
- The current CIL enables local values and requirements within a district or borough to be recognised to support delivery of housing and associated

infrastructure. The proposal is not showing how this will ensure that the current levels can be maintained or improved.

22(c). Should the Infrastructure Levy aim to capture the same amount of value overall, or more value, to support greater investment in infrastructure, affordable housing and local communities? [Same amount overall / More value / Less value / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

- If a new consolidated Infrastructure Levy is introduced it must capture at least the same amount of value overall. Noting the point that much infrastructure is delivered by developers and not issued as a payment to LPAs, how has this value been considered?
- How does the government intend to ensure that the cost of this is borne by the landowner/developer through the value of the land (i.e. a tax on the land) and not enabling developers to increase value of land unnecessarily through bids at the cost of the infrastructure provision provided / viability.
- Whilst flexibility to enable spend of the levy of wider infrastructure, at the LPAs discretion, is supported, the requirement for the levy to cover the cost of provision of matters such as affordable housing outside of the S106 is a concern. This would entail the LPA needed to purchase parcels on developments in order to build the affordable housing on site and take on responsibility for the building of the majority of affordable housing, with partners. This will bring significant additional work on the LPAs and RSLs to achieve this. Furthermore, if parcels are not purchased / made available on site the result will be developments that are not sustainable and mixed in nature with affordable housing having to be provided in areas potentially with less infrastructure provision. Even if the Levy could capture the same or above current combined value, this will be much later on occupation. Furthermore, if this is not until the scheme as a whole is completed this could be significantly later. The current CIL system enables developments, particularly relevant for larger ones, to have phased permissions. This ensures that CIL payments, payable from commencement but, in most areas, via an approved supportive instalment policy are done so in a timely manner to support the delivery of infrastructure as soon as possible. If the levy was not required until occupation how would this be determined? On the occupation of the first unit for the whole site or not until all sites occupied? If not the former then it is considered that would have a detrimental impact on the timely delivery of infrastructure.

22(d). Should we allow local authorities to borrow against the Infrastructure Levy, to support infrastructure delivery in their area? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

- The flexibility for local authorities to borrow against the Infrastructure Levy is welcomed. However, the government cannot expect LPAs to do that as a normal cause of action to deliver infrastructure early in the way current S106 agreements enable through trigger setting. With any borrowing against levy receipts there is/would be a significant level of risk as there is no certainty that the planning permission will be implemented

at all or fully. As the consultation itself identifies “local authorities should assure themselves that this borrowing is affordable and suitable”. The result of this is that many LPAs are unlikely to borrow and so infrastructure will be delivered much later, due to payment not being required until later, and so communities will be infrastructure poorer than in the current system.

25. Should local authorities have fewer restrictions over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

- It is important that the Levy is spent on infrastructure but the ability to spend that on infrastructure more freely would be supported. For example, with the continuing change of how the NHS operates and the introduction of Integrated Neighbourhoods certain health services, particularly the more specialised, may not be provided in the immediate local area of the development but the next town or further afield. The flexibility to spend this in those ways is positive and yet would enable the LPA to ensure that wherever spent it was the support of its area. The current CIL enables this but more flexibility would be welcomed.

25(a). If yes, should an affordable housing ‘ring-fence’ be developed?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

- Without details on the proposals, the LPA is not convinced the removal of the current S106 system is appropriate. However, should that happen and even though affordable housing is a priority for this council, it should be for the LPA to decide on how the levy is best spent and the infrastructure priorities at the time.

26. Do you have any views on the potential impact of the proposals raised in this consultation on people with protected characteristics as defined in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010?

The proposals may have detrimental impacts on people with the defined protected characteristic of ‘age’ by reducing their opportunities to interact with planning consultations through the emphasis on digital only systems which some older people may find challenging to engage with.

Other points to note:

- The Alternative Option is noted although no question is asked about this. Is the optionality purely based on whether you implement it? If an LPA chose not to, could it continue with the current CIL and S106 system or is the only option you have the consolidated Infrastructure Levy or nothing at all? Would it not be simpler to address the fact that where LPAs have not introduced the CIL that they are required to do so, i.e. making the CIL mandatory?

Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Housing Strategy 2020-2025

Meeting/Date: Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) – 7th October 2020

Executive Portfolio: Executive Leader

Report by: Interim Corporate Director, David Edwards

Wards affected: All

Executive Summary:

At the end of July 2020, a revised set of core strategies and plans were discussed and agreed for the Council. Work is progressing on these documents to an agreed timetable.

The attached Housing Strategy has been developed following internal and external consultation - including a member workshop with Overview and Scrutiny in early August. External consultation has been undertaken informally and formally with a variety of housing providers and interested parties.

A separate one-year action plan has also been produced; this contains details on how the outcomes set out in the strategy will be accomplished. Given the current challenges in responding to COVID-19 and the ongoing uncertainty it was felt that providing a plan for the next twelve months was appropriate. This plan will change further depending on local and national circumstances.

Recommendation:

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to review and comment on the contents of the Housing Strategy 2020-2025 and the accompanying one-year action plan.

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Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Housing Strategy 2020-2025
Date: Cabinet – 22nd October 2020
Executive Portfolio: Executive Leader
Report by: Interim Corporate Director, David Edwards
Wards affected: All

Executive Summary:

At the end of July 2020, a revised set of core strategies and plans were discussed and agreed for the Council. Work is progressing on these documents to an agreed timetable.

The attached Housing Strategy has been developed following internal and external consultation - including a member workshop with Overview and Scrutiny in early August. External consultation has been undertaken informally and formally with a variety of housing providers and interested parties.

A separate one-year action plan has also been produced; this contains details on how the outcomes set out in the strategy will be accomplished. Given the current challenges in responding to COVID-19 and the ongoing uncertainty it was felt that providing a plan for the next twelve months was appropriate. This plan will change further depending on local and national circumstances.

Recommendation:

- (a) To agree the Housing Strategy for 2020-25 and accompanying one-year action plan.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To set out the strategic direction for housing in Huntingdonshire in the medium term.
- 1.2 To highlight the housing priorities and how these will be achieved by the Council and through working in partnership.
- 1.3 To set out a short-term action plan for the next twelve months, noting that further work will need to be undertaken to refine these details, particularly in response to COVID-19 and the likelihood of further housing related legislative change. Whilst the action plan will be updated during the next 5 years it is not anticipated that the Strategy will change significantly.
- 1.4 To request that the Cabinet agrees the attached documents which will then form a key part of the new Strategies and Plans bookcase for the Council.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/ BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members agreed a revised set of Plans and in July 2020. The table below contains the high-level documents that the Council will be using to set out future objectives, priorities and service delivery. This suite of documents will be brought together over the next 15 months.

Overarching Plans	Outcome Plans	Strategic Plans	Activity Plans
Place Strategy to 2050 (Vision for Huntingdonshire)	Local Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Management Strategy • Waste Strategy • Housing Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Corporate Plan</i> Asset Management Plan • Waste Minimisation Plan
	Community Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Strategy • Consultation and Engagement Strategy <i>Leisure and Health Strategy</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Corporate Plan</i>
	Economic Growth Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport Strategy • Climate Change Strategy • Commercial Investment Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regeneration Plan
Vision for HDC	Core Service Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Strategy • Digital Strategy • <i>Leisure and Health Strategy</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Management Plan • Medium Term Financial Strategy • Service Plan(s) (SMs)

- 2.2 The documents printed in italics will span more than one of the outcome areas, those highlighted in bold have been identified by Overview and Scrutiny for further involvement as part of their work programme for 2020/21.

3. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 3.1 The preferred option of bringing forward the Strategy at this stage is reflected in the report. It is recognised that housing policy, need and provision is changing all the time and the document represents an evidence led approach in determining the housing priorities and objectives for the Council. Housing is a high priority and it is important that the objectives and outcomes are clearly

defined, many of which involve working with other public sector organisations, registered providers, and the private sector.

- 3.2 **Delay** - There was an option to delay in updating the Housing Strategy until a later date. However, given the importance of having a clear policy around Housing and the broad range of Council services that the elements of the strategy touch it was important to update the document now. There are also several pieces of current work including the A141 and Wyton where it would be beneficial to have an updated strategy in place. In addition, the Council currently has a vacant Housing Manager post and reviewing the strategy and identifying the immediate priority actions at this stage has helped to shape the job requirements.
- 3.3 **To present the housing outcomes in another document** – the housing objectives could be captured in one of the other documents. Whilst some high-level objectives are set out in the Local Plan this is a longer-term document and does not contain a high level of housing detail. By incorporating housing into another document would also devalue this key priority for the Council which was recognised when the planning bookcase was assembled and also by the member interest that has been shown throughout the development of this document.
- 3.4 **Do nothing** - there is always a do-nothing option, this would result in the Council not having a current strategy in place which would limit some of the wider aspirations and prioritisation of housing activity.

4. **COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

- 4.1 The comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

5. **KEY IMPACTS/ RISKS**

- 5.1 **Clarity of purpose** – if the Council does not have an up to date strategy in place it makes it difficult to engage with potential partners and plan service delivery.
- 5.2 **The focus of the housing work becomes quickly out of date or has limited relevance** – mitigation is through setting a single year action plan any emerging issues will be captured. In the current climate there are challenges around meeting housing need and affordable housing, this is expected to become more acute in the short term. There are also various regional and local pieces of work underway that the strategy will inform, and which will inform future housing action plans. It is anticipated that the headline outcomes set out in the strategy will remain for the medium term
- 5.3 **The strategy does not reflect the local position and requirements** – the Council has brought in an independent expert to undertake the development of the strategy and action plan. Informal and formal engagement has taken place on the development of the documents and once an initial draft had been

produced. Feedback has been positive in terms of the aspirations of the Council and the range of housing issues that have been covered.

6. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

6.1 The Corporate Plan was agreed by Cabinet in September 2020. This includes housing objectives and targets for the coming year. As with this action plan these objectives will be regularly reviewed particularly in response to the COVID-19 situation.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 There has been formal consultation on these proposals with a range of housing organisations.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There is a statutory duty to provide a range of housing support.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 In delivering the work outlined in the action plan there are implications for several council departments. The Council is also currently recruiting to the vacant Housing Manager post, the successful candidate will have a key role in progressing this work.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

10.1 The Council needs to have a Housing Strategy that is current and fit for purpose. The attached document reflects the latest housing context in Huntingdon and sets out a broad range of desired housing outcomes for the future. It identifies 3 overarching priorities:

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

10.2 Providing a one-year action plan also provides some further information on how these priorities will be achieved, and where achievement of priority actions are dependent on the variety of ongoing and not yet completed local and regional studies that need to be considered in the district. An annual action plan was strongly supported by those who responded to the external consultation.

11. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

11.1 Appendix 1 – Huntingdonshire District Council Housing Strategy 2020 – 2025
Appendix 2 – Housing Strategy Annual Action Plan

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 Formal feedback responses on the final draft document have been received from:-

Councillor Wilson
Cross Keys Housing
Longhurst Group
Urban and Civic

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Huntingdonshire District Council Housing Strategy 2020 - 2025

Foreword

Huntingdonshire District Council have clear ambitions to address the housing needs of Huntingdonshire now and in the future. These are shaped by the rich diversity of the District, comprising market towns, large and small villages, and dispersed rural settlements. The growing economy is also shaping future housing needs, with the area connected to Greater Cambridge in the south, the Peterborough economy in the north and the Fens to the north eastⁱ. Looking to the future the District forms part of the Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Oxford Arc, identified as a significant area for future economic growthⁱⁱ, with the mixed use Enterprise Zone development at Alconbury significant nationally. Improvements in transport links, the rerouting of the A14, planned improvements to the A428 and A141 and the potential for an East/West rail link with a station at St Neots, improve the connectivity of Huntingdonshire both within the District, and to other destinations.

With economic growth come new housing pressures to provide homes for a growing workforce, in a range of tenures that can be afforded, of a quality that will attract businesses concerned with the housing options for their future employees. The Huntingdonshire Local Planⁱⁱⁱ shows the need for 20,100 additional homes between 2011 and 2036 with a 40% requirement for affordable housing on sites of 11 or more units, subject to viability. The Huntingdonshire Local Plan demonstrates that this is achievable and deliverable.

Future housing needs must be balanced with addressing the needs of the existing population in Huntingdonshire. With the 20% of the population over 65, and a prediction that these numbers will grow significantly over the next 10 years^{iv}, anticipating the future housing needs of older people will be important. At the same time prices for both rented and market housing remain unaffordable for those on lower or average earnings and the need for affordable housing will grow, whether because the economy grows and house prices increase or the economy suffers a downturn and incomes drop. Homelessness remains a challenge.

Huntingdonshire District Council have a pivotal role to play in shaping the housing market in Huntingdonshire. In addition to their statutory role as the planning authority the Council have a wider place shaping role that requires working collaboratively with national and regional partners. This means building strong relationships with key players who are engaged in the delivery of new homes as well as those who contribute to the quality and management of existing homes and provide for the wellbeing of residents.

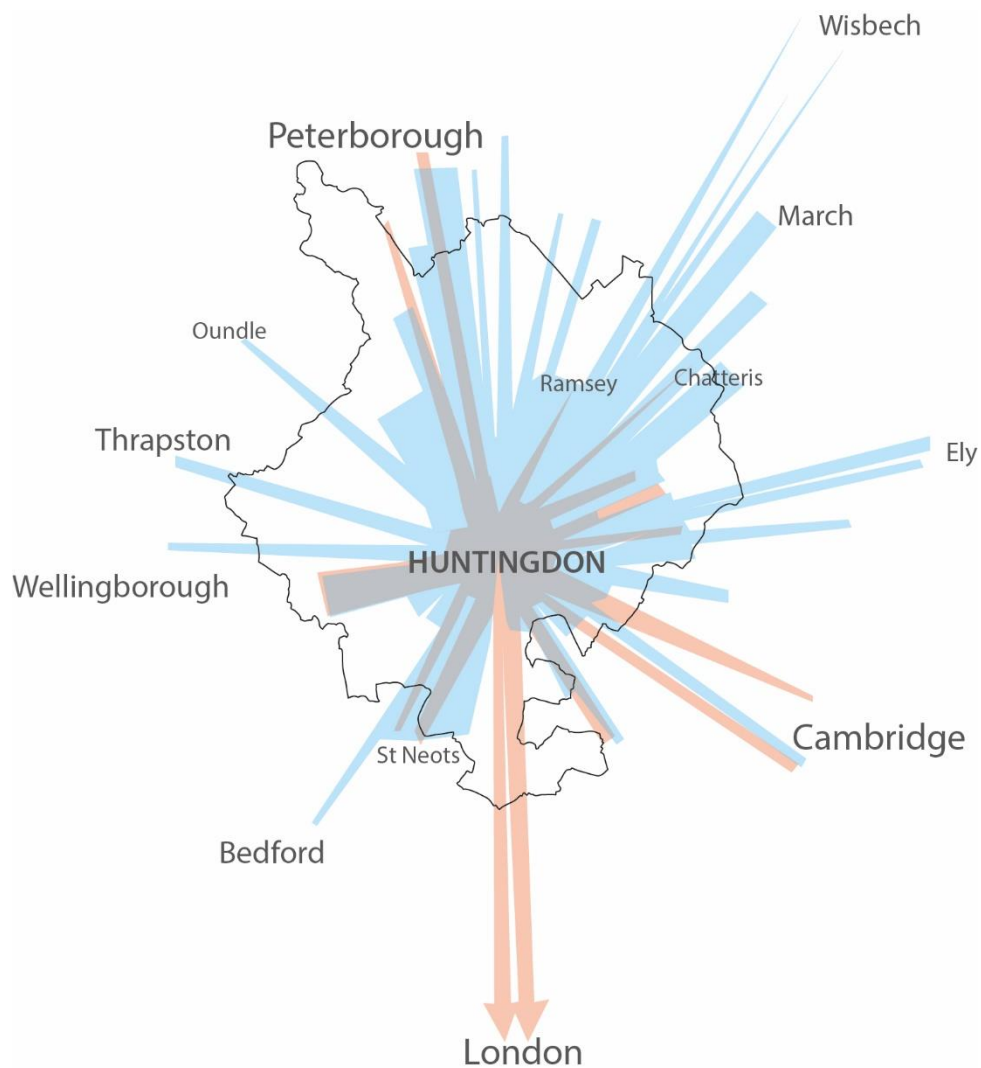
The housing strategy is being written at a time when the impact of Covid-19 on housing and the economy cannot be fully known. It is too early to predict the full impact on employment or income levels, which in turn will affect house prices for market sales, and the demand for affordable housing. The Government have also announced a suite of new policy papers relevant to housing, yet to become legislation. With this in mind the Action Plan will be drawn up for the first year and will be reviewed annually.

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Strategic Context.

This strategy has been developed to deliver the priorities agreed in the Council's Corporate Plan, summarised below, and to identify and agree actions to take forward additional emerging priorities. The Strategy is also written in the context of national and regional policy that are relevant to housing and the ambitions for Huntingdonshire and the emerging Huntingdonshire Place Strategy to 2050. The following travel to work chart, based on the 2011 census, gives an indication how the broader economy impacts on those who live in the Huntingdonshire.



Huntingdonshire Corporate Plan Housing related priorities

People

Priorities	Key Actions	Performance Indicators
<p>Enabling independent and accessible living through the provision of adaptations and accessible housing.</p> <p>Meeting the housing and support needs of the population</p>	<p>Early intervention to prevent homelessness</p> <p>New Homelessness and Letting Policy</p> <p>Eradicate the need to place homeless families in B&B</p>	<p>Numbers of homeless preventions achieved</p>

Place

Priorities	Key Actions	Performance Indicators
<p>Supporting economic growth in market towns and rural areas.</p> <p>Facilitate the delivery of infrastructure to support housing growth.</p> <p>Planning and delivering decent market and affordable housing to meet current and future needs</p> <p>Creating well designed, good places to live and work</p> <p>Ensuring a supply to meet objectively assessed needs</p> <p>Working with partners to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour</p> <p>Well-designed schemes that</p>	<p>Prepare options for redevelopment of bus stations in St Ives and Huntingdon.</p> <p>Work with partners to secure resources to facilitate the delivery of new housing.</p> <p>Prepare 'Prospectuses for Growth' for Market Towns and support the delivery of St Neots masterplan</p> <p>Adopt and deliver a Housing Strategy annual action plan</p> <p>Facilitate the delivery of new housing and necessary infrastructure</p>	<p>Number of new affordable homes delivered in 2020/21</p> <p>Net growth in number of homes with a Council Tax banding</p> <p>These have been prepared and adopted by CPCA in March 2020</p>

The Council is a member of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Sub-Regional Housing Board and has signed up to delivering against the following 4 priorities; New Homes and Communities; Homes for Wellbeing; Existing Homes; Housing Need and Homelessness

The most recent national housing policies influencing this strategy are summarised below.

The Housing and Planning Act 2016^v:

- Introduced Starter Homes as a new affordable housing product.
- Proposed the extension of the right to buy for Housing Association tenants – still in the pilot phase.
- Introduced a range of measures to tackle rogue landlords and address poor practice in the Private Rented Sector.
- Encouraged Self-build and Custom Build and required all local authorities to hold a register of applicants.

This was followed by **the Housing White Paper in 2017^{vi}** entitled ‘Fixing our Broken Housing Market’ with an emphasis on accelerating the delivery of new homes, with a target to build 300,000 new homes a year. It also widened the definition of affordable homes.

The social **Housing Green Paper in 2018^{vii}** entitled ‘A new Deal for Social Housing’ was heavily influenced by the Grenfell disaster. It had a strong emphasis on giving social housing tenants a stronger voice. It also looked at accelerating supply and a broader range of home ownership products.

Although the White Paper and Green Paper did not progress to legislation they are reflective of Government concerns to increase delivery and widen the market for entry level market housing.

The Government announced on 20th of March 2020 that they would be bringing forward several housing related papers ^{viii} - a detailed Housing Strategy, a Renters Reform Bill, a Social Housing White Paper and a Planning for the Future white paper. The last of these has been published at the time of writing, entitled **White paper: Planning for the Future^{ix}**. The White Paper is out for consultation until the end of October 2020. It proposes a radical overhaul of the current planning system, whereby Local Plans would become shorter documents, produced over a 30 month period (42 months for a Local Plan agreed within the last 3 years), showing areas zoned under 3 categories:

- Growth- suitable for substantial development, where outline planning permission would be automatically granted, with the forms and types of development specified in the plan,
- Renewal – suitable for some types of development
- Protected – where development would be restricted.

The document anticipates a faster process for seeking planning permissions, with clear rules, design codes and build standards including energy efficiency measures that anticipate the move towards zero carbon homes. Currently Section 106 agreements are the main route to delivering affordable housing, whereby the local planning authority negotiates the contribution that a developer will make. This would be replaced with a formula for an infrastructure levy which would pay for affordable housing, together with other requirements like roads, schools, and green space. The paper suggests that developments of 40-50 homes could be exempt from this levy as a temporary measure.

The White Paper consultation also promotes First Homes as a for sale product with up to a third discount. It also supports Community Land Trusts, self-builders and small and medium-sized builders' contribution to building more homes.

It is too early to know how this might translate into legislation and when, but at the earliest the requirement for a new Local Plan which may change some of the policy requirements in this Housing Strategy for Huntingdonshire is likely to be 4-5 years from now. The proposal for an Annual Action Plan relating to the Housing Strategy is designed to create flexibility to adapt to new requirements.

Other national legislation of relevance to this strategy relate to specific areas of activity:

The Care Act 2016^x required closer working between health, housing, and social care agencies to meet the assessed support needs of adults, underpinned by the pooled Better Care Fund, managed through Health and Wellbeing Boards. This incorporated the Disabled Facilities Grant, previously provided directly as a separate allocation.

The Homeless Reduction Act 2017^{xi} introduced a requirement for Councils with housing responsibilities to review homelessness in their area and formulate a Homelessness Strategy to:

- address the causes of homelessness in the area;
- introduce initiatives to prevent homelessness wherever possible;
- provide sufficient temporary accommodation for those households that are or may become homeless; and
- ensure that appropriate support is available for people who have previously experienced homelessness in order to prevent it happening again.

Regionally, the priorities of the Combined Authority for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, to accelerate delivery, create prosperous places where people want to live, and expand housing choices support the delivery of Huntingdonshire District Council's priorities. In September 2018 the Combined Authority published an **Independent Economic Review^{xii}** which identified the importance of housing in underpinning economic prosperity, and the vital role that market towns play in supporting economic vibrancy. This review is currently being updated in light of COVID-19.

Looking further afield Huntingdonshire is a part of the **Oxford, Milton Keynes, Cambridge Arc**, backed by Government in recognition that this is an area of economic strength with

huge economic potential, supported by housing delivery ambitions to create good places to live and work.

Housing Priorities for Huntingdonshire

This evidence-based Strategy has three overarching themes, shaped by the broader policy context described in the preceding section.

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

1. New Homes to meet the needs of Huntingdonshire now and in the future

Housing targets

Huntingdonshire has the greatest number of households of all the districts in Cambridgeshire, with a population set to grow by 20% in the next 20 years^{xiii}. The Council does not own and manage Council Housing, which means that their direct influence on the housing market is through working with housebuilders, developers and registered providers. In response to the requirement to build for the changing needs of the existing population, and future households, the Local Plan has an objectively assessed target to achieve 20,100 homes, an average of 804 each year, between 2011 and 2036, and ambitions to exceed this target. In previous years delivery has not been as strong as it could be and in response Huntingdonshire District Council agreed a Housing Delivery Test Action Plan^{xiv} which identified key actions that the Council would take to accelerate delivery. These relate to site constraints including land and viability related issues; supply issues that impact on the capacity to build and release new homes; planning processes including speed and accuracy of processes and the status of the Local Plan; and the delivery of key infrastructure services including transport and the provision of other essential services. The most recent housing delivery target results demonstrate that 110% of the required target was met last year.

Priority Action for Housing:

- 1.1. **The Council will continue to monitor the achievement of delivery targets in the Annual Monitoring Plan and take action as appropriate.**

Affordable Housing

The National Planning Policy Framework (2018) define affordable housing as:

- Affordable housing for rent (at social rent levels, and affordable rent levels usually at LHA rates)
- Starter Homes. (New homes or conversions to be sold at a minimum of 20% below market value with costs capped)
- Discounted market sales
- Other schemes which help prospective buyers

For many people either living or working in Huntingdonshire buying their own home or renting on the open market is not affordable. House prices in Huntingdon, although lower than in the Greater Cambridge area have seen a steady increase. In the last 5 years the average cost of buying your own home has increased by 19.6%, just below the national average of 20.9%^{xv}. Affordability is measured by looking at the ratio of earnings to prices. The latest published figures for December 2018 show that for those on the lower quartile earnings the lowest quartile house prices were 9.3 times earnings, and for median income and house prices the affordability ratio was 7.0^{xvi}. This has contributed to the current trend in Huntingdon with a net migration in from Greater Cambridge where prices are higher, but a net migration out to areas north of Huntingdonshire where house prices are cheaper^{xvii}

The picture for rental property shows the same trends with the average cost of renting a home above the Local Housing Allowance set by Government, widely used as an indicator of affordable rent.

Bedrooms	Median weekly PRS rents Dec 19 (£pw)	LHA rates for 2020/21 (£pw)
1 bed	138	130
2 bed	173	161
3 bed	207	189
4 bed	288	253

Recognising the importance of delivering affordable housing the Council has set the percentage requirement for affordable homes on all sites of 11 or more homes at 40% or 7,900 over the lifetime of the plan equating to an average of 316 a year. The delivery of

affordable housing has shown a steady increase over the last 3 years, reflecting the priority given to this target, with 440 affordable homes achieved last year.

Affordable Housing Completions

Year	Total	Affordable Rent	Shared Ownership
2019/20	440	292	148
2018/19	268	190	78
2017/18	165	134	31
Total	873	616	257

In Huntingdonshire the delivery of new build for affordable homes has focused on affordable rent as subsidy in the form of grants is only exceptionally available for social rent. Affordable rent is typically pegged at 80% of market rent or the Local Housing Allowance levels (the amount used to work out the limits for Housing Benefit or Universal Credit payment for rent), whichever is the lower. Current policy requires 70% of all affordable housing to be rented with the remaining 30% of affordable housing to be shared ownership as a discounted market housing product.

Huntingdonshire District Council expects that the majority of affordable new housing will continue to be rented and shared ownership as described above, but is keen to explore alternative and innovative models of low cost ownership to assist those that need a step up to being able to own their own homes. This will include consideration of starter homes where viable, and consideration of emerging options such as the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority £100k home^{xviii}. As these will count as affordable homes under the National Planning Policy Framework this will involve decisions regarding trade-offs in meeting different housing and infrastructure needs.

Priority Actions for Housing:

- 1.2. The Council will work with developers and registered providers to prioritise the achievement of 40% affordable housing.**
- 1.3. The Council will explore the potential and barriers for delivery of starter homes and other Discounted Market Housing models.**

Entry level housing

In some ways the needs of older people looking to downsize and the needs of younger people wanting to become homeowner coincide, in that both will benefit from smaller new

build homes, although older people will have different design requirements, as discussed in the section on specialist housing. Currently the tendency is for the market to deliver larger units for sale on new sites.

The Government have recently introduced a new provision for entry-level exception sites, to support the delivery of this type of affordable homes for sale. The Council is currently exploring the potentially for the development of an entry level site, which align with the priority given to developing options for entry level homes for sale and rent. In considering Entry Level Exception Sites the Council will need to be mindful of overlaps with Rural Exception site policy.

Shared ownership is a well-established and successful product providing entry level affordable housing in Huntingdonshire. The Council will explore a wider range of entry level products and evaluate their feasibility alongside shared ownership. These newer products include the provision of Starter Homes introduced in the Housing and Planning Act 2016, and the £100,000 home recently launched by the Combined Authority.

Priority Actions for Housing

- 1.4. To prioritise the delivery of at least one entry level site.**
- 1.5. To evaluate alternative models for entry level housing alongside shared ownership.**

Market Rent and Rent to Buy

The private rental sector makes up about 15 % of housing in Huntingdonshire.

The Council wishes to explore the options for developing good quality private rented accommodation. The options for using the Councils' own assets to secure the development of private rental properties are explored in the section on working in partnership in this report.

Build to rent is a distinct asset class within the private rented sector, at an early stage of maturity, often with institutional investment funding, with an element of affordable rent included (typically 20%). This market is well established in the student accommodation market, but less developed for other potential renters. The objective assessment of need for rented property in Huntingdonshire identifies low demand. Nevertheless Savills^{xix} predict this to be a growing market and one to keep a watching brief on, particularly in the light of the Council's ambition to create competition in the housing market to address high rents.

Priority Actions for Housing:

- 1.6. The Council will be open to exploring the options for institutional investment in the Private Rented Sector on suitable sites, including those owned by the Council.**

New homes to meet specific needs.

Some housing needs to be designed with particular needs in mind. This relates to both the size or design and designating homes for a specific group of people.

In Huntingdonshire as homes to rent or buy increase in price the retention of key workers in the District must be addressed. Early discussions with local hospitals have identified a need for key worker housing for those on lower incomes. The Council will want to look at options for providing for key workers, including on sites in its ownership and on other sites.

Older people households make up a significant proportion, one in five, of all households in the District, and in the next 20 years older households between 65-75 are likely to increase by a third.^{xx} The changing housing aspirations of this group need to be better reflected in future housing development. Studies show that whatever type of housing older people live in the majority prefer to live within mixed age communities^{xxi}.

There is a requirement for smaller units, attractive to older people looking to downsize, that are accessible and easier to manage. Older people tend to spend more time at home and may require more storage space and future proofed adaptable space. This includes smaller homes where older people can remain close to familiar networks and communities, including new build on rural exception sites, and homes within or close to market towns which benefit from being close to shops, services and social networks. The requirement in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan for new dwellings to be accessible and adaptable, and a proportion suitable for wheelchair users anticipates this growing trend. Newer models of provision will also be explored, like retirement villages which have a mix of general needs housing, supported and extra care, and care homes. For Registered Providers having a good mix of size and type of housing to offer older people helps to make the best use of housing portfolios, and gives existing and potential residents choices to downsize or move into specialist accommodation to meet their needs.

There will continue to be a requirement for specialist housing for vulnerable groups such as care leavers or younger adults who require specialist housing with some level of support. The recent draft Hearn report concludes that there is a 16% shortfall in the numbers in specialist housing. Huntingdonshire District Council's Local Plan identifies a need between 2016 and 2035 for 4000 specialist homes or older people and 2,000 extra care beds. Some existing specialist housing in the area has proved more popular than others, and lessons need to be drawn from the type and location of specialist housing, both in Huntingdonshire and elsewhere, when planning for new provision. As discussed in the next section models of care and support are evolving, with a much greater emphasis on enabling people to live independently in their own homes. Keeping abreast of models of care and support through engagement with health and social care partners will mean building the right kind of specialist accommodation for the future.

The Council will work pro-actively with developers and registered providers to deliver the right type of specialist provision, in the right locations, with the right tenure mix. This should provide for different levels of income and equity, reflecting the demographics of the area

and will include identifying external funding where available to improve the viability of building specialist accommodation.

Priorities for Actions for Housing:

- 1.7. Exploring options for key worker housing, including on own sites.**
- 1.8. Working pro-actively with developers and housing associations to achieve the targets for homes built to M4 (2) and M4 (3) standards as set out in the Local Plan (LP25).**
- 1.9. The Council will engage with Health and Social Care partners to align requirements for specialist housing with future models of care and support.**

Strategic sites and regeneration of market towns.

Market towns must be living, growing places that can thrive now and in the future. New homes for people to live in is an essential component for growing and sustaining the economic success of Huntingdonshire's market towns, keeping high street viable and providing employment in the locality. In Huntingdonshire the medium sized and larger strategic sites for housing development in the Local Plan will helping to sustain market towns as vibrant and attractive places to live, work and visit.

Successful strategic developments will bring new employers to the area, alongside existing employers and the context for this will be set out in the Council's Economic Growth Strategy. The quality of available housing, which will include new developments, is often an important consideration for companies looking to relocate to an area, together with other quality of life factors. Planning policies which ensure good design and build standards are a means to ensure a consistent approach to the quality of housing delivered.

The Council's forthcoming Climate Change Strategy will reinforce the importance of energy efficiency in new homes, as well as existing homes, anticipating changes in the energy market to meet the Government's Net Zero Carbon target. This is a fast-changing area where future policies are likely to have implications for building new homes able to accommodate the shift from fossil fuel energy sources to favour electricity and new forms of energy generation such as heat pumps. The energy efficiency of homes where it reduces costs can help lower income households to avoid fuel poverty.

The recent trend towards homeworking in response to the threat of the coronavirus pandemic has reinforced the need for good digital and fibre connections and the value placed on gardens and other green space. If the need to travel to work is reduced for many commuters, then market towns will offer many advantages in providing a valued quality of life.

The Local Plan has designated Alconbury Weald, North of Huntingdon and the developments east of St Neots as strategic expansion areas with mixed use developments delivering significant housing and employment growth on major sites in close proximity to market towns. The Council have embarked on work, sponsored by the Combined Authority to create a long-term vision for the future of all its four market towns. St Neots is the first

market town to secure support for 'Masterplanning for Growth'^{xxii} from the Combined Authority. This approach will be extended to other market town expansions in Huntingdonshire. Huntingdon is already at the first stage of having a 'Prospectus for Growth'^{xxiii} setting out an overall vision for the town. Well planned new housing settlements will be an essential element of this long-term visioning for strategic sites now and in the future.

Priority Actions for Housing:

- 1.10. **The Council will continue to work with developers to maximise delivery on sustainable strategic sites.**
- 1.11. **The Council will refresh its Design Guide**

Small sites target to meet local needs

Smaller sites for housing development in villages and towns can also play a vital role in maintaining the vibrancy of places, providing affordable homes for families who might otherwise be priced out of the area, and smaller homes to meet the needs of first time buyers and those looking to downsize. Huntingdonshire District Council will encourage the development of smaller sites that meet the needs of the local community, or a need for specialist housing, (see previous section). Thought will be given to the integration of small sites into existing communities and how new developments will relate to existing settlements.

New homes in villages can help to sustain village life, meeting the changing needs of those who live in the village and others with a local connection, and the Council will encourage the development of village housing supported by or led by the local community. Small village sites that might not otherwise get planning permission can be brought forward as Rural Exception Sites if they can demonstrate that they meet local needs. Exception Sites are intended to provide affordable housing in perpetuity. In Huntingdonshire 11 Rural Exception Sites have been completed since 2000, with a further four currently on site. There are ten in the pipeline, at varying stages of development. Gaining agreement for Exception Sites can be a lengthy process, requiring a demonstration of need, and planning permission. To simplify the planning requirements for Exception Sites Huntingdonshire District Council have set a standard 60:40 of net developable area split between affordable and market housing. This innovative approach is resulting in more sites coming forward.

Another option available to individuals wanting to build new homes is self-build or custom build homes on small plots. The interest in self-build and custom build in Huntingdonshire has been significant. By 30th October 2019 there had been 198 registrations of interest for self or custom build on since HDC instituted the register in April 2016 and 172 exemptions have been granted from the Community Infrastructure Levy on the grounds of the development being for self or custom housebuilding. The Council will consider the disposal

of small parcels of land in its ownership for self-build if they are not suitable for larger housing development.

Huntingdonshire District Council is supporting the development of the first Community Land Trust in the District at Great Staughton^{xxiv}, a development that will be owned by the local community and managed and developed by a Registered Provider, with the aim of providing a mix of affordable rent and shared ownership. The Council will evaluate the progress of the first Community Land Trust in Huntingdonshire, learning the lessons from what has worked well and less well in bringing this forward, in order to support future initiatives of this kind.

Villages, small and medium size enterprises and individuals benefit from the advice and guidance provided to them by Council officers for these various types of essentially community-based developments. This type of housing can make an important contribution to delivering much needed homes, particularly as a means of sustaining village life, and enabling villages to adapt and evolve without losing their essential character. Recognising this the Council will reflect on how we can improve the guidance we provide, including signposting to other advice hubs supporting community led housing

Priority Actions for Housing:

- 1.12. The Council expects that where affordable housing is contemplated typically Rural Exception sites will be progressed, but will also support the development of suitable smaller sites supported or led by the local community or meeting a need for specialist housing.**
- 1.13. The Council will strengthen the guidance and support provided to community led or supported sites to assist in accelerating delivery.**
- 1.14. The Council will consider the use of its own assets for key worker housing, and for self-build where these are not suitable for larger developments.**

2. Homes to enable People to live independent and healthy lives

Having a decent home of your own is the bedrock to creating stability and security in life. This section looks at various pathways through which people can achieve this, acknowledging that a home can take a variety of forms, depending on people's circumstances or preferences.

The broader environment in which people live also contributes to their sense of health and wellbeing. Building well designed good places to live which retain the vitality of towns and villages, connecting people to those things that are important to them, is a theme that ran through the first section on building new homes.

The basic requirements for a home have changed over time as expectations change. The experience of lockdown in response to the threat of a Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the importance of digital connectivity for working, staying in touch with friends and family, and providing technological support to keep vulnerable people safe in their own homes. It has also increased the value of gardens and nearby green space for a sense of wellbeing

when people are spending more time in their homes. The extent to which these changes will be long term and will require new approaches to the requirements within a home environment is a future challenge for all tenures.

Homelessness and rough sleeper prevention

Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategic Priorities for Huntingdonshire

Priority 1: Preventing Homelessness

Priority 2: Providing appropriate temporary accommodation and aiming to reduce its overall use by securing accommodation for people who are homeless

Priority 3: Establishing effective partnerships, working arrangements and support to those threatened by homelessness, to improve their resilience and reduce the risk of homelessness occurring

The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) has brought about a shift in approach to addressing homelessness in Huntingdonshire, placing a much greater emphasis on prevention and co-operation with other agencies. The Council's Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy^{xxv} sets out this new approach within the national and local context.

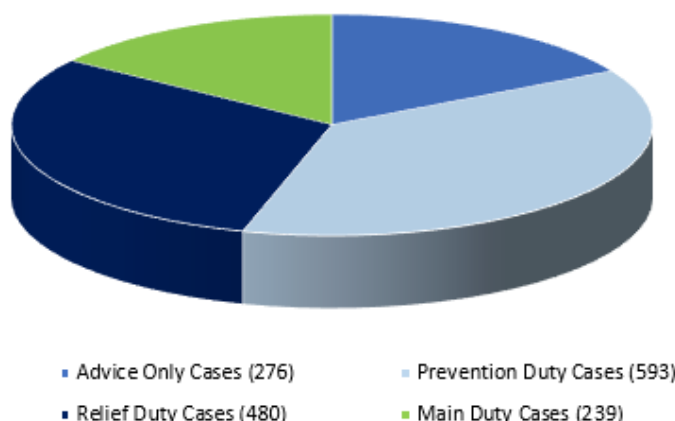
The Council invested in a restructured and increased homelessness prevention service at the time of the introduction of the new Act, working collaboratively with other public agencies engaged in the prevention and resolution of homelessness. Local policies, projects and transformative programmes, adopted in Huntingdonshire shaped the public service response to homelessness.

Key amongst these has been:

- The Homelessness Trailblazer Programme – reviewing the pathways through which people become homeless and establishing new pathways to prevention.
- Working with the County Council on their Housing Related Support Strategy and the possible opportunities to redesign or reconfigure models of delivery.
- Adopting a “Think Communities” approach which seeks to transform multi-agency working together, and “Project Pathways” which aims to restructure services for vulnerable individuals to prevent a revolving door of presentations to different agencies.

The HRA requires local authorities to go through staged interventions with households presenting as homeless. The following chart shows the split of households that were assisted at each of these stages of intervention

Number of Homeless Applications Opened At the Various Duty Stages, Huntingdonshire 2018/19



This staged approach gives the opportunity for the Council, working with other agencies, to resolve a household's potential homelessness in a wider range of ways, detailed in the Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Review and Strategy. For those households that reach the relief stage and those that go on to the main duty stage, where the Council has a statutory duty to provide accommodation, the availability of socially rented housing is a key determinant to securing accommodation, underscoring the impact that housing delivery has on homelessness.

The Lettings Policy is in the process of being revised as a joint document, with other local authorities in the sub-region, in the light of the Homelessness Reduction Act, and is due for completion in 2020. The Letting Policy ensures that those households that legislation states must be prioritised, including those owed certain homelessness duties, are offered sufficient priority.

The Council has committed to ending the use of Bed and Breakfast for homeless households for whom it owes a duty to provide emergency accommodation. Huntingdonshire District Council have successfully worked with Housing Associations in the district to increase the availability of temporary housing, and also increased the use of nightly paid self-contained units and are on track to achieve this target. A further short-term let scheme is in the pipeline to be delivered in 2020 with a partner housing association, by redesigning and redesignating an outdated elderly persons scheme. This will add further to the stock of short-term units available to the Council.

The numbers of rough sleepers in Huntingdonshire are relatively small because rough sleepers tend to congregate in larger urban areas. In November 2019 the estimate was 4 men aged over 25. The Council successfully combined with East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire, neighbouring Districts with similar characteristics, to secure Government funding to pilot a homeless street outreach team, to support rough sleepers to address a range of issues. This initiative will be evaluated to consider the ongoing need for this type of service in the future.

Priority Action for Housing:

- 2.1. **The Council will monitor the achievement of the key objectives agreed in the Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Review and Strategy through an annual action plan and adapt as necessary.**
- 2.2. **The Council will adopt a revised lettings policy.**
- 2.3. **The Council will evaluate the pilot Rough Sleeper Initiative.**

Housing with support

Housing with support - definitions

- General needs . People living in their own homes with or without support.
- Housing with Support. Usually with off-site or some on-site support that promotes independent living in retirement homes or sheltered housing.
- Housing with care –enhanced supported/sheltered housing with on-site support 24/7.
- Residential care bed spaces – provides intensive care and nursing support.

People can benefit from supported housing for a range of reasons where they may struggle to cope with living independently without some level of support. Sometimes this will have previously been provided by families, friends, or others. People can be supported in a number of ways, ranging from housing specifically designed with specific needs in mind to visiting support that promotes independent living. The earlier section on building new homes highlighted the necessity to work closely with Health and Social Care partners to ensure that new housing provision is designed with models of care in mind. Linked to this is the importance of Registered Providers who deliver and manage specialist housing for older people and other specialist needs being involved as partners in forward planning for future needs in Huntingdonshire.

The Council's Housing Options and Advice service is engaged in work with colleagues from the County and other agencies looking at options and future commissioning of services that help individuals or families to be able to sustain their accommodation, or set up their own homes, or live independently, or provide ongoing support. A Housing Related Support Strategy is due for publication shortly, and the implications for Huntingdonshire will need to be reviewed and understood.

Most older people continue to live in their own homes, with varying levels support to enable them to live independently. The majority of older people in Huntingdonshire are owner occupiers with 73% of 65-75-year-old householders owning their homes outright, and a further 10% owning with a mortgage. The 18% that rent are most likely to be in socially

rented accommodation, particularly if they are a single person^{xxvi} As models of care evolve it is becoming more typical for older people to be cared for in their own homes for as long as possible, and the size and design of homes is important in enabling this.

There are a range of choices for older people looking to move into accommodation that better meets their circumstances. Many are not aware that there are choices other than residential care for those finding it difficult to remain in their existing homes. To help people explore and understand the options that are available the Council will support the Housing Options for Older People (HOOP)^{xxvii} initiative to enable residents to make informed choices.

Priority Actions for Housing:

- 2.4. **When published, review the implications for Huntingdonshire District Council of the County Council's Housing Related Support Strategy.**
- 2.5. **The Older Peoples Housing Strategy will be updated to reflect changing patterns of care, identify gaps in provision, and determinants of successful schemes in Huntingdonshire District Council and elsewhere.**
- 2.6. **The Council will support and publicise the availability of the Housing Options for Older People scheme.**

Helping people to live independently in their own home

The Council is committed, working with our partners in Health and Social Care, to assist people to remain in their own homes and live independently, wherever possible. The Council has worked jointly with Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire Council to agree the 'Cambridgeshire Housing Adaptations and Repairs Policy'^{xxviii}. This policy recognises the crucial role housing can play in promoting physical and mental health and wellbeing, and outlines eligibility, and the criteria for improvements funded through the Disabled Facilities Grant. The policy aims to provide for a consistent approach across the County as to how councils meet their statutory responsibilities and make judgements about the best use of resources for all agencies involved in the care and support provided to enable adults and children to live independently in their own homes.

Huntingdonshire District Council is signed up to a County wide Handy Person's scheme which is a key contributor to enabling people to live independent and health lives, reducing falls in older people, and facilitating discharges from hospital. The service delivers low level interventions such as minor repairs and maintenance tasks, safety checks around the home, and referral services for additional help or support.

The allocation for Disabled Facilities Grants is passed on to District Councils via the Government Funded Better Care Fund. In 2019/20 Huntingdonshire received an allocation of £1.3m for the year, which was insufficient to meet demand and which was topped up by

almost £1m directly from Council resources. This is a significant investment by the Council in aids and adaptations for the local population.

In Huntingdonshire residents who qualify for a Disabled Facilities Grant are encouraged to have the work carried out through the local Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency (CHIA)^{xxix}. The Agency will assist people to apply for grants and loans, design and organise work, obtain quotes, supervise the work on site and complete all of the administrative support required to enable a person to maximise their independence in their own home, for which they charge of fee. The staff in the agency work closely with district council officers, Occupational Therapists, and other professionals.

The following table shows how the amount spent by the Council on Disabled Facilities Grants has increased year on year, with the proportion of direct investment by the Council increasing exponentially in the last 3 years. This is for mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants only as the Council do not have the financial capacity for discretionary spend. There are historic reasons for this. Nonetheless with such a significant investment it is prudent for the Council to periodically review the reasons for this level of spend and any actions to either reduce spend or free up resources to accommodate greater flexibility.

Year	Better Care Fund Allocation	HDC DFG Budget	Final year spend	CHIA Fees (included in final year spend)
2015/16	£ 549,000	£ 1,545,000	£ 1,435,089	£ 142,756
2016/17	£ 1,018,751	£ 1,400,000	£ 1,584,398	£ 186,373
2017/18	£ 1,118,716	£ 1,418,716	£ 2,386,944	£ 325,443
2018/19	£ 1,150,583	£ 1,900,000	£ 2,395,552	£ 336,212
2019/20	£ 1,315,029	£ 2,246,000	£ 2,217,435	£ 318,795

Priority Action for Housing

- 2.7. The Council will review the reasons for higher Disabled Facilities Grant spend and scope to make changes.**

Gypsy and Traveller sites and houseboat moorings

Not everyone chooses to live in a bricks and mortar home, and in Huntingdonshire the Gypsy and Traveller Community and Houseboat dwellers will have specific requirements for their choice of living accommodation.

Huntingdonshire has well-established gypsy and traveller community and Council has an effective planning policy for granting permanent planning permission for sites which meet a criteria-based approach. 'The Cambridgeshire Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment 2016' ^{xxx} assessed the need for additional pitches in Huntingdonshire. The five year target has been met by the Local Plan examination and as a consequence Huntingdonshire do not have any future sites designated for pitches. Applications for pitches in suitable locations away from existing settlements, but sufficiently close to local health services and primary schools, will continue to be considered against policy requirements.

The demand for residential houseboat moorings is relatively small and is similarly assessed against policy criteria which ensure that granting permission for permanent mooring is assessed against the impact on nearby settlements and access to services for houseboat dwellers.

A review of the Gypsy and Travellers accommodation needs is underway - including houseboat dwellers, and the findings will be taken into account once completed.

Priority Action for Housing:

- 2.8. **Continue with existing policies as agreed in the Local Plan with clear signposting to policies on the Council's website.**
- 2.9. **Have regard to the conclusions of the Gypsy and Travellers Review.**

3 Working with Partners

In the delivery of housing to meet the needs of the District the Council have a statutory role as the planning authority. But the influence that the Council can have is potentially much wider than this and depends to a large extent on the approach the Council takes to working with other agencies with a role in the provision of housing. Building strategic relationships that support the delivery of the Council's housing ambitions is part of a long-term commitment to work collaboratively with partners for the benefit of Huntingdonshire. This section selects those that will be key to supporting housing delivery and to addressing the housing needs of existing residents. Annex 2 sets out a fuller map of key partnerships and forums.

Working Strategically to accelerate delivery

The Council's housing ambitions are shared by other agencies, unsurprisingly as Huntingdonshire's housing market operates within a much broader national and regional context of housing supply that is insufficient to meet demand. This is evidenced through complementary strategies that encompass Huntingdonshire. The Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority Housing Strategy 2018^{xxxi} has a target to deliver 100,000 new homes by 2022, of which 40% are affordable. Its strategic priorities include accelerating delivery, placemaking and expanding housing choices. The Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority recently commissioned an Economic Review which confirmed the strategic importance of Huntingdonshire, particularly its market towns, for the delivery of housing to support economic growth. Looking wider the Government have set out ambitions for the Cambridge, Milton Keynes Oxford Arc identifying Huntingdonshire as an area with significant potential.

Affordable Housing in Huntingdonshire is delivered through Registered Providers, (mainly Housing Association). Registered Providers are increasingly consolidating their developments in target geographically areas, and in Huntingdonshire these are the Housing Associations which the Council wants to build and sustain a good long term working relationship with, based on an understanding that there a shared aim to deliver much needed affordable housing and low-cost home ownership in the District. A productive relationship will be built on mutual respect, an ongoing dialogue, and clarity of shared strategic objectives.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have other key fora concerned with housing issues as Annex A shows. The Housing Board for Cambridgeshire Peterborough and West Suffolk which brings together local authorities, including Cambridgeshire County Council, and housing association representatives has been notably instrumental in developing a consistent sub-regional approach where this is beneficial, and provides a forum to reflect and learn from good practice. This has provided a useful platform to agree strategic joint working between agencies, and has paid real dividends in areas like homelessness, understanding the links between housing health and social care, and delivering build standards that helping to maintain those who need support in their own homes as long as possible.

Priority Actions for Housing:

- 3.1. The Council will continue to build and sustain long term strategic relationships with key partners in the delivery of housing ambitions.**

Accessing Funding

Funding streams evolve over time, and Huntingdonshire District Council will make sure that it keeps up to date with available funding and any new or emerging funding priorities. This is

not an entirely passive process. The Council will have an ongoing dialogue with funding agencies to make them aware of ongoing housing pressures, and where funding can be best targeted. For housing delivery funding from Homes England, the Combined Authority and the National Infrastructure fund all provide potentially valuable resources to access. This can be for direct delivery of housing in the form of grants, for infrastructure and to unlock sites, and to facilitate a joint approach to housing delivery through support for Joint Ventures. The Council has worked in collaboration with Registered Providers to secure investment for 100% affordable housing on sites in the District. More can be achieved if the Council works to facilitate funding that addresses ambitions or gaps in provision in the District.

New funding streams are emerging at the time of writing to redress the economic impact of the Covid-19 lockdown. The Government have announced a Green Homes Grant to retrofit existing homes also which also contributes to the Net Zero Carbon target and have indicated the importance of construction industry contribution to re-stimulating the economy. The Government have also announced an intention to provide a decarbonisation fund for social housing.

Priority Actions for Housing:

3.2. The Council will take a pro-active approach to securing funding to assist the delivery of housing development.

Use of Assets

Huntingdonshire District Council own several small and medium sites within the District with the potential for a small number of homes. The Council is evaluating how these can be used to further the priorities for housing. A number of options will be considered, and the Council will want to make sure it makes the best use of these assets to deliver against its priorities. This is most likely to mean exploring options for delivering affordable housing and market rental housing, self-build and custom build, and key worker housing, encompassing a range of potentially different products.

In the case of market rented housing companies experience elsewhere has shown that once costs such as voids, arrears and management costs are factored in local authority housing companies with modest portfolios cover their costs but rarely make a significant profit from rents, in large part because of the requirement to pay back borrowing incurred to finance the build. (Borrowing rules for the Public Works Loans Board are also changing to make it much more difficult for local authorities to make a profit from borrowing and reinvesting). The Council will continue to explore alternative options for delivering the ambition of providing good quality market rental housing on its sites, alongside other priority tenures.

Bringing sites forward is a complex process which includes gaining planning permission, site investigations, design and build out of the site and management of the properties. The Council does not have the capacity or expertise in-house to develop or manage these sites directly itself and will be looking to do this in partnership with others. Furthermore, in

today's uncertain economic climate the Council is better able to control risk with an experienced partner.

The form of partnership working entered into will depend on final decisions as to how many sites are assessed as suitable for development, and whether this is sufficient to warrant the cost and complexity of forming a separate legal entity to deliver housing on sites, or whether better outcomes can be achieved through partnership agreements on individual sites with Registered Providers. The earlier section on productive partnership working is worth reflecting on here. Ultimately the Council will enter into the type of agreement that best delivers the housing outcomes sought. Different sites are likely to lend themselves to different mixes of tenure.

The primary motive for the use of these sites is to deliver housing, rather than to deliver a capital return from sale, unless from sales to improve the viability of schemes. The Council will agree a timetable for testing the option of a partnership with a Registered Provider, and/or other providers specialising in market rental homes, to deliver a mix of housing that reflect priorities.

The Council owns other assets which currently provide an income to support delivery of Council services. If the pandemic has an impact of the viability of these other assets the Council may want to consider using some of them to deliver its housing priorities.

Priority Actions for Housing:

- 3.3. For Council owned sites the Council will determine the optimum approach for delivering against its strategic priorities.**
- 3.4. The Council will consider partnership proposals that provide best value and maximise the delivery of the Council's objectives.**
- 3.5. Owned sites that are not viable for development with a partner will be considered for disposed for self-build**

Working with landlords

The previous housing strategy concluded that a comprehensive stock condition survey carried out in 2010^{xxxii} showed the Private Rented Sector (PRS) stock to be generally in good condition, and although there were a few homes that were unfit or in substantial disrepair, there was no special concentration and no need for an area renewal strategy. There is no evidence to suggest this position has changed.

Nevertheless, there are good reasons for the ongoing work with landlords. Typically, private sector landlords own a small number of properties^{xxxiii} and may not be aware of their obligations and responsibilities to provide accommodation that meets statutory requirements. There are estimated to be around 500 Houses in Multiple Occupation of which 47 are licenced with the Council, with a further 7 in train. (Not all HMOs are required to be licenced). Important for the rented sector in general are the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and the requirement to meet statutory energy rating

standards. The Council takes the approach of working with landlords to inform and educate about their obligations, only exceptionally taking formal enforcement action. There were 2 enforcement notices issued to landlords in the last 2 years, both speedily complied with.

A growing trend is the number of properties empty for more than 6 months in Huntingdonshire which has increased by a third in the last year to 577. The Council will monitor the interventions made by Environment Health in the private rented sector to maintain an up-to-date picture of conditions in this sector, to inform future approaches.

The Council is leading a project called the Huntingdon North Initiative^{xxxiv} with other partners focused on the Oxmoor Estate, originally built as a social housing estate for London overspill, where the main landlord is the housing association Chorus. The estate is within the most deprived wards in Huntingdonshire. This initiative takes a multi-agency approach where services work together to build community resilience, taking a 'Think Communities' approach. This involves working collaboratively with the residents to support and maintain valued aspects of life on the estate and tackle some of the underlying challenges, encouraging community led solutions and interventions. A profile of the estate shows that the population on the Oxmoor Estate have a strong sense of community, are predominantly 'financially overstretched' and have suffered historic high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. An early result of this initiative has been a fall in recorded offences, and an identification of anti-social behaviour hotspots followed by targeted interventions. This approach to working with communities under pressure is being closely monitored and the evaluation will provide useful lessons for future work, including the role that landlords can play in improving the health and wellbeing of an area.

Priority Actions for Housing:

- 3.6. **The Council will collect data on private rented sector interventions to inform future focus.**
- 3.7. **The Council will seek to understand the reasons for the increase in empty homes and what actions, if any, could be pursued.**
- 3.8. **The Council will continue to lead the Huntingdon North Initiative including the evaluation of the effectiveness of this approach.**

Delivering on priorities

This Housing Strategy sits within a suite of strategies for Huntingdonshire agreed by the Council to set clear pathways for the future. This is shown in Annex 1. The priority actions in this report are supported by an annual action plan which sets out how each priority will be delivered, responsibility for this, any key milestones, and delivery dates.

Annex 1 Huntingdonshire District Council Strategies

Overarching Plans	Outcome Plans	Strategic Plans	Activity Plans
Place Strategy to 2050 (Vision for Huntingdonshire)	Local Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asset Management Strategy Waste Strategy Housing Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Plan Asset Management Plan Waste Minimisation Plan
	Community Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Strategy Consultation and Engagement Strategy Leisure and Health Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Plan
	Economic Growth Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport Strategy Climate Change Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regeneration Plan
Vision for HDC	Core Service Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce Strategy Medium Term Financial Strategy Commercial Investment Strategy Digital Strategy Leisure and Health Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information Management Plan Service Plan(s)

Annex 2 Key Partnerships

Strategic	Service delivery	Housing Delivery
Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority	Cambridgeshire County Council	Developers including master developers
Oxford, Milton Keynes Cambridge Arc	Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency	Registered Providers including Housing Associations
Homes England	Letting Agents	Parishes
MHCLG	Private Landlords	Community Land Trusts
Housing Board for Cambridgeshire Peterborough and West Suffolk	Housing Associations	Self and Custom Build
	Home-link Board	Institutional Investors
Health and Wellbeing Board	Homelessness Trailblazer Programme	
Cambridgeshire Public Service Board	Project Pathways	
Planning Policy Forum	Huntingdon North Initiative	
	Registered Providers providing specialist accommodation	
	Ageing Well Board	

References

- ⁱ Cambridge and Peterborough Independent Economic Review. Final Report. www.cpier.org.uk
- ⁱⁱ The Oxford-Cambridge Arc: government ambition and joint declaration between government and local partners. www.gov.uk
- ⁱⁱⁱ Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (adopted 15th May 2019). www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk
- ^{iv} GL Hearn. Housing Needs of Specific Groups (draft April 2020, figures may change in final draft)
- ^v The Housing and Planning Act, 2016. www.gov.uk
- ^{vi} Housing white paper 2017. www.gov.uk
- ^{vii} Housing green paper 2018. www.gov.uk
- ^{viii} MHCLG Planning for the Future statement released 20th March 2020 www.gov.uk/mhclg
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- ^{xv} GL Hearn. Housing Needs of Specific Groups (draft April 2020, figures may change in final draft)
- ^{xvi} Housing Market Bulletin. Edition 40 published April 2019 (December 2018 data). www.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk
- ^{xvii} See CPIER Final report
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- ^{xx} GL Hearn. Housing Needs of Specific Groups (draft April 2020, figures may change in final draft)
- ^{xxi} Older People’s housing, care and support needs in Greater Cambridge 2017 -2036. Sheffield Hallam University, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, University of Sheffield. 2017. www4.shu.ac.uk
- ^{xxii} St Neots Masterplan for Growth. www.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk
- ^{xxiii} Huntingdon: A Prospectus for Growth. www.cambridgepeterborough-ca.gov.uk
- ^{xxiv} Community Land Trust – Great Staunton Parish Council. www.greatstauntonpc.org.uk
- ^{xxv} Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to be published in 2020

^{xxvi} GL Hearn. Housing Needs of Specific Groups (draft April 2020, figures may change in final draft)

^{xxvii} www.HOOP.eac.org.uk

^{xxviii} Cambridgeshire Housing Adaptations and Repairs Policy 2019

^{xxix} www.cambshia.org

^{xxx} GTAA ref needed

^{xxxi} CPCA Housing Strategy (3 parts) www.cambridgepeterborough-ca.gov.uk

^{xxxii} Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy 2017-2020 www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

^{xxxiii} The Evolving Private Rented Sector: Its Contribution and Potential 2018. Julie Rugg and David Rhodes. Centre for Housing Policy Studies. The University of York. www.nationwidefoundation.org.uk

^{xxxiv} Developing Oxmoor. Briefing paper. www.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk

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1. New Homes to meet the needs of Huntingdonshire now and in the future

	Priority Action	Outcome and progress	Timeframe	Lead Service/officer
1.1	Annual achievement of housing delivery targets	Annual delivery of new homes	Annual Monitoring Report ARM published December 2020	Growth
1.2	Work with developers and Registered Providers to prioritise the achievement of 40% affordable housing	Affordable housing numbers delivered	Monitored through AMR. Action plan to be agreed if numbers fall	Growth Housing Strategy
1.3	Explore the potential and barriers for delivery of Starter Homes and other Discounted Market Housing	Report to Corporate Management Team on options when Housing Manager is in post	Not a priority for this year	Housing Strategy/ Housing Manager
1.4	Deliver at least 1 entry level exception site	At least 1 site in progress or completed	September 2021	Housing Strategy
1.5	To evaluate alternative models of entry level housing alongside share ownership	Include in report for 1.3	Not a priority for this year	Housing Strategy/ Housing Manager
1.6	Explore options for institutional investment in the Private Rented Sector	Dependant on opportunities	Not a priority for this year	Housing Manager
1.7	Explore options for key worker housing, including on own sites	Sites identified as potential sites for key worker housing	1 by December 2021	Strategic Director/ Managing Director?
1.8	Working pro-actively with developers and housing associations to achieve the targets for homes built to M4(2) and M4(3) standards as set out in the local plan	Numbers of homes built to these standards	Monitored through AMR	Growth
1.9	Engage with Health and Social Care partners to align requirements for specialist housing with future models of care and support	Link to local plan process and G L Hearn report Also: Link to final CC Housing Related Support report	Dependant on Hearn and County Council reports	Strategic Housing
1.10	Continue to work with developers to maximise delivery on sustainable strategic sites.	Related to effective partnership working	Site dependant	Growth Housing Manager
1.11	Refresh Design Guide to reflect aspirations or build standards	Refreshed document	Not a priority for this year as linked to possible legislative	Growth

			change	
1.12	Support the development of rural exception sites, smaller sites led or supported by the community, or meeting the needs of specialist housing	Follow-up on interest from road show.	Review in next Annual Action Plan	Strategic Housing
1.13	Strengthen guidance and support provided to community led or supported sites to assist in accelerating delivery	Improve information and signposting on the website	Review in next Action Plan	Strategic Housing with Growth
1.14	Use of own assets for self-build and key worker housing where these are not suitable for larger developments	Self-build sites identified and marketed. Also Council owned site identified for key worker housing	First of these dependent on marketing of other sites. KWH relates to 1.7	Development consultant/Strategic Director/MD

2. Homes to enable people to live independent and healthy lives

	Priority Action	Outcome and progress	Timeframe	Leader Service/officer
2.1	Monitor the achievement of key objectives in the Rough Sleepers Review and Strategy through an annual action plan	Achievements of objectives	Dependent on timing of final Rough Sleepers Review and Strategy	Housing Needs and Resources
2.2	Adopt a revised lettings policy	Sub-regional policy to be agreed at Housing Board prior to adoption by HDC Going through Home-Link board before each of the LAs consultation and formal adoption processes	Cabinet December 2020	Housing Needs and Resources
2.3	Evaluate the pilot street outreach service	Decide whether to continue .	By end December 2020	Housing Needs and Resources
2.4	Review implications of County Council's Housing Related Support Strategy	To inform an updated Older Peoples Housing Strategy and commissioning of homelessness services.	Following publication by the County Council	Housing Strategy/ Housing Needs & Resources
2.5	Older Peoples Housing Strategy will be updated	Report to Cabinet	As above	Housing Strategy
2.6	Publicise the availability of Housing Options for Older People scheme	Improve information and link on the Council's website	By December 2020	Housing Strategy
2.7	Review reasons for high Disabled Facilities Grant Spend	Reduction in spend for 2021/2022	By March 2021	Environmental Health /Communities
2.8	Clear signposting to Gypsy and Traveller and Houseboat Dwellers policies on website	Clear policy presentation	By January	Growth
2.9	Respond to conclusions of Gypsy and Travellers	Will depend on whether the Countywide review	Dependant on completion and	Growth

	review	requires changes	publication of report commissions through the County Council. Draft report expected December 2020.	
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3. Working in partnership to achieve shared objectives

	Priority Action	Outcome and progress	Timeframe	Lead service/officer
3.1	Build and sustain long-term strategic relationships with key partners in the delivery of housing ambitions	Clarity on key contacts and for a to maintain and build strong working relationships including the CPCA, RPS, Developers, other Councils in the sub-region.	Immediate and ongoing	MD/Leader/Strategic Director/Housing manager
3.2	Pro-active approach to securing funding to assist the delivery of housing development	Quantifiable achievements in supporting/securing funding for the delivery of housing, including infrastructure funding if relevant	Evaluate achievements at end of 2021	Housing manager/housing strategy
3.3	For Council owned sites determine the optimum approach for delivery against strategic priorities	Report setting out approach agreed with Cabinet.	Proposal to registered providers September/October 2020. Cabinet October 2020.	Housing Development Consultant
3.4	Consider partnership proposals that provide best value and maximise the delivery of the Council's objectives	Responses to be evaluated against Council broad objectives	November/December 2020	Housing Development Consultant
3.5	Owned sites not viable for development with a partner considered for self-build	To follow evaluation of partnership proposals for sites	No action until 2021. Action for next AAP	Housing Manager/Growth
3.6	Collect data on the private rented sector to inform future focus	Agree priorities for action for the coming year	January 2021	Environmental Health/Housing Manager
3.7	Understand reasons for empty homes increase	Profile and evaluate	January 2021	Communities
3.8	Continue to lead Huntingdon North Initiative and evaluate effectiveness	Reduction in ASB and crime and other tangible benefits.	Depends on lockdown rules and easing	Communities

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Public
(Confidential (Part 2) Appendices)
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Housing development on Council owned sites

Meeting/Date: Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) – 7th October 2020

Executive Portfolio: Executive Leader

Report by: Interim Corporate Director, David Edwards

Wards affected: All

RECOMMENDATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to review and comment on the Cabinet report attached at Appendix A.

Public
(Confidential (Part 2) Appendices)
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Housing development on Council owned sites

Date: Cabinet – 22nd October 2020

Executive Portfolio: Executive Leader

Report by: Interim Corporate Director, David Edwards

Wards affected: All

Executive Summary:

To agree the outcome of the market testing of the small land parcels for potential acceleration of affordable housing provision and agree the final steps toward securing disposal and development.

Recommendations:

- a) To approve the list of 13 parcels of land held by Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) and reclassify them as assets for sale
- b) To approve that the Council sells the parcels of land for the delivery of affordable housing
- c) To select Longhurst Housing Group as the preferred housing development partner and enter into further discussions on each of the sites
- d) To agree the budget for the housing delivery programme
- e) To delegate authority to the Leader in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources and Interim Corporate Director (Delivery) to approve the price (subject to RICS Valuation) and execute all associated legal and contractual processes and documentation.
- f) To delegate authority to the Leader in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources and the Interim Corporate Director (Delivery) to determine private rented homes or a capital receipt is received as payment for each of land parcels
- g) To agree that any remaining small land parcels in the Councils portfolio not involved in this disposal remain under consideration for future facilitation of the objectives of the Housing Strategy and wider economic development/growth options.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To secure disposal and development of parcels of land owned by HDC for the delivery of Affordable Housing.
- 1.2 To ensure that the elements of the report and decision making can be discussed in public the details of the sites themselves have not been included in the report. To provide some context it is anticipated that the 13 sites will not deliver more than 150 homes.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/ BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The provision of affordable housing is one of the Council's priorities. This is addressed through planning policy and working proactively with a variety of registered providers and developers.
- 2.2 The number of affordable homes that have been delivered through the regulatory planning process has improved in recent years, however, demand for affordable homes remains high.
- 2.3 The Council originally identified 43 parcels of land in Council ownership where there was the potential for affordable housing to be developed and thereby help accelerate supply. There was a desire to explore potential for Private Sector Rent properties to be built as part of the developments and returned to the Council as part payment for the land assets, which would then enable a potential new revenue stream for the Council (subject to management cost considerations). Recognising that for these parcels of land to be viable this would have to be in conjunction with market housing or potentially mixed-use development.
- 2.4 The Council does not have a significant internal housing expertise resource within its capacity and bringing these parcels of land forward to development thereby necessitates working with a partner for delivery.
- 2.5 A consultant (Davey Estates) was engaged to review these parcels of land and explore the potential for development. This has involved discussions with registered providers and potential developers to explore whether there would be interest in these parcels of land. In addition, informal discussions took place with development management on the possibility of development and potential constraints. The potential for external funding including grant funding from the Combined Authority has also been explored.
- 2.6 The original list of 43 parcels of land was reduced to 13 viable sites and in August 2020 expressions of interest were sought from registered providers and local developers.
- 2.7 One of the aims was to identify a partner that would engage on all the parcels of land (recognising that many of these are small sites and potentially difficult to bring forward) and so a balanced package of 13 sites was agreed with

Portfolio Holders to bring forward a viable proposal that included parcels of land with a reasonable prospect for development overall.

- 2.8 The attached exempt appendices contain the conclusion from the consultant's analysis of the responses. These findings have been reflected in the recommendations.
- 2.9 If Cabinet is minded to agree with the recommendation to work with the preferred partner then given the value of the land, before doing so, the Cabinet also needs to agree that there are no other uses that the Councils statutory duties requires on the parcels of land.
- 2.10 There is also the opportunity to bid for funding from the Combined Authority to help a partner enable development, either sooner or in greater numbers. If agreement can be reached on the development on each of sites by the end of the 2020, potential grant funding is in principle still available via a bidding process to provide additional affordable housing provision should it be required by the partner.

3. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

Council development

- 3.1 The Council was looking for a partner that was willing to consider all the potential delivery models and had a proven track record of delivery and management of affordable housing. The knowledge, skills and experience of the team and current satisfaction with their housing management were also key considerations. Given the nature of the sites their experience of developing small infill sites was also tested along with their commitment to use local contractors. Further details can be seen in the exempt quality matrix.
- 3.2 Several development options were considered and these are summarised below:-
 - Option 1** - HDC grant a lease to a Housing Association in exchange for a fixed income
 - Option 2** - HDC sell the parcels of land to the Housing Association in exchange for:-
 - private rented affordable homes; and/or
 - a capital receipt;
 - Option 3** - HDC enter a joint venture
- 3.3 Further details of what was included in these options can be seen in the Exempt appendices.
- 3.4 Following engagement with the registered providers and potential developers it is recommended to proceed with Option 2.

Site selection

- 3.5 The Council could have put a larger number of sites out for consideration. After initial review of 43 sites it was concluded that a smaller number of sites would be put forward, primarily given the planning constraints and issues and rejecting several very small parcels of land. This option is not recommended.
- 3.6 The Council could still hold on to the sites for a longer period and then explore options on these sites later, potentially to get a greater return. Given the work that had been undertaken previously to identify the land holdings, a long list and shortlist of potential sites and the positive informal discussions it is recommended to proceed, noting there is still further detailed work to do now on each site. This option is not recommended.

Disposal

- 3.7 The Council could have undertaken a procurement process and disposed of the land on the open market to a variety of interests. However, this is not recommended as the Council would like to see more affordable homes come forward and soft market testing had indicated that there would be some appetite for looking at the sites, recognising the small sites would have limited housing capacity.

Do nothing

- 3.8 The Cabinet could decide to do nothing with these parcels of land at this stage. This is not recommended as although there is further work to undertake with the preferred bidder there is a viable scheme that includes all 13 sites.

4. COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

- 4.1 The comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

5. KEY IMPACTS/ RISKS

- 5.1 Some of these sites might ultimately not be viable for development. Mitigation: Initial work has been undertaken to assess ownership and explore potential number of homes. At this stage it is felt that these sites are viable. Agreement will also need to be reached with the preferred partner on a model of risk and reward/recovery of any costs should sites not be viable after further work has been undertaken.
- 5.2 There are potential policy and reputational risks associated with bringing forward affordable housing on these sites. Mitigation: There has been informal discussions with development management and it is felt these can be overcome, any final decision will be managed through the planning process.
- 5.3 There are a variety of sites and there is a risk that the smaller sites will be pushed to the back of the queue. Mitigation: There will be a range of

considerations for each of the sites and it is envisaged that a proposal containing all the sites will come forward as the next stage.

- 5.4 Given the above, the ultimate outcome in terms of development numbers and thereby value and receipt, have a degree of uncertainty. Mitigation: Bringing these otherwise surplus sites into use for affordable housing is the correct principle given the Council's priorities and the opportunity for development.
- 5.5 The Council has not gone out for a full procurement exercise and opened up this opportunity to a wide market. Mitigation: The Council has undertaken work and will continue to undertake work to ensure that best value is achieved, and independent valuations are a core element on reviewing each parcel of land. The Council wants affordable housing and to work with a local provider that knows the area and challenges. If there had not been a positive response from the local market then the Council would have looked to expand the offer more widely. The Council also took independent legal advice from Freeths on this approach.

6. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 The priority to secure affordable housing is clearly set out in the Corporate Plan along with securing best value. The emerging Housing Strategy also highlights the need for additional affordable housing in the district.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Whilst consultation on these proposals has been undertaken with a range of potential partners and agencies and internally within the Council, there has been no wider public consultation at this stage. Consultation on each of the individual parcels of land will also be carried out as part of the planning process.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are a variety of legal aspects associated with this programme of work. Advice has been sought internally from the 3C Legal Service and Freeths have also been appointed to provide external legal advice which has been sought on the approach to date and in producing this paper.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Finalising the arrangements with Longhurst Housing Group will require Council resources and additional resources will be required to bring forward planning applications and assess the sites, consultation etc. How these costs are managed, including linking to "cost of sales" and cashflowed will need to be developed and finalised with the Finance department and Longhurst Housing Group.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 10.1 Increasing the level of affordable housing in the district is a key priority for the Council. This paper brings forward the opportunity to develop some of the land that the Council owns to achieve this ambition.
- 10.2 After exploring a range of delivery options and both informal and formal work to test the possible interest from registered providers a preferred provider has been identified.

11. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

(Part 2) Appendix 1 – Assessment and Selection of Housing Delivery Option and Housing Delivery Partner.

(Part 2) Appendix 2 – Shortlist of HDC sites

(Part 2) Appendix 3 – Bid Assessment Summary

(Part 2) Appendix 4 – Detailed Deliverability / Quality Scores

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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