

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held as a **REMOTE MEETING VIA ZOOM** on **THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 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 meeting held on 22nd October 2020.

Contact Officer: H Peacey - (01223) 752548

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

Contact Officer: Democratic Services - (01223) 752548

3. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21, QUARTER 2 (Pages 11 - 50)

To receive a report on the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2018/22 and an update on project delivery.

Executive Councillor: J Neish.

Contact Officer: D Buckridge/J Taylor - (01480) 388119

4. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21, QUARTER 2 (Pages 51 - 82)

To receive the financial performance report 2020/21 for Quarter 2.

Executive Councillor: J Gray.

Contact Officer: C Edwards: (01480) 382179

5. TREASURY MANAGEMENT - SIX MONTH PERFORMANCE REVIEW (Pages 83 - 106)

To receive the Treasury Management Six Month Performance Review.

Executive Councillor: J Gray.

Contact Officer: C Edwards: (01480) 382179

6. HUNTINGDONSHIRE TREE STRATEGY REVIEW (Pages 107 - 204)

To receive a report from the Arboricultural Officer on the Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020-2030.

Executive Councillor: J Neish.

Contact Officer: T Miles - 07864 604208

7. HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK JOINT GROUP (Pages 205 - 210)

To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Hinchingbrooke Country Park Joint Group held on 16th October 2020.

Executive Councillor: Mrs M L Beuttell.

Contact Officer: H Peacey - (01223) 752548

11 day of November 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 Mrs Habbiba Peacey, Democratic Services Officer, Tel No: (01223) 752548 / e-mail: Habbiba.Peacey@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 Cabinet.

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 CABINET held as a Remote Meeting via Zoom on Thursday, 22 October 2020

PRESENT: Councillor R Fuller – Chairman.

Councillors Mrs M L Beuttell, S Bywater, J A Gray,
D N Keane, J Neish and K I Prentice.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor J M Palmer.

29 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17th September 2020 were approved as a correct record.

30 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

31 HEALTHY OPEN SPACES STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report prepared by the Development Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking endorsement of the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy and its vision of “Embrace Your Space” and the associated action plan.

The Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment outlined the background to the report which set out the direction of focus, development and investment in the open spaces in Huntingdonshire. The Cabinet noted the many benefits that would be achieved including how open spaces can support local people to live healthier lives, improve their mental health and wellbeing and contribute to the fight against change as well as addressing social isolation.

Having been informed that targeted public and stakeholder consultation had been undertaken since August 2019 and that the 10 year action plan would be reviewed on an annual basis and that a refresh of the evidence base would be undertaken after 5 years, the Cabinet commended Officers and the Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment for the production of comprehensive report.

The Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources commented on paragraph 7.2 of the report and encouraged any projects and facilities to be revenue neutral as possible prior to any revenue bids being submitted for consideration.

In noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships), it was

RESOLVED

that the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy and the proposed 10-year action plan be endorsed by the Cabinet.

32 PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE WHITE PAPER CONSULTATION RESPONSE

With the aid of a report prepared by the Planning Policy Team Leader (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were provided with an outline of the proposals set out in the government's White Paper "Planning for the Future" and the draft consultation response highlighting how the proposals might affect the District and the Council's corporate priorities and objectives.

By way of background, the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning reported that the White Paper had been published for consultation on 6th August 2020, proposing fundamental reforms to the planning system in England including Local Plan reform and changes to both developer contributions and development management. Particular mention was also made of the District's 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 Executive Councillor for Corporate Services expressed his support for the draft responses proposed for questions 5, 13 and 14. It was felt that they strongly reflected the Council's views on the matter. With regard to 9(c), comment was made by the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources that the response should be amended to "No" as the residents of Huntingdonshire would want assurances that decisions on new settlements were being undertaken at a local level. Following a suggestion by the Chairman, it was agreed that the proposed response to 8(a) should be amended to either "No" or "Not Sure" to prevent the Council inadvertently agreeing to the proposals around a standard methodology for establishing housing requirements. Finally, it was confirmed that it was the Council's intention not to provide a "Yes/No/Not sure" answer to the draft response to 17 as a means of ensuring the Council's response would be fully considered.

Following a suggestion, the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning agreed to produce a covering letter for Huntingdonshire residents summarising the Council's final response to the consultation.

In concurring with the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) and in noting that the response to the consultation would need to be submitted by 30th October 2020, it was

RESOLVED

that the comments of the Cabinet be noted and that delegated authority to finalise and submit the Council's consultation response be given to the Service Manager (Growth) and the Planning Policy Team Leader in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning.

33 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY GOVERNANCE

A report was submitted by the Service Manager (Growth) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) reviewing and seeking the Cabinet's agreement on future governance arrangements for the spending of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts.

Having been apprised with the background to the report, the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning reported that the current system was no longer considered best suited to meet the Council's strategic aims. He then drew attention to Appendix 1 which provided an outline of all options which had been considered.

In welcoming Option 4, where all governance would be undertaken by the Council, the Cabinet expressed their support that this option would be the most appropriate to safeguard the delivery of the Council's priorities. In noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth), the Cabinet

RESOLVED

to support the introduction of a new process for the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, including:

- (a) the introduction of a new application form and guidance (as outlined in Appendices 2 & 3 of the report now submitted);
- (b) delegating authority to the Corporate Director (Place) and the Service Manager (Growth) in consultation with the Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning for the 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; and
- (c) approving the process requiring applications requesting more than £50,000 in the Strategic Bids category to be approved by Cabinet.

34 HOUSING STRATEGY 2020 - 2025

Consideration was given to a report by the Interim Corporate Director (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) setting out the strategic direction for housing in Huntingdonshire in the medium term, highlighting the housing priorities and how they will be achieved by the Council including through partnership working and setting out the short term action plan for the next twelve months.

The Chairman, as Executive Councillor for Housing and Economic Development, reported that the Housing Strategy would cover a 5 year period and that an annual action plan would be produced each year to set out how the priorities within the Strategy would be achieved taking into account current external influences such as COVID-19 and the likelihood of further housing related legislative change. Having been informed of the involvement of Overview and Scrutiny in developing and shaping the Strategy and in welcoming the work undertaken by Mrs L Bisset, Housing Consultant to effectively engage and collaborate with external stakeholders, the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) were noted. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Housing Strategy for 2020-25 and the accompanying one-year action plan be approved.

35 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ON COUNCIL OWNED SITES

With the aid of a report by the Interim Corporate Director (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) and appendices (copies of which are appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) the Cabinet gave consideration to a proposal seeking to secure the disposal and development of parcels of land owned by the District Council for the delivery of affordable housing.

The Cabinet were reminded that should they wish to discuss the content of the appendices, to inform the Chairman so that the meeting could move to private session if required.

By way of background, the Chairman, as Executive Councillor for Housing and Economic Development, reported upon the aspirations of the Cabinet to make better use of the Council's redundant land holdings. The proposals would seek to deliver affordable housing for the residents of Huntingdonshire and provide an ongoing revenue stream and/or capital receipt to the Council.

Having welcomed the proposals and whilst being mindful of the need to ensure an appropriate balance between residential and open spaces, it was noted that the proposals, if relevant, would be subject to the planning process thereby providing an opportunity for the community and residents to be consulted. Comment was made that the parcels of land identified currently fulfilled a number of different uses within the community and that discussions would be held with the public as necessary.

In noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth), the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- a) to approve the list of 13 parcels of land held by Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) and agreed to 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 the land parcels; and
- 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.

Chairman

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Public
Key Decision – No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Corporate Performance Report 2020/21, Quarter 2

Meeting/Date: Cabinet, 19th November 2020

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning

Report by: Business Intelligence and Performance Manager

Wards affected: All

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to brief Members on progress against Key Actions and Corporate Indicators listed in the Council's Corporate Plan 2018/22 for the period 1 July to 30 September 2020 and on current projects being undertaken.

Key Actions, Corporate Indicators and targets are as included in the Corporate Plan Refresh 2020/21, as approved by Council on 14 October 2020.

The report does not incorporate the usual Financial Performance Monitoring Suite information setting out the financial position at the end of the Quarter. This information is being reported as a separate item to Overview and Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) Panel and Cabinet, due to the need for separate focus on financial matters as a result of the impact from Covid-19.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet is invited to consider and comment on progress made against the Key Actions and Corporate Indicators in the Corporate Plan and current projects, as summarised in Appendix A and detailed in Appendices B and C.

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present details of delivery of the Corporate Plan 2018/22, and project delivery.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council's Corporate Plan has recently been refreshed to reflect the impact of Covid-19 on services and was approved at the Council meeting on 14 October 2020. The performance data in this report and its appendices relates to the indicators and actions selected for 2020/21. The information in the summary at **Appendix A** relates to Key Actions and Corporate Indicators and the performance report at **Appendix B** details all results at the end of September.
- 2.2 As recommended by the Project Management Select Committee, updates for projects based on latest approved end dates are included at **Appendix C**. Across all programmes there are currently 17 projects which are open, pending approval or pending closure.

3. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) Panel have an important role in the Council's Performance Management Framework and a process of regular review of performance data has been established. The focus is on the strategic priorities and associated objectives to enable Scrutiny to maintain a strategic overview. Their comments on performance in Quarter 2 will be submitted to Cabinet with this report following the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 4 November 2020.
- 3.2 Progress against Corporate Plan objectives is reported quarterly. The report at **Appendix B** includes details of all Key Actions and Corporate Indicators at the end of Quarter 2. **Appendix C** provides information about projects, including the purpose of the project and commentary from the project managers as to the current status of each project.
- 3.3 Performance Indicator data has been collected in accordance with standardised procedures.
- 3.4 The following table summarises Quarter 2 progress in delivering Key Actions for 2020/21:

Status of Key Actions	Number	Percentage
Green (on track)	30	77%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	9	23%
Red (behind schedule)	0	0%
Awaiting progress update	0	0%
Not applicable	0	

Most key actions were on track at the end of Quarter 2 and none were significantly behind schedule.

Actions which have seen positive progress include:

- KA 2. The Healthy Open Spaces Strategy and Plan finalised during the Quarter has since been approved at Cabinet.
- KA 4. Hardship fund payments totalling over £500k have been awarded to 5,300 Council Tax Support recipients and we are encouraging new Universal Credit claimants liable for Council Tax to apply for Council Tax Support.
- KAs 5 & 7. Pathways and protocols previously developed for Housing helped mitigate against prisoners being released onto the streets during the Covid-19 pandemic, with additional family accommodation due to be available from October.
- KAs 10, 11 & 12. Flexibility built into new contracts with community organisations has helped with the local response to Covid-19, supporting residents, volunteers and community groups. Local job clubs being developed will help people find work.
- KA 13. Work is underway on final stages of the new park in St Ives.
- KAs 15, 21 & 31. A Waste Minimisation Plan has been drafted to go to Cabinet in November, an Economic Growth Strategy is currently in development and a new Housing Strategy has been prepared for submission to Cabinet during Quarter 3.
- KAs 22, 24, 25 & 27. HDC continues to be involved in supporting critical transport infrastructure developments including the A428, East-West Rail and A14.
- KAs 29 & 30. Development of strategic housing sites and associated infrastructure at Wintringham Park, Alconbury Weald and Bearscroft has continued, with work to support delivery of affordable homes including a proposal to sell 13 parcels of land for the delivery of affordable homes which has now been approved by Cabinet.
- KA 38. While work to expand online and out of hours access to services via the customer portal has been delayed, priority was given to development of additional digital resources to support residents and businesses through the pandemic.

Most of the Key Actions that have been given an Amber status relate to impacts from the effects of the national lockdown and the impacts of Covid-19 on our activities. The pandemic directly affected our ability to provide leisure and health opportunities (KAs 1 & 3) and is referenced as a factor in delays to KA 14 (planning to protect and increase biodiversity in our parks and open spaces), KA 20 (work to deliver economic growth), KA 32 (achieving a market return from Council assets) and KA35 (financial recovery).

3.5 Quarter 2 results for 2020/21 Corporate Indicators are shown in the following table:

Corporate Indicator results	Number	Percentage
Green (achieved)	17	57%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	10	33%
Red (below acceptable variance)	3	10%
Awaiting progress update	0	0%
Not applicable (annual/data unavailable/ targets TBC)	7	

While the majority of performance indicators were on track at the end of Quarter 2, three were given a Red status because performance was below an acceptable variance. A summary of the performance indicators follows on the next page with more detail provided in Appendix B. It should be noted that following the decision to postpone the Corporate Plan refresh to allow it to reflect the impacts of Covid-19, targets have been revised to account for these impacts where possible. In some cases, the full extent of the impact of the pandemic/lockdown on services is still being assessed and final targets are still to be confirmed. These targets are marked as TBC in Appendix B, with the indicators where performance cannot be assessed included in the 'Not applicable' category in the table above.

Indicators where services are meeting or exceeding their targets include the following:

- Pls 1 & 2. Despite high numbers of new claims and change events arising from the impacts of Covid-19 on local residents, the speed of processing new claims and changes of circumstances remains within the target.
- PI 3. The number of people prevented from becoming homeless to the end of Quarter 2 was above target despite the impact of lockdown limiting prevention activities. Court action on evictions was also suspended during this period.
- Pls 9, 10 & 11. Performance of street cleansing and waste collection teams has remained high, with less litter to clear in urban areas, a reduction in the number of bins not collected and an improvement in waste recycled/reused/composted.
- PI 12. Complaints about food premises remain low due to closure during lockdown.
- Pls 14, 15 & 25. Numbers of appeals allowed against licensing and planning decisions remain low, with no cost awards against the Council where a planning application was refused contrary to the officer recommendation so far this year.
- PI 28. Staff sickness remains low although there is uncertainty about the further impacts of Covid-19 on employee health this winter. This is expected to be discussed when the Quarter 2 Workforce Report goes to Employment Committee.
- Pls 33, 34 & 36. The speed of resolving complaints at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 has improved and there has also been an increase in the number of customer portal accounts set up by residents.

Indicators where services are below their targets as a direct result of the impact of Covid-19 are:

- Pls 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8. One Leisure centre and Active Lifestyles activities and participant numbers were significantly affected by closure during lockdown and changes to how they operate and customer behaviours since. Predicted volumes at the year end are expected to be significantly lower than achieved in 2019/20 as a result.
- PI 20. The number of new affordable homes delivered was below target at 124 against a target of 162. Forecasts for the year end from Registered Providers are also down on the previous expectation for the whole of 2020/21.
- Pls 23 & 24. Collection rates for both Business Rates and Council Tax have been significantly affected despite efforts to ensure all appropriate grants and discounts for businesses, and Council Tax Support and hardship payments for residents, are applied. The collection rates are not expected to recover by the end of the year.

Indicators where services are below their targets as they are likely to have been impacted as result of the impact of Covid-19 are:

- PI 27. Invoice payment within 30 days remains well below target, with Finance reporting that it has been moderately impacted by working from home arrangements for staff. Performance has started to improve through the Quarter.

There were no Red indicators with performance below acceptable variance that were not linked to Covid-19 or the impact of the lockdown on services.

3.6 The status of corporate projects at the end of September is shown in the following table. With a Programme Delivery Manager now in place, a programme-based approach to delivery is due to be applied for projects within the Customer Portal, Market Town Strategies and Covid Recovery umbrellas. The latter two are being scoped out and the Customer Portal project has been split into a series of projects.

Corporate project status	Number	Percentage
Green (progress on track)	9	53%
Amber (progress behind schedule, project may be recoverable)	4	24%
Red (significantly behind schedule, serious risks/issues)	4	24%
Pending closure	0	
Closed (completed)	0	

There are four projects showing as Amber and another four were Red at the end of Quarter 2. Two of these are projects previously reported under a single Customer Portal project, which had been at Red status since the last quarter of 2019/20 before being split into four separate projects which form the Customer Service programme. The St Benedicts Court Regeneration project requires further discussion before next steps can be taken and the start date for the 3G Artificial Pitch at One Leisure Ramsey has now been delayed to help manage risks associated with the archaeological works.

Details of all projects can be found in **Appendix C**.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANELS

- 4.1 The Panel received the Corporate Performance Report 2020/21, Quarter 2 at its meeting on 4th November 2020. Overall, the performance of the Council has been commended, particularly the low number of Key Actions and Performance Indicators rated Red.
- 4.2 Members have discussed the mental health of employees and have established that the Council has introduced a number of initiatives in this area including: the provision of Mental Health First Aiders for confidential one-to-one conversations, virtual drop-in sessions and ensuring managers regularly check on the wellbeing of their staff.
- 4.3 The Panel had addressed the potential effect of the second lockdown on Key Actions currently rated Amber. An undertaking has been provided that the Council had already been planning for the predicted second lockdown with a view to mitigating the effects on all its priority areas of activity.
- 4.4 Going into more detail, the Panel has considered whether the Council had exceeded the target on Performance Indicator 3 following the suspension of Court Action during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is recognised that this has assisted the Council in this area, but it is important to note that proactive action has also been taken. In addition, work with vulnerable people has been highly effective.
- 4.5 Regarding the affordable homes target, the Council is taking steps to increase the number of affordable homes built in the District, including through the planning system using policies on affordable homes and collaborating with a Registered Housing partner to build affordable homes on Council owned sites. However, there can be a time lag between the grant of planning permission and the construction of affordable housing being completed and available for occupation.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Cabinet is invited to consider and comment on progress made against Key Actions and Corporate Indicators in the Corporate Plan and current projects, as summarised in **Appendix A** and detailed in **Appendices B and C**.

6. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix A – Corporate Performance Summary 2020/21, Quarter 2

Appendix B – Corporate Plan Performance Report 2020/21, Quarter 2

Appendix C – Project Performance, September 2020

CONTACT OFFICERS

Corporate Plan Performance Monitoring (Appendices A and B)

Daniel Buckridge, Business Intelligence and Performance Manager,

dan.buckridge@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Project Performance (Appendix C)

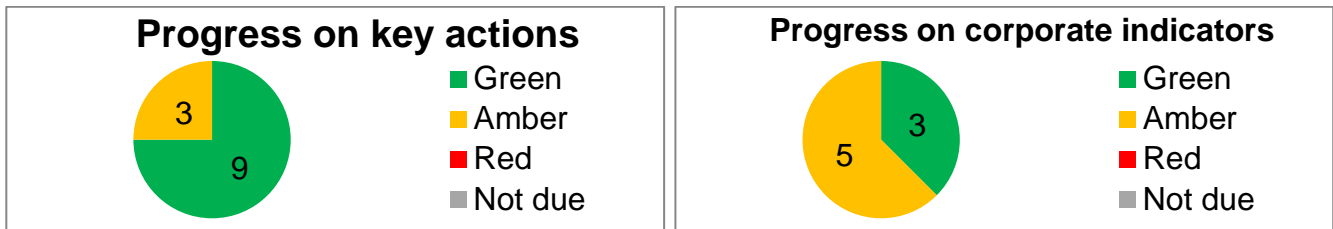
John Taylor, Chief Operating Officer ☎ (01480) 388119

Appendix A

Corporate Performance Summary 2020/21, Quarter 2

People

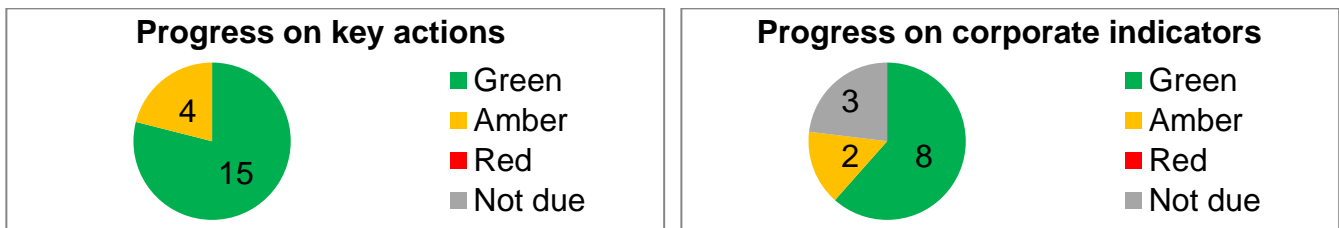
We want to make Huntingdonshire a better place to live, to improve health and well-being and for communities to get involved with local decision making



Highlights include the award of over £500k in hardship fund payments to 5,300 Council Tax Support claimants.

Place

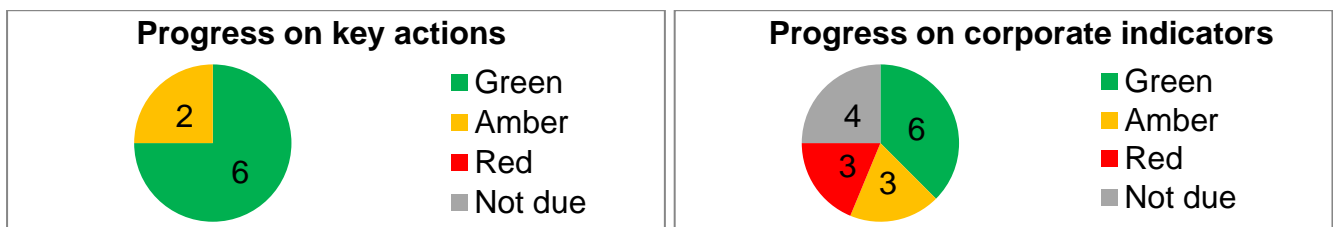
We want to make Huntingdonshire a better place to work and invest and we want to deliver new and appropriate housing



Highlights include a household waste recycling/reuse/composting rate of 64% (up from 62% at Quarter 2 last year), with an increase in dry recycling seen due to changing habits and more working from home.

Becoming a more efficient and effective council

We want to continue to deliver value for money services



Highlights include over 17,600 accounts registered on our Customer Portal platform, with residents able to access services digitally outside of the Council's working hours.

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STRATEGIC THEME – PEOPLE

Period July to September 2020

Summary of progress for Key Actions

G	Progress is on track	A	Progress is within acceptable variance	R	Progress is behind schedule	?	Awaiting progress update	n/a	Not applicable to state progress
	9		3		0		0		0

Target dates do not necessarily reflect the final completion date. The date given may reflect the next milestone to be reached.

Summary of progress for Corporate Indicators

G	Performance is on track	A	Performance is within acceptable variance	R	Performance is below acceptable variance	?	Awaiting performance update	n/a	Not applicable to assess performance
	3		5		0		0		0

WE WANT TO: Support people to improve their health and well-being

Status	Key Actions for 2020/21	Target date	Portfolio Holder	Head of Service	Progress Update to be reported each Quarter
A	KA 1. Work in partnership to provide greater leisure and health opportunities to enable more people to be more active, more often	Ongoing	Cllr Prentice / Cllr Bywater	Jayne Wisely	Work continues with partners where restrictions allows, however some partners are not in place to work together currently. New partnerships are being explored where possible. Some good work with Parish Councils over the summer enabled some holiday activity provision. Training Shed now fully

Status	Key Actions for 2020/21	Target date	Portfolio Holder	Head of Service	Progress Update to be reported each Quarter
					opening and memberships growing but continues to be under scrutiny against revised Covid-19 targets.
G	KA 2. Establish a Healthy Open Spaces Strategy and Plan to maximise the health benefits of the Council's Parks and Open Spaces	Strategy to Cabinet, 22/10/2020	Cllr Beuttell	Neil Sloper	Approved 22nd October.
A	KA 3. Recovery Action (One Leisure and Active Lifestyles – e.g. promoting health and wellbeing, sport and fitness activities, weight loss, healthy eating)	Ongoing	Cllr Prentice / Cllr Bywater	Jayne Wisely	Active Lifestyles classes and sessions coming back where possible in line with guidance. New links with BMI Can Do it and Healthy You contract to aid recovery. Some previous sessions with targeted groups (disabilities/care homes) will take longer to recover. Key facility delivered activities (Gym, Swim and Classes) are now open (with capacity restrictions) and performing well - ahead of modelling with St Ives and St Neots at capacity. Work being undertaken to increase capacity potential where possible. Discussions underway regarding "non-key" activity delivery.
G	KA 4. Provide financial assistance to people on low incomes to pay their rent and Council Tax	Ongoing	Cllr Gray	Amanda Burns	Over £500k in hardship fund payments have been given to 5,300 claimants on Council Tax Support (CTS). Contact is made with customers claiming Universal Credit to advise them to apply for CTS.
G	KA 5. Ensure that the principles of earlier interventions aimed at preventing homelessness are embedded within public sector organisations and other stakeholder partners	Ongoing	Cllr Fuller	Jon Collen	Early interventions principles strengthened through pathways and protocols that have been introduced with others still in the pipeline. Pandemic response to the prison release programme was a good example of where public sector agencies followed the established pathways to ensure that early multi-agency interventions mitigated against possible releases of prisoners onto the streets. Other pathways still being established and embedded with mental health and substance misuse services.

Status	Key Actions for 2020/21	Target date	Portfolio Holder	Head of Service	Progress Update to be reported each Quarter
A	KA 6. Adopt a new Homelessness Strategy and a new Lettings Policy	December 2020	Cllr Fuller	Jon Collen	Revised Lettings Policy to go through consultation throughout November and December with formal adoption through February '21 Member cycles. Homelessness Strategy to be consulted on throughout December and January with formal adoption through Portfolio lead and Chief Operating Officer in February '21.
G	KA 7. Identify and implement solutions to eradicate the need to place homeless families in B&Bs	Ongoing	Cllr Fuller	Jon Collen	Although use of hotels and B&Bs increased for single rough sleepers as part of 'Everyone In' pandemic response, this accommodation is not used for families with children. Alternative units of family short-term units coming online in October (Crown Gardens) that will increase stock available and ensure no use of B&Bs for families unless as extreme last resort.

WE WANT TO: Develop a flexible and skilled local workforce

Status	Key Actions for 2020/21	Target date	Portfolio Holder	Head of Service	Progress Update to be reported each Quarter
G	KA 8. Recovery Action (Community / Economic Development – e.g. promoting opportunities for local people to improve their skills and experience)	Ongoing	Cllr Neish	Finlay Flett / Clara Kerr	All opportunities from Government and Combined Authority actively promoted on WeAreHuntingdonshire website. Kickstart scheme anticipated in Q3.

WE WANT TO: Develop stronger and more resilient communities to enable people to help themselves

Status	Key Actions for 2020/21	Target date	Portfolio Holder	Head of Service	Progress Update to be reported each Quarter
G	KA 9. Support community planning including working with parishes to complete Neighbourhood Plans	Ongoing	Cllr Neish	Clara Kerr	Continuing to work with Parish Councils. Cabinet Office has confirmed that elections/referendums will not be before May '21. For those caught by Covid-19,

Status	Key Actions for 2020/21	Target date	Portfolio Holder	Head of Service	Progress Update to be reported each Quarter
					the Planning Inspectorate have confirmed significant weight for those at the point of referendum.
G	KA 10. Award and manage contracts for a public advice service and an infrastructure and support service for the voluntary sector	Ongoing	Cllr Gray / Cllr Bywater	Finlay Flett	Contracts let for 2020-23 in April 2020. New contracts include ability to flex contract objectives to meet changing HDC priorities. In the past 6 months, this has seen new work for both providers linked to Covid-19 response, recovery and community support.
G	KA 11. Develop our asset-based approach to working with partners to improve opportunities for residents in the Oxmoor area, taking actions to increase community resilience and reduce demands and pressures on partner organisations	Ongoing	Cllr Bywater	Finlay Flett	Work on Oxmoor to be included in emerging Community Strategy. Work specific to Oxmoor continues, including development and support for new Recognised Organisations, promoting volunteering and community engagement. Focus on community based and community led Job Club to help local residents secure employment locally.
G	KA 12. Recovery Action (Community – e.g. work with Recognised Organisations or other community organisations to increase volunteering)	Ongoing	Cllr Bywater	Finlay Flett	Network of community organisations has increased in response to ongoing Covid-19 issues. Ongoing work will focus on retaining skills and input from the volunteers who have come forward since April. New Community Strategy will retain this as a key outcome.

Corporate Performance and Contextual Indicators

Key to status

G	Performance is on track	A	Performance is within acceptable variance	R	Performance is below acceptable variance	?	Awaiting performance update	n/a	Not applicable to assess performance
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Performance Indicator	Full Year 2019/20 Performance	Q2 2019/20 Performance	Q2 2020/21 Target	Q2 2020/21 Performance	Q2 2020/21 Status	Annual 2020/21 Target	Forecast Outturn 2020/21 Performance	Predicted Outturn 2020/21 Status
PI 1. Average number of days to process new claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support (cumulative year to date) Aim to minimise	23	23	24	21	G	24	22	G

Comments: (Revenues & Benefits) It was expected that new claims would reduce as Housing Benefit for working age people transfer to Universal Credit, but numbers of claims have remained consistent due to the impact of Covid-19.

PI 2. Average number of days to process changes of circumstances for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support (cumulative year to date) Aim to minimise	3	4	5	5	G	5	4	G
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Comments: (Revenues & Benefits) The number of change events processed remains high due to the impact of Covid-19.

PI 3. Number of homelessness preventions achieved (cumulative year to date)	521	272	200	232	G	400	450	G
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Housing Needs & Resources) Cumulative number of successful homelessness preventions to the end of Q2 are 232 (119 in Q1 & 113 in Q2). Prevention work impacted during the pandemic lockdown as Court Action suspended and prevention activities also more limited. Annual target had therefore been reduced but we are exceeding this at present.

PI 4. More people taking part in sport and physical activity: Number of individual One Card holders using One Leisure Facilities services over the last 12 months (rolling 12 months)	43,383	44,248	32,000	30,178	A	40,000	38,000	A
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Leisure and Health) Slight lag on recovery as Centres did not open fully as anticipated. With most productive 6 months of the year to follow - barring any further restrictions - it is still possible to recover and see more members using the facilities.

PI 5. More people taking part in sport and physical activity: Number of individual One Leisure Active Lifestyles service users (cumulative year to date)	4,023	2,762	N/a	724	A	1,400	1,400	G
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Leisure and Health) Active Lifestyles are aiming to bring more activities back in the coming months but there are still restrictions on number of people allowed to attend and some partners are not looking to commission us until the new year at the earliest.

PI 6. Providing more opportunities for people to be more active: Number of sessions delivered by One Leisure Active Lifestyles (cumulative year to date)	4,526	1,725	N/a	409	A	1,500	1,500	G
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Leisure and Health) Sessions will be added where possible to provide opportunities to people to participate (the sessions will have restrictions on numbers).

PI 7. People participating more often: Number of One Leisure Facilities admissions – swimming, Impressions, fitness classes, sports hall, pitches, bowling and Burgess Hall (excluding school admissions) (cumulative year to date)	1,425,633	749,135	150,000	135,531	A	350,000	340,000	A
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Leisure and Health) As with live members there is a slight lag due to delayed opening of some areas. Numbers are growing week on week however and the 4th quarter of the year is traditionally significantly busier than all others. It is still therefore possible to make the adjusted target.

PI 8. People participating more often: One Leisure Active Lifestyles total attendances (cumulative year to date)	57,098	29,097	N/a	2,683	A	12,000	12,000	G
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Leisure and Health) Attendances have taken a big hit on the first 6 months and will continue to do so with restrictions on numbers allowed to attend sessions. Work will continue to get as many people back and look at new opportunities where possible.

STRATEGIC THEME – PLACE

Period July to September 2020

Summary of progress for Key Actions

G	Progress is on track	A	Progress is within acceptable variance	R	Progress is behind schedule	?	Awaiting progress update	n/a	Not applicable to state progress
15		4		0		0		0	

Target dates do not necessarily reflect the final completion date. The date given may reflect the next milestone to be reached.

Summary of progress for Corporate Indicators

G	Performance is on track	A	Performance is within acceptable variance	R	Performance is below acceptable variance	?	Awaiting performance update	n/a	Not applicable to assess performance
8		2		0		0		3	

WE WANT TO: Create, protect and enhance our safe and clean built and green environment

Status	Key Actions for 2020/21	Target date	Portfolio Holder	Head of Service	Progress Update to be reported each Quarter
G	KA 13. Establish a new park in St Ives	31 March 2021	Cllr Beuttell	Neil Sloper	Final stages of works underway with date for opening being established. On track for Q4.
A	KA 14. Adopt a plan and deliver increases in nature – protecting and increasing biodiversity within our parks and open spaces	30 June 2021	Cllr Beuttell	Neil Sloper	Work on hold due to Covid-19 and maintaining service delivery. Anticipated delivery now Q2 2021/22.
G	KA 15. Adopt Waste Minimisation Plan and deliver programme of waste	Strategy to Cabinet,	Cllr Beuttell	Neil Sloper	Strategy report goes to Senior Leadership Team on 27 October and will then be considered at Overview &

Status	Key Actions for 2020/21	Target date	Portfolio Holder	Head of Service	Progress Update to be reported each Quarter
	minimisation activities to encourage people to reduce, re-use and recycle	December 2020			Scrutiny and Cabinet. Once adopted the strategy will be implemented. Strategy scheduled for Cabinet 19/11/2020.
A	KA 16. Install electric vehicle charging points in specific council owned car parks	31 March 2021	Cllr Beuttell	Neil Sloper	Impacted by contractor availability. Capital growth bid to increase reach to all car parks submitted. Final survey to inform options to maximise number of points in car parks will be concluded end of November.
A	KA 17. Install secure cycle storage facilities in specific council owned car parks	31 March 2021	Cllr Beuttell	Neil Sloper	Impacted by contractor availability and need to prioritise electric charging project. Plan for pilot sites to be installed in Q4 with remainder in 2021/22 to be informed by pilot and customer survey.

WE WANT TO: Accelerate business growth and investment

Status	Key Actions for 2020/21	Target date	Portfolio Holder	Head of Service	Progress Update to be reported each Quarter
G	KA 18. Develop a Regeneration Plan	TBC	Cllr Fuller	Clara Kerr	With Senior Leadership Team lead for feedback.
G	KA 19. Prepare options reports for the redevelopment of the Bus Station Quarters in St Ives and Huntingdon	September St Ives, December H'don	Cllr Fuller	Clara Kerr	Now part of KA 23, progress on this will be reported there.
A	KA 20. Work with partners across the Cambridgeshire economy to deliver the ambitions of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review / Local Industrial Strategy	Ongoing	Cllr Fuller	Clara Kerr	Covid-19 has impacted on aims of the Review. Team are working closely with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) on accelerating recovery to mitigate economic impact of Covid-19.
G	KA 21. Recovery Action (Economic Development – Economic Growth Strategy)	Q3	Cllr Fuller	Clara Kerr	Economic Growth Strategy in development.

WE WANT TO: Support development of infrastructure to enable growth

Status	Key Actions for 2020/21	Target date	Portfolio Holder	Head of Service	Progress Update to be reported each Quarter
G	KA 22. Continue to work with partners and influence the Combined Authority (CA) and secure support and resources to facilitate delivery of new housing, drive economic growth and provide any critical infrastructure	Ongoing	Cllr Fuller / Cllr Neish	Clara Kerr	Outcomes of A141 study supported by HDC; in addition CPCA have committed to a dedicated St Ives Study to be undertaken with a view to unlocking additional growth beyond the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.
G	KA 23. Support the implementation of 'Prospectuses for Growth' for St Ives, Huntingdon and Ramsey and the St Neots Masterplan	Ongoing	Cllr Fuller	Clara Kerr	Bid submitted to CPCA for £300k to undertake regeneration studies in St Ives, Huntingdon and Ramsey. If successful, will be notified in Q3 and procurement will get underway.
G	KA 24. Continue to provide active input into and work with partners on key transport developments, including the A428, East-West Rail (EWR) and A14 improvements	Ongoing	Cllr Neish	Clara Kerr	Planning Performance Agreement with neighbouring authorities underway for A428; First EWR Development Consent Order discussion took place at the end of September and further information expected in Q3. A further non-statutory consultation is expected early 2021.
G	KA 25. Work with partners to develop Oxford-Cambridge Arc (Ox-Cam) growth corridor proposals and maximise the opportunities this can offer locally	Ongoing	Cllr Neish	Clara Kerr	HDC attends the A428 Strategic Stakeholder Board; Ongoing dialogue with all partners. Expected to intensify in Q3 as Development Consent Orders progress both for A428 and EWR.
G	KA 26. Prepare and implement an updated Section 106 Supplementary Planning Document and Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule	Ongoing	Cllr Neish	Clara Kerr	Portfolio Holder agreement to pause given impact of Covid-19 on economic market.
G	KA 27. Recovery Action (Economic Development - enable growth	Ongoing	Cllr Neish	Clara Kerr	Transport for Huntingdon will restart in Q3; A141 support to Cabinet in Sept.

Status	Key Actions for 2020/21	Target date	Portfolio Holder	Head of Service	Progress Update to be reported each Quarter
	through infrastructure development)				

WE WANT TO: Improve the supply of new and affordable housing, jobs and community facilities to meet current and future need

Status	Key Actions for 2020/21	Target date	Portfolio Holder	Head of Service	Progress Update to be reported each Quarter
G	KA 28. Maintain a five year housing land supply (5YHLS) and ensure that the Housing Delivery Test in the National Planning Policy Framework is met	Ongoing	Cllr Fuller	Clara Kerr	Reviewed annually; Annual Monitoring Report 2020 Part 1 (housing) due in Q3.
G	KA 29. Facilitate delivery of new housing and appropriate infrastructure	Ongoing	Cllr Fuller / Cllr Neish	Clara Kerr	Growth team working closely with developers to ensure strategic sites and associated infrastructure are delivered on site. New primary school at Wintringham Park moving at pace, parcels at Wintringham Park and Alconbury Weald are under construction, and final parcels at Bearscroft under consideration.
G	KA 30. Design and implement strategies to use Council assets to support the delivery of affordable homes	Ongoing	Cllr Fuller / Cllr Gray	David Edwards	A report to be submitted to Cabinet in October will propose the sale of 13 parcels of land held by HDC for the delivery of affordable homes.
G	KA 31. Recovery Action (Housing Strategy and/or Planning/Growth - e.g. prepare and adopt new Housing Strategy)	Ongoing	Cllr Fuller	Clara Kerr	To be submitted to Cabinet in Q3.

Corporate Performance and Contextual Indicators

Key to status

G	Performance is on track	A	Performance is within acceptable variance	R	Performance is below acceptable variance	?	Awaiting performance update	n/a	Not applicable to assess performance
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Performance Indicator	Full Year 2019/20 Performance	Q1 2019/20 Performance	Q1 2020/21 Target	Q1 2020/21 Performance	Q1 2020/21 Status	Annual 2020/21 Target	Forecast Outturn 2020/21 Performance	Predicted Outturn 2020/21 Status
PI 9. Percentage of sampled areas which are clean or predominantly clean of litter, detritus, graffiti, flyposting, or weed accumulations (cumulative year to date) Aim to maximise	80%	96%	80%	98%	G	80%	80%	G

Comments: (Operations) The pandemic is still affecting people's attitude to going out, we are seeing less litter in and around urban areas although more in open spaces.

PI 10. Number of missed bins per 1,000 households (cumulative year to date) Aim to minimise	0.79	0.84	0.75	0.57	G	0.75	0.60	G
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Comments: (Operations) Work continues to support the collection crews to ensure bins aren't being missed. In-cab technology is now in place which will further assist with this.

PI 11. Percentage of household waste recycled/reused/composted (cumulative year to date)	60%	62%	60%	64%	G	60%	60%	G
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Operations) Organic waste increases throughout the summer months so the year to date figure is high. As the year progresses, organic waste weight drops and we will see the recycling rate decrease slightly. We have however seen an increase in dry recycling due to changing habits and more people working from home due to the pandemic.

PI 12. Number of complaints about food premises (cumulative year to date)	748	?	TBC	48	G	TBC	?	N/a
Aim to minimise								

Comments: (Community) Numbers remain significantly down due to closure of premises through Covid-19.

PI 13. Percentage of licensed taxi/hackney carriage/private hire vehicles that meet 'Euro 6' low vehicle emission standards (latest position at end of each quarter)	N/a	N/a	40%	32%	A	40%	<40%	A
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Community) New indicator so no past performance data available.

PI 14. Total number of appeals allowed as a percentage of total number of planning appeals decided (cumulative year to date)	25% (4 out of 16)	0%	25%	15%	G	15%	15%	G
Aim to minimise								

Comments: (Development) Betterment compared to last year. In Q2 alone, the service successfully defended 100% of appeals (12 out of 12). Cumulative percentage from April to Sept 2020 is 3 out of 20 appeals allowed, so 15%. The service is improving year on year in respect of appeals.

PI 15. Number of costs awards against the Council where the application was refused at Development Management Committee contrary to the officer recommendation (cumulative year to date)	1	0	0	0	G	0	0	G
Aim to minimise								

Comments: (Development) Committee decisions were sound and this is reflected in an improvement in respect of cost position compared to last year (Dignitas appeal allowed with costs).

PI 16. The amount of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding allocated for small-scale infrastructure development (cumulative year to date)	N/a	N/a	0	0	G	TBC	TBC	N/a
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Growth) New indicator so no past performance data available. CIL governance paper due to October Cabinet. Expected first allocations to be presented to Cabinet in November/December 2020.

PI 17. Percentage of planning applications processed on target – major (within 13 weeks or agreed extended period) (cumulative year to date)	87%	92%	TBC	86%	N/a	TBC	85%	N/a
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Development) Target still to be confirmed as further time is needed to review the impact of Covid-19 on the planning service locally and how this has affected national benchmark performance levels.

PI 18. Percentage of planning applications processed on target – minor (within 8 weeks or agreed extended period) (cumulative year to date)	78%	74%	TBC	78%	N/a	TBC	78%	N/a
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Development) Target still to be confirmed as further time is needed to review the impact of Covid-19 on the planning service locally and how this has affected national benchmark performance levels.

PI 19. Percentage of planning applications processed on target – household extensions (within 8 weeks or agreed extended period) (cumulative year to date)	88%	72%	TBC	83%	N/a	TBC	82%	N/a
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Development) Target still to be confirmed as further time is needed to review the impact of Covid-19 on the planning service locally and how this has affected national benchmark performance levels.

PI 20. Number of new affordable homes delivered in 2020/2021 (cumulative year to date)	440	180	162	124	A	338	293	A
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Growth) There have been significant changes in numbers forecast by Registered Providers since the last report. Reduction in the number of affordable homes that will be completed is likely to occur. By far the most significant factor is Covid-19 (although forecasting can change even in normal circumstances). Forecast completions were 338 but this is now estimated to be 293 and further changes can be expected during the course of the year. The number of completions expected by end of Q2 has also reduced from 162 to 124.

PI 21. Net growth in number of homes with a Council Tax banding (cumulative year to date)	1,185	564	No target set	434	G	No target set - defer to Annual Monitoring Report	?	N/a
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Growth) The total at 27 September 2020 is 434 higher than at 29 March 2020. House building has been affected by lockdown measures already and may also be impacted by the state of the national and local economy so any forecasts at this stage are unlikely to reflect delivery.

STRATEGIC THEME – BECOMING A MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE COUNCIL

Period July to September 2020

Summary of progress for Key Actions

G	Progress is on track	A	Progress is within acceptable variance	R	Progress is behind schedule	?	Awaiting progress update	n/a	Not applicable to state progress
6		2		0		0		0	

Target dates do not necessarily reflect the final completion date. The date given may reflect the next milestone to be reached.

Summary of progress for Corporate Indicators

G	Performance is on track	A	Performance is within acceptable variance	R	Performance is below acceptable variance	?	Awaiting performance update	n/a	Not applicable to assess performance
6		3		3		0		4	

WE WANT TO: Become more efficient and effective in the way we deliver services

Status	Key Actions for 2020/21	Target date	Portfolio Holder	Head of Service	Progress Update to be reported each Quarter
A	KA 32. Actively manage Council owned non-operational assets and, where possible, ensure such assets are generating a market return for the Council	Ongoing	Cllr Gray	Justin Andrews	Three lettings, one rent review and one lease renewal completed in Q2, increasing rent by £5k p.a (21% increase on previous rent). Year to date activity now totals 6 rent reviews and lease renewals at an increase of £6.5k p.a. and 4 lettings at new rent of £45.4k p.a. Covid-19 is impacting, with 8 tenants having served notice to quit/break leases and one entered a Company Voluntary Arrangement with unit

Status	Key Actions for 2020/21	Target date	Portfolio Holder	Head of Service	Progress Update to be reported each Quarter
					closing (total loss of £143k annual rent over 9 units). Five of these units have attracted re-let interest. A handful of additional lettings are approved and in legals ahead of Q3 with potential additional rental income of £20k p.a. Smaller units are generating some interest and maintaining income levels, larger units less so. One wayleave completed at one off income of £500.
G	KA 33. Develop the Council's approach to data and business intelligence to support efforts to improve organisational efficiency including the development of unit cost and value metrics to measure service performance	Ongoing	Cllr Gray	Tony Evans	Much of our recent focus has been on identifying and targeting support for vulnerable people as part of our response to Covid-19. The Operational Board is continuing to review service performance and finances monthly with a focus on improving productivity. The Corporate Plan 2020/21 has now been approved by Council with key actions and performance indicators amended to reflect this year's work programme and take the impact of Covid-19 on our planned activities into account.
G	KA 34. Develop the Council's approach and methodologies for business change, service design and user research to enable effective change management within the organisation	Ongoing	Cllr Keane	Tony Evans	Working with the new Programme Delivery Manager role, we continue to embed business change into all phases of project management from start to finish including tracking the delivery of business benefits. We are working with HR to support training of senior managers on the 'double diamond' approach to change to ensure we can be effective and efficient.
A	KA 35. Recovery Action (Finance e.g. respond to impact on budget)	Ongoing	Cllr Gray	Justin Andrews	Close monitoring of our financial position is imperative during this period of economic turmoil. We have engaged external expertise 'Pixel' to aid with our funding assumptions and mapping. Parts of our business are undertaking fundamental reviews of their business model to deal with losses of income and predicted shortfalls going forward. S151 Officer is

Status	Key Actions for 2020/21	Target date	Portfolio Holder	Head of Service	Progress Update to be reported each Quarter
					pursuing novel structural options such as a Minimum Revenue Provision 'holiday' and identifying other options which could be taken up should circumstances demand. More detail is given in financial reporting and that should be taken as the prime source of information.
G	KA 36. Develop Workforce Strategy including options for best use of apprenticeship levy	Ongoing	Cllr Keane	Justin Andrews	<p>Our future Workforce Strategy relies on a number of 'Left Hand' Strategies to be written to give direction to this work. In the current situation and post-COVID, our needs and the shape of our Workforce is likely to need to be quite different to pre-COVID and even from right now. This Strategy must remain a Work in Progress or transition arrangement until such time as a 'new normal' develops.</p> <p>The Apprenticeship Levy remains a part of our strategy which can be leveraged seperately from any formal updates and opportunities are taken up as they arise.</p>

WE WANT TO: Become a more customer focussed organisation

Status	Key Actions for 2020/21	Target date	Portfolio Holder	Head of Service	Progress Update to be reported each Quarter
G	KA 37. Develop our understanding of customer and resident needs and demands	Ongoing	Cllr Keane	Michelle Greet	Work on the proposal to introduce a customer forum is well underway. Input and feedback has been received from many people across the organisation. An agenda item is scheduled for the Operational Senior Leadership Team meeting on 3rd November and Corporate Senior Leadership Team on 4th November to gain commitment to proceed in January 2021.

Status	Key Actions for 2020/21	Target date	Portfolio Holder	Head of Service	Progress Update to be reported each Quarter
G	KA 38. Expand how we offer online and out of hours access to our services via the customer portal and other solutions	Ongoing	Cllr Keane	Michelle Greet / Tony Evans	Work on this action has been delayed due to impacts of Covid-19 on our customer services, transformation and digital resources. These resources have been diverted to create a digital hub to support residents finding information about Covid-19 as well as creating digital services for Covid-related schemes such as business grants and self isolation support payments. The digital solution continues to be developed, with integrated maps that show real time content. All forms can now be tracked after submission by residents. Waste forms are being integrated with the back office system to provide real time updates. The Local Government Association-funded voice bots are being tested with target user groups to provide 24/7 information over the phone.
G	KA 39. Introduce a new electronic pre-application planning advice service	2021/22	Cllr Neish	Jacob Jaarsma	Agreed with Chief Operating Officer and Portfolio Holder to put rolling out new electronic pre-app service on hold until next financial year due to struggles with recruitment and to allow service to reduce the backlog of planning applications.

Corporate Performance and Contextual Indicators

Key to status

G	Performance is on track	A	Performance is within acceptable variance	R	Performance is below acceptable variance	?	Awaiting performance update	n/a	Not applicable to assess performance
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Performance Indicator	Full Year 2019/20 Performance	Q1 2019/20 Performance	Q1 2020/21 Target	Q1 2020/21 Performance	Q1 2020/21 Status	Annual 2020/21 Target	Forecast Outturn 2020/21 Performance	Predicted Outturn 2020/21 Status
PI 22. Total amount of energy used in Council buildings (cumulative year to date) Aim to minimise	11,265,569 kWh (10% increase on 2018/19) *As at Q3 and compared with Q3 2018/19	4,428,617 kWh	3,917,203 kWh (5% down on 2018/19)	?	N/a	9,710,467 kWh (5% down on 2018/19)	?	N/a

Comments: (Corporate Resources) Energy Management System not currently operational to provide data. Permanent Energy & Sustainability Officer not in position.

PI 23. Percentage of Business Rates collected in year (cumulative year to date) Aim to maximise	99%	59%	61%	57%	R	99%	?	R
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Comments: (Revenues & Benefits) Target is based on last year's performance, however a direct comparison cannot be made as this year's payment profile has changed as individual payment arrangements have been made, e.g. more instalments. All appropriate grants and discounts have been applied.

Recovery action has started on businesses in arrears but the collection rate won't recover by the end of the year.

PI 24. Percentage of Council Tax collected in year (cumulative year to date)	98%	58%	58%	56%	R	98%	?	R
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Revenues & Benefits) Target is based on last year's performance, however a direct comparison cannot be made as this year's payment profile has changed as individual payment arrangements have been made, e.g. more instalments. Customers are being encouraged to claim Council Tax Support to help reduce their liability. Hardship payments of over £500k have been awarded. Recovery action has now started on accounts in arrears but the collection rate won't recover by the end of the year.

PI 25. Number of magistrates court appeals against licensing decisions which have been upheld against the Council (cumulative year to date)	N/a	N/a	10	0	G	10	<10	G
Aim to minimise								

Comments: (Community) New indicator so no past performance data available. Low number is good. Appeals are currently behind schedule with courts due to Covid-19. Four heard so far, all successful. Six are awaiting rescheduled dates.

PI 26. Percentage satisfaction with ICT support services from feedback received (cumulative year to date)	N/a	N/a	95%	94%	A	95%	95%	G
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (3C ICT) Note: this is a new indicator so no past performance data available. Future reports will include cumulative results as expected rather than results for a single quarter. Performance during Q2 was averaged at 93.94%, slightly below the 95% target for the year, but we still have time to recover. This quarter we've had a number of positive responses / returns from a wide range of users reflecting this performance, but one of the main drivers behind a number of positive comments and emails we received was related to the roll out/migration of mobile phones over to Intune. The ability to access MS Teams and emails seems to have resonated with a number of people who have said it's changing the way they work. Also, the transition process where staff were guided through the resetting of their devices elicited lots of praise and positive comments for the two technicians who were involved in the bulk of this work.

PI 27. Percentage of invoices from suppliers paid within 30 days (cumulative year to date)	92%	89%	98%	80%	R	98%	88%	A
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Corporate Resources) The indicator has been moderately impacted by the absence of people from the office due to working from home arrangements. However improvements have been implemented to mitigate this and the performance has continued to improve (from 78%) through the last quarter. The Accounts Payable team is continuing to work with other teams to improve the identification of disputed invoices.

PI 28. Staff sickness days lost per full time employee (FTE) (cumulative year to date)	6.5 days/FTE	2.3 days/FTE	4.0 days/FTE	2.6 days/FTE	G	9.0 days/FTE	<9.0 days/FTE	G
Aim to minimise								

Comments: (Corporate Resources) Recent sickness absence figures remain low. However, this excludes non-sickness absences related to Covid-19 (such as those required to shield or isolate who were unable to work from home). While absences for those reasons fell by over 80% in Q2 compared to Q1, if these absences were included the absence rate would increase to 6.6 days/FTE. The annual sickness target remains at 9 days/FTE due to uncertainty about further impacts of Covid-19 on health over the winter

Further details will be included in the Workforce Report going to Employment Committee in November.

PI 29. Income generated from Commercial and Operational Estate Rental Income (cumulative year to date)	£4.9m	£1.4m	£1.95m	£3.2m	G	£3.9m	£4.7m	G
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Corporate Resources) Target is low as new income secured in 2019/20 was not accounted for, but forecast outturn is based on current likely loss of income/write off due to Covid-19, particularly in the retail/leisure sector. This is a moving picture, however, and expectation is that this could worsen. Borrowing from Public Works Loan Board for Commercial Investment Strategy (CIS) acquisitions is on hold meaning no new CIS income expected this year.

PI 30. Percentage of calls to Call Centre answered (cumulative year to date)	83%	85%	80%	?	N/a	80%	85%	G
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Customer Services) We are not currently able to obtain the percentage answered figure for this quarter as the Microsoft Teams reporting tools do not provide this information. We have to use Teams to enable home working, and we are securing financing to purchase a more advanced Teams-based reporting solution that provides answered call rates as well as many other data points. We may be able to retrieve this quarter's information if the solution is installed later this year.

PI 31. Call Centre telephone satisfaction rate (cumulative year to date)	89%	93%	80%	N/a	N/a	80%	N/a	N/a
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Customer Services) We have paused the sending out of paper surveys this quarter, but we will review in Q3.

PI 32. Customer Service Centre satisfaction rate (cumulative year to date)	95%	94%	80%	N/a	N/a	80%	N/a	N/a
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Customer Services) We have paused the sending out of paper surveys this quarter, but we will review in Q3.

PI 33. Percentage of Stage 1 complaints resolved within time (cumulative year to date)	87%	90%	90%	96%	G	90%	95%	G
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Customer Services) Of 69 Stage One Complaints received so far, only 3 this year have been responded to late, all of which are in Operations. Operations have received the most complaints with 18. Development then follow with 14. There have been 12 complaints related to Covid/Discretionary Business Grants, though the majority of these are related to non-eligibility for discretionary grant schemes.

PI 34. Percentage of Stage 2 complaints resolved within time (cumulative year to date)	76%	89%	90%	95%	G	90%	95%	G
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Customer Services) 19 Stage Two Complaints have been received, of which one relating to Development was responded to late. 9 were related to Covid/Discretionary Business Grants and, as with Stage One complaints, the majority related to non-eligibility for discretionary grant schemes.

PI 35. Percentage reduction in avoidable contacts (cumulative year to date)	2%	-1%	-15%	-9%	A	-15%	-20%	G
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Customer Services) The introduction of the integrated Operations forms took place in May 2020 and the online customer portal continues to progress.

PI 36. Percentage of households with customer accounts generated (latest result)	15%	6%	N/a	23%	G	8%	25%	G
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Customer Services) We now have 17.6K accounts on the OneVu platform. A small proportion of these are registered to addresses outside the district. Multiple residents of a property may also have their own accounts.

PI 37. Percentage of all council services that have an end to end digital process (latest position at end of each quarter)	N/a	N/a	5%	N/a	A	20%	N/a	N/a
Aim to maximise								

Comments: (Transformation) New indicator so no past performance data available. Data exists on the number of partially and fully digitised services currently still working to compile a full list of services offered by the council, the work to digitise obvious and high volume services continued through Covid-19, the work to list all services was put on hold during this period.

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Project Name	Project Description	Original Approved End Date	Expected Delivery Date	RAG Status	Performance Summary	Last updated	Service Area	Project Sponsors	Project Managers
Customer Portal	Development of a customer portal and the processes that support the portal that allow for the creation of end to end digital services that integrate with back office system. This also includes the replacement of Dynamics as a tool in the contact centre. This includes the deliver of forms for Operations, Taxi Licensing and eBilling.	31-Oct-19	30-Dec-21	R	Programme has been split into four projects below: each will be led and updated separately going forward.	Sep-20	Transformation	John Taylor	Tony Evans
CPP - Core Portal Project	Part of the Customer Portal Project - Delivers the ability to create integrated dynamic eForms to the council with supporting people, process and technology. Additionally delivered forms for Operations Streets, Waste, Grounds.	31-Mar-21	31-Mar-21	R	Job descriptions were put out for digital designer position and interviews are being conducted. Final requirements were passed to 3C Digital Team for built of Waste forms. Progress remains slow on digital team delivery.	Sep-20	Transformation	John Taylor	Tony Evans
CPP - Dynamics Replacement	Replaces Dynamics with IEG4 CsVu.	31-Mar-21	31-Mar-21	R	Awaiting date for the waste forms to go into User Acceptance Testing before further work is undertaken to finish business processes and handover. Some form design work for simple forms remains outstanding. Not clear who will build complex forms going forward as 3C Content Team not currently skilled up to do this.	Sep-20	Customer Services	John Taylor	Michelle Greet
CPP - eBilling	Delivers an eBilling capability that will allow residents to request online council tax bills, letters and benefits statements and letters.	30-Sep-22	30-Sep-22	A	No progress made waiting for the award of the hybrid print and mail contract.	Sep-20	Revenues & Benefits	John Taylor	Amanda Burns
CPP - Data & Analytics	Creates a unified view of demand across digital and phone channels that will provide the basis for understanding demand for services and unit cost of interaction.	30-Sep-22	30-Sep-22	A	3C ICT confirmed that this could not be progressed as a Single Work Package and would need to be convert to a full project and prioritised. 3C ICT confirmed that they did not have in house resource to create a secure design and sign off on how to secure a data store.	Sep-20	Transformation	John Taylor	Tony Evans
Retail in our Town Centres - St Benedicts Court regeneration	Investigate opportunities for working with the owners of St Benedicts Court in Huntingdon as part of a wider redevelopment 'quarter' approach to regenerate that part of the town centre (M25)		TBC	R	Conversations afoot with Montagu Evans (Threadneedle). They confirm that Threadneedle are looking at options for the site, including longer term thinking about potential redevelopment. Next step is further discussion in Mid-October.	Sep-20	Development	David Edwards	TBD
One Leisure Ramsey - 3G Artificial Pitch	3G Artificial Pitch (2018/19 Capital programme) (M10)	31-Dec-18	31-Mar-21	R	Agreement in place with contractors to delay start date until March 2021 to manage risks associated with archaeology works to be undertaken prior to build as part of planning conditions. Poor ground conditions in the winter period could result in additional works and additional spend. Agreement with main funder football foundation to delay and also fits in within the lease agreement with school to deliver project within 18 months of signing lease agreement.	Sep-20	Leisure & Health	Jayne Wisely	Martin Grey

Project Name	Project Description	Original Approved End Date	Expected Delivery Date	RAG Status	Performance Summary	Last updated	Service Area	Project Sponsors	Project Managers
New HR system	Full tender to replace the existing HR and Payroll system with a new, modern, cloud-based solution which better integrates with other systems (e.g. active directory, Tech1 etc.) Joint procurement with CCC and SCC, Procurement lead is CCC. Project Manager is external consultant.		31-Mar-21	A	System demonstrations and scoring of tenders are complete. The project board agreed that given the margin between the suppliers final scores award at stage 2 would be appropriate. Costing breakdown was completed using the costs submitted by preferred supplier including charges due to premium rapid implementation and reviewed by Project Lead, Sponsor and Chief Finance Officer. Additional costs will put pressure on 20/21 budget but will payback over 5 years. Announcement was made on 15/9/20 to both suppliers. Risk remains over implementation timescales, mitigations include the rapid implementation route adopted, dedicated project resource to see through the payroll go live extended by further month to allow for contingency; also HDC has a further month scope in current supplier contract. Further risks have been identified that will be assessed as part of conversations about exit with current supplier. The updated costs include assumed charge for exit. Next phase of work: External legal partners will prepare the contract incorporating the suppliers tender responses alongside both party T&C's. This contract type arrangement will allow for each council to request divergence to their respective contracts. The contract will be managed centrally by 3C ICT who will oversee any upgrades and patch testing. Work has commenced on cleansing our data in preparation, including aligning staff establishment to finance data, deleting old records, cleansing areas in line with data migration requirements.	Sep-20	Corporate Services	Justin Andrews Fiona Bryant	Aileen Whatmore Randeep Singh (PM)
Bridge Place car park reprovision	Completion of property sale, reprovion of parking at alternative site (long stay car park serving Huntingdon). This will also involve setting up of a park alongside the car park.		30-Jun-21	A	We are currently in consultation for a change request. We are in discussions with third party planning application to progress. Plans for alternative site (Riverside Huntingdon) underway with application to Fields in Trust for permission to allow planning design and consultation to be progressed.	Sep-20	Operations	Neil Sloper	Matt Chudley (site) George McDowell (Car Park works)
Environmental Health System Procurement / Implementation	Project has been broken down into two phases. Selection and Implementation. The Selection project is for the three Councils to choose a single supplier to replace current environmental health systems with a single system. SCDC is leading on the project on behalf of the three Councils.	31-Mar-20	31-Jan-21	G	Civica and Idox have been engaged to extract the data from Flare and Uniform respectively and have provided test extracts which are currently being imported into Tascomi. User Acceptance Testing will follow with final test extractions by 30/10/20. Super User training commenced 24/9/20 and continues until 15/10/20, preparing personnel to configure Tascomi. Train the Trainer training is being finalised and expected to take place in the first week of November, giving time to train all end users by the end of the year. Go Live of the Tascomi system as a back office system is scheduled for 29/1/21. Work will continue after this date to integrate Tascomi and develop online forms etc for the customer portal IEG4 with the integration scheduled for 10/5/21.	Sep-20	3C Shared Services	John Taylor	David Pope

Project Name	Project Description	Original Approved End Date	Expected Delivery Date	RAG Status	Performance Summary	Last updated	Service Area	Project Sponsors	Project Managers
Oak Tree Car Park Development Project and Affordable Housing Project Phase II	Phase II relates to the application of further funding from One Public Estate to develop the Master Planning Scheme into a viable Capital Project with less reliance on NHS occupation of new offices. New apartments will still follow the design principle of accommodation for "Key Workers". Awaiting further Central Government instructions re grant applications.		30-Sep-22	G	A paper prepared on 14/9/20 set out 6 options relating to the development of the site. Two options are being considered with a 3rd option being the sale of Oaktree Health Centre excluding the car park. In consideration of the 20th October meeting, and to ensure costs relating to potential future revenue and build cost are ascertained, LSi (Master Planning Architect) have been instructed to prepare sketch proposals that Savills can cost re revenue and Ridge can cost re build. Once compiled we can present actual forecasts with the Board then open to consider the options and potential revenue. Given any development would not commence until late 2021 or early 2022 this will likely mean a Post-Covid/Brexit regenerational development scheme for the Oxmoor area. In addition to the paper presented the Phase 8 funding options via the OPE streams of a Sustainable Grant and Land Release Funding were also forwarded. OPE have been allocated £10m and £20m for each stream. An application via the Sustainable Grant stream in the order of 350k is recommended, which is likely to be approved at less but is worthwhile considering. The caveat is any funding via this stream is repayable after 3 years so HDC must consider whether this is viable. Also it is recommended that Adrian Davey is consulted so as to make a separate application under the Land Release fund given the Land being considered for sale.	Sep-20	Corporate Services	Justin Andrews	Carl Egonu
Outsourced Hybrid Mail & Printing Project	Outsourced Hybrid Mail & Printing Project	-	31-Dec-20	G	Moderation is now complete and 11 potential suppliers will be issued Invitations To Tender. We are currently seeking guidance on whether it may be advantageous to remove the emergency supplier from the competition with a direct award awarded contract offered to a local supplier who submitted a completed Standard Selection Questionnaire and meets the criteria. We are still waiting for Cambridge City to confirm Huntingdonshire's contribution to legal costs for this project.	Sep-20	Customer Services	John Taylor	Andy Lusha
Operations Back Office System - Yotta	Streets/Grounds/Recycling and Waste Services: Phase 1: Streets April 2019 / Phase 2: Grounds Sept 2019 / Phase 3: Waste Services May 2020 / 3C project across the three authorities.	07-May-19	31-Dec-20	G	Phase 2 - Streets Service re-launched 14/9/20. So far 12/17 operatives have been made live on the system. Phase 4 - Waste Testing and data preparations completing. Go-live reviews have been held. Target date now 7/10/20). Phase 3 - Grounds Soon to be scoped and go into initiation.	Sep-20	3C Shared Services	Joel Carre (CCC) Neil Sloper	Tony Allen
One Leisure St Ives Changing Rooms	Capital 2019/20	TBC	31-Mar-21	G	Design Team meeting 2/10/20 - tenders being prepared to go to Framework.	Sep-20	Leisure & Health	Paul France	Chris Keeble
Alms Close, Huntingdon - Land development	Development of Land at Alms Close, Huntingdon	31-Oct-19	18-Sep-20	G	Near completion, marketing now for five smaller units and one large unit. Due to achieve practical completion on 28/9/20. Planting will commence in November for soft landscaping works.	Sep-20	Corporate Services	Justin Andrews	Carl Egonu

Project Name	Project Description	Original Approved End Date	Expected Delivery Date	RAG Status	Performance Summary	Last updated	Service Area	Project Sponsors	Project Managers
Eastnet MLL Migration	Eastnet MLL Migration	-	31-Dec-20	G	The core decommission happened without issues. Closure report is in draft - lessons learnt workshops taking place. Eastnet service management board being adopted. Lessons learned work underway.	Sep-20	3C Shared Services	Oliver Morley	Peter Holmes
Data Centre Migration	Data Centre Migration from Shire Hall to Peterborough (interim hosting)		31-Mar-21	G	Generator installation and commissioning completed successfully at the end of August. Detailed planning on the equipment move from Cambridge to Peterborough has started (involving Dell, transport company and County programme management team). Infrastructure Disaster Recovery test running all services from Shire Hall completed successfully too. 3CSS are now going to be the first organisation to move from Shire Hall after Education IT move was delayed. The project is still on course for the November migration date.	Sep-20	3C Shared Services	Oliver Morley	Peter Holmes
Godmanchester Sluice	Funding of repair/renovation to sluice structures, Mill Steps site, and potential additional fish/eel passage. None of this is HDC money.		30-Nov-20	G	Phase 1 - site survey, geophysics, water flow and silting evaluation. Survey produced positive results allowing us to move to the next phase. Phase 2 - Final design. This met all the requirements and progressed to next phase. Phase 3 - Cost of build feasibility. First two phases answered some fundamental questions: 1, what should the fish pass look like?, & 2, could we physically build it? The next and probably most important phase is how much will it cost? Using the Environment Agency framework, Breheney initially submitted a cost of £400k. This would exceed the budget of the group and would make the build financially unfeasible. They were asked to re-work their costings and they have resubmitted a cost of £334K. This would make the project feasible and we are now currently looking into the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations aspect of the build. Findings will go to the project board end of October to see if they wish to proceed with the fish pass or look at alternative options.	Sep-20	Operations	Neil Sloper	Andrew Rogan

**Public
Key Decision - No**

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Finance Performance Report (Q2)
Meeting/Date:	Cabinet – 19th November 2020
Executive Portfolio:	Executive Councillor for Strategic Resources (JG)
Report by:	Chief Finance Officer (CE)
Ward affected:	All

Executive Summary:

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a considerable impact on the Council. The Government's lockdown, announced on 20th March 2020, has meant that many of the businesses in Huntingdonshire have been forced to close – significantly impacting on the local economy, which in turn impacts on the Council's commercial income. Furthermore, the Council has had to put considerable resources into ensuring that rough sleepers are safe during this period and that the most vulnerable in our community are cared for. This comes with additional cost pressures.

Financial Impact

These additional costs have had a significant impact on the financial outturn for 2020/21 as the lockdown as continued into the first quarter of this financial year, with the economy and businesses just starting to re-open. However, the true scale of its impact on the Council's finances in 2020/21 will not be truly known until March 2021. The Council is showing substantial losses across many of its largest streams of commercial income. These include rental income, Leisure income, parking, commercial waste, licensing fees and planning fees. As with any recession, investment income is anticipated to reduce which will create further pressures on the Council's finances.

On the expenditure front some of the key areas of additional pressure will include accommodation and support for rough sleepers, additional costs in supporting our most vulnerable with food parcels and assistance in accessing medical provisions – some of whom may not have required our support previously.

It is difficult to quantify the impact of Covid-19 at this stage with any certainty, but the financial pressure on the Council will be substantial – even after the Government's emergency Covid-19 funding for local

authorities is taken into account. Due to the Council's reliance on commercial income and fees and charges and consequently its exposure to the economic cycle, the Council has sought in recent years to build up the general fund balance to ensure the Council is financially resilient in a recession. The Council is therefore able to draw upon its general fund reserve balances in 2020/21 to balance its budget.

Moving forward, the Council will reset its Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) in recognition of the impact of the pandemic and the Council's strategic objectives. The Covid-19 crisis has meant that the Council has had to review what its most critical services areas and which are required to still be operational even during a global pandemic. The changing environment and "new normal" in which we are likely to find ourselves will require the Council to review the services it provides, its delivery models and the outcomes that are of the highest priority. This will also require the Council to review the structural position of its budget and how that needs to change going forward.

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that:

- The Cabinet is invited to consider and comment on the financial performance at the end of September, as detailed in Appendices 1, and the register of reviews of Commercial Investment Strategy propositions at Appendix 2.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present details of the Council's projected financial performance for 20/21.

- Revenue outturn estimated overspend of £2.403m.
- Capital outturn estimated underspend of £10.802m

The impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, as far as possible, has been reflected within the Council's financial position. This now includes the first claim from the Governments Income Compensation Scheme of £1.568m, this will be claimed retrospectively and is subject to approval.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The budget and MTFS for 2020/21 approved in February 2020, assumed a net expenditure budget of £17.688m, together with an increase in Council Tax of 2.6%. At the time of setting this budget it was not foreseen that a global pandemic was imminent, causing unprecedented actions to be taken within the UK and the rest of the world, in trying to restrict the spread of this pandemic.

Impact assessments were initially undertaken to estimate the impact on the council's budget and due to government support via emergency funding and the anticipated income compensation scheme, together with the ability to support the anticipated deficit with reserves, a revised budget for 20/21 has not been produced. However, this is constantly under review and any significant changes will be reported to cabinet.

The MTFS is currently under review for 21/22 onwards within the current budget setting cycle.

2.2 The detailed analysis of the Q2 outturn as at 30th September is attached at **Appendix 1**.

3. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

3.1 Financial Performance Headlines

The forecast outturn position for the current financial year and the impact of variations will be incorporated within the MTFS.

Revenue The approved Budget is £17.688m with the forecast outturn being £20.091m which is an overspend of £2.403m, a decrease of £0.593m compared to Q1 forecast. The main reasons are shown on the next page.

MTFS The MTFS was updated as part of the 2020/21 Budget setting process and will again be updated as part of the 2021/22 Budget setting process which is now under way. The revision of the MTFS will include 2019/20 outturn variations and others occurring or foreseen in 2020/21 that have an impact on future years.

Capital The approved Budget is £16.611m plus the re-phasing of £3.909m giving a revised total Capital Programme of £20.520m. The forecast outturn is £9.717m giving an underspend of £10.802m.

3.2 Summary Revenue Forecast Variances by Service

The table below shows the total variances for each Service and the main reasons where variances are greater than £50,000.

Head of Service	Budget £'000s	Revised Forecast £'000s	Variance £'000s	Comments
AD Corporate Resources	5,899	4,979	(920)	Emergency funding for Covid 19 -£2.295m; reduction in CIS rental income +£0.975m due to no CIS acquisitions as planned, increase voids and expected lower rental growth across the whole portfolio
AD Transformation	401	240	(161)	Combination of delays in projects and recruitment to vacant posts due to focusing and support the response to Covid 19
Chief Operating Officer	4,425	4,518	93	Increase agency costs for Development Management; Mid year adjustment on Housing Benefit, off set by various salary and efficiency across the whole service
Corporate Leadership	603	718	115	Increase costs due to supporting response to Covid 19
Head of ICT	2,139	2,131	(8)	
Head of Leisure & Health	(215)	2,065	2,280	Loss of income due to closure of Leisure Facilities
Head of Operations	3,347	4,553	1,206	Loss of income due to car park charges being suspended during lock down.
Housing Manager	177	172	(5)	
Growth Manager	842	679	(163)	Salary savings and reduced costs due to delay in projects due to Covid 19.
Programme Delivery Manager	70	36	(34)	
Total	17,688	20,091	2,403	

Further analysis of the revenue variance and service commentary are in **Appendix 1**. This provides the variances by service and where the variances are greater than +/- £10,000 comments have been provided by the budget managers/Head of Services. Where there are adverse variances the budget managers have provided details of the actions they are undertaking and where possible indicated if this will have an ongoing impact on the MTFs. This does not include the Income Compensation Scheme claim as this is still subject to approval.

3.3 Capital Programme

The approved gross capital programme for 2020/21 is £16.11m plus the re-phasing of the £3.909m giving a revised total Capital Programme for 2020/21 of £20.520m.

The forecast net expenditure outturn is £9.717m, an underspend of £10.802m.

The table below shows the total variances for each Service and the main reasons where variances are greater than £50,000.

	Budget £000	Forecast outturn £000	Forecast (underspend) / overspend £000	Main reasons for variance
AD Resources	12,371	2,351	-10,020	Delay's in projects in relation to Bridge Place Car Park; Oak Tree Remedial work Projects impacted by Covid 19 are Alms Close and Huntingdon Redevelopment which is being rephased within the current budget cycle for 21/22
AD Transformation	207	161	-46	Impacted by resources being redeployed elsewhere within the business to support the response to Covid 19
Chief Operating Officer	2,306	1,886	-420	Reduction in disabled adaptations
Head of ICT	62	62	0	
Head of Leisure & Health	1,149	1,456	307	Additional spend to be funded from CIL and grant income
Head of Operations	3,819	2,427	-1,392	Impacted by resources being redeployed elsewhere within the business to support the response to Covid 19
Housing Manager	0	0	0	Impacted by resources being redeployed elsewhere within the business to support the response to Covid 19
Planning Policy Manager	606	1,374	768	Additional spend is CIL funded projects not shown within the budget.
Total	20,520	9,717	-10,803	

3.4 Finance Dashboard

The Outturn for Q2 also looks at the collection rates for Council Tax and NDR, together with the working ages caseload for Council Tax Support Scheme. The details are shown in Appendix 1.

In summary, Council Tax collection rates are holding in line with 19/20 rates, however NDR is showing a decline compared to 19/20. This is mainly due to

the impact of Covid 19 pandemic and the lock down of the economy, together with Government initiatives to support the hospitality sector with additional reliefs of £20.8m compared to 19/20. The Council will be compensated for these reliefs via the normal grant income received via the business rates retention scheme.

Council Tax Support Scheme has seen a significant increase in caseload within the working age group of 11% compared to 19/20.

4. UPDATE ON THE COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

4.1 The Commercial Investment Strategy (CIS) was approved by Cabinet in September 2015 and the CIS Business Plan in December 2015. The implementation of the CIS is seen as a key means by which the Council can generate income to assist it in meeting the forecast gap in the revenue budget, by 2023/24 it will have in part contributed in reducing this to £1.2m.

4.2 At the end of Quarter 2, the financial projections for the CIS are:

CIS Investments	Budget (£'000)	Outturn (£'000)	Variance (£'000)
Cash Investments			
CCLA Property Fund	(162)	(160)	2
Total Cash Investments	(162)	(160)	2
Property Rental Income	(5,880)	(4,660)	1,220
MRP	879	697	(182)
Net Direct Property Income	(5,001)	(3,963)	1038
Management Charge	144	144	0
Total Property Investments	(4,857)	(3,819)	1038
TOTAL	(5,019)	(3,979)	1040

4.3 Investments

Due to Covid 19 the investment market virtually closed for business. In Q2 there has been some return in activity, but a significant number of funds remain gated to buying or selling assets and accordingly very few quality investment assets have come to the market, the majority being development sites or retail. Resources have been concentrating on managing income from existing tenants during the pandemic whilst awaiting more clarity on the current and future financial position and the demands from the income stream. We continue to monitor the market and flag up any exceptional opportunities, There has been only one opportunity within District, an industrial site off Cromwell Road, St Neots but at only 20% let was not attractive. The Government continued consultation in this period on use of PWLB funds for investing for yield, the indicators are that this source of funding will be switched off for commercial property investment and may extend to prevent any PWLB borrowing if Local Authorities undertake any borrowing elsewhere for property investment. A summary of opportunities is included in **Appendix 2**.

Returns from the CCLA property fund have decreased in 2020/21. Other investment vehicles such as bank deposits and money market funds interest rates have also decreased significantly since the Covid-19 pandemic.

To date the majority of the Council's investments have been funded from earmarked reserves or cash balances. Recent acquisition such as Fareham, Rowley Centre and Tri-Link have required loans from PWLB to fund their purchases; part of the purchase price and acquisition costs were met from earmarked reserves.

5. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 5.1 The Panel received the Financial Performance Report 2020/21, Quarter 2 at its meeting on 4th November 2020. Generally, the Council's finances appear to be performing better than originally expected.
- 5.2 Concern has been raised at the prospect of the Council being unable to use Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans to deliver the Commercial Investment Strategy (CIS). It has, however, been confirmed that the Government are currently conducting a consultation on the PWLB and, depending on the outcome, the Council may have to consider other funding options to achieve the objectives of the CIS.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Cabinet are invited to consider and comment on financial performance at the end of September, as detailed in section 3 and in **Appendix 1**, and the register of reviews of Commercial Investment Strategy propositions at **Appendix 2**.

7. LIST OF APPENDICIES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Financial Performance Monitoring Q1

Appendix 2 – Register of reviews of CIS investment propositions, Q1

CONTACT OFFICER

Claire Edwards, Chief Finance Officer

 01480 388822

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Financial Performance Monitoring Suite September 2020 – Quarter 2

Executive summary

This report sets out the financial forecast for September, for revenue and capital. The headlines are:

Revenue - the forecast outturn is an estimated overspend of £3.971m when compared to the approved budget. The significant overspend is due to the Covid 19 pandemic and the effect of the national lock down affecting income streams within our Leisure, Car Parking Facilities and Commercial Properties. This includes initial emergency Covid 19 funding from central government of £2.295m and £0.454m of reduce costs from furloughing staff from the Leisure Facilities.

Central Government announced further support for Local Authorities in relation to Leisure Facilities and Car Park, Income Compensation Scheme. Commercial Property income is excluded from this scheme. This will allow the authority to claim back 75p for every £1 of net losses and after deduction of 5% of budgeted fees and charges for those services. The first claim covers April to July, which the council has claimed to £1.568m (subject to approval) and will be on a retrospective basis. This will reduce the deficit from £3.971 to £2.403m, a decrease of £0.593m from Q1.

The council will continue to claim against on going losses within the Leisure Facilities and Car Parks, although they are open, they are not operating at full capacity due to the restrictions and impact on the high streets.

Capital Programme – the forecast outturn is an estimated underspend of £10.802m.

Service Grouping Summary

This list only includes service groups with a variance exceeding +/- £10,000

Service Commentary

The following table provides the variances by service and where variances are greater than +/- £10,000 comments have been provided by the budget managers/Head of Service. Where there are adverse variances the budget managers have provided details of the actions they are undertaking to address the overspend.

Head of Service	Actuals to September 2020 £'000s	Budget £'000s	Forecast £'000s	Income Compensation Scheme £'000s	Revised Forecast £'000s	Variance £'000s	Variance %	Forecast Spend £'000s	Forecast Income £'000s
AD Corporate Resources	(2,147)	5,899	4,979	0	4,979	(920)	-15.6	12,828	(7,848)
AD Transformation	175	401	240	0	240	(161)	-40.1	303	(63)
Chief Operating Officer	4,731	4,425	4,518	0	4,518	93	+2.1	37,156	(32,638)
Corporate Leadership	414	603	718	0	718	115	+19.1	718	0
Head of ICT	2,973	2,139	2,131	0	2,131	(8)	-0.4	8,232	(6,102)
Head of Leisure & Health	1,849	(215)	3,031	(966)	2,065	2,280	+1,060.5	5,472	(3,407)
Head of Operations	2,764	3,347	5,155	(602)	4,553	1,206	+36.0	8,578	(4,025)
Housing Manager	86	177	172	0	172	(5)	-2.8	172	0
Growth Manager	(2,564)	842	679	0	679	(163)	-19.4	35,328	(34,649)
Programme Delivery Manager	1	70	36	0	36	(34)	-48.6	36	0
Total	8,282	17,688	21,659	(1,568)	20,091	2,403	+13.6	108,823	(88,732)

Service Grouping Summary

This list only includes service groups with a variance exceeding +/- £10,000

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Actuals to September 2020 £	Budget £	Forecast £	Variance £	Var %	Commentary on Result	Action Required	MTFS Impact
AD Corporate Resources	Head of Resources	(2,704,618)	106,242	(1,821,127)	(1,927,369)	-1,814.1	Within this are the Covid 19 additional costs +£371k and emergency funding (£2,295k)		
AD Corporate Resources	Corporate Finance	749,400	5,135,547	5,176,671	41,124	+0.8	Reduced income from surplus cash balance +£25k; increase apprentice levy +£17k.		
AD Corporate Resources	Finance	428,940	794,948	757,392	(37,556)	-4.7	Salary savings due to delay in recruiting, post now recruited to.		
AD Corporate Resources	Risk Management	831,013	652,742	674,657	21,915	+3.4	Additional cost due to increase in insurance premiums		
AD Corporate Resources	Facilities Management	627,632	865,276	894,386	29,110	+3.4	<p>£10k Loss of rent/income due to COVID-19 lockdown</p> <p>£9.5k Cost of CCO's</p> <p>£28k Roof repairs to St Ives Bus Station</p> <p>£13k Increased/additional staff costs, as a result of restructure</p>	<p>Review budget to make savings elsewhere in the budget to compensate.</p> <p>Review budget to make savings elsewhere in the budget to compensate.</p> <p>Works agreed by Cllr Jonathan Gray to go ahead, agreed overspend due to H&S compliance</p> <p>Transfer funds from restructure budget to cover costs</p>	<p>£1.5k to be removed from St Ives Bus Station income (Whippet no longer renting office), the rest should return post COVID-19</p> <p>Cost reduced to £4.5k or 0k if DWP use their own contractor to provide CCO services</p> <p>One off repair not further funding required</p> <p>Adjustment of salary budgets after restructure will result in additional figures being covered</p>

Service Grouping Summary

This list only includes service groups with a variance exceeding +/- £10,000

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Actuals to September 2020 £	Budget £	Forecast £	Variance £	Var %	Commentary on Result	Action Required	MTFS Impact
							(£30k) Budget savings identified		Savings identified have been removed from next years budget
AD Corporate Resources	Democratic & Elections	413,809	831,404	759,484	(71,920)	-8.7	<p>£2k budget removed for grants and contributions with no explanation that anyone can put forward. These are awards of money that the Chairman presents to three charities each year.</p> <p>The support of external entity is forecasted to be zero as no Chairman's events are taking place this year due to Covid.</p> <p>Electoral registration expected grant set in budget £17k but only £13k received. Printing external likely to be more as for some reason budget reduced by £23k despite the fact that the budget was all used last year and still required for this year.</p>	The additional expenditure can be offset against savings in my budget elsewhere.	
AD Corporate Resources	Human Resources	180,885	588,867	681,381	92,514	+15.7	Forecast overspend on staffing is due to 2 maternities in team of 7, both backfilled, one by lower grade, less hours, the other by higher grade (same hours), but also additional Mat pay, as well as agency overspend, due to budget not accounting for on-costs and approval to get temp support in for team, due to workloads.		

Service Grouping Summary

This list only includes service groups with a variance exceeding +/- £10,000

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Actuals to September 2020 £	Budget £	Forecast £	Variance £	Var %	Commentary on Result	Action Required	MTFS Impact
							<p>Forecast overspend on services is some centralised recruitment spend, agreed as value for money this year to pilot a new way of supporting the business with recruitment. this May have future impact, but a budget bid is already submitted in MTFS to cover this.</p> <p>Also overspend due to increased year one costs on new HR and Payroll system, due to supplier costs to support a rapid implementation approach. This is to avoid costs on current supplier who would only roll over 3 year licence. The future costs are already in budget and will represent a saving year on based on new supplier fees.</p>		
AD Corporate Resources	Procurement	0	62,132	20,661	(41,471)	-66.7	Salary saving due to vacant post – now being recruited.		
AD Corporate Resources	Commercial Estates	(2,772,212)	(3,586,787)	(2,611,651)	975,136	+27.2	Employees - interim staff spend but covered by management charge in CIS (5304)	Actively marketing vacant units and targeting units with some rental growth prospects. Seek measures to retain tenants where financially better than an empty unit.	Covid 19 impacts and review of budget assumptions built into MTFS proposals (Sept 2020) - ongoing impact of void units and increase liability for void property and re-

Service Grouping Summary

This list only includes service groups with a variance exceeding +/- £10,000

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Actuals to September 2020 £	Budget £	Forecast £	Variance £	Var %	Commentary on Result	Action Required	MTFS Impact
							<p>Income & fees: no CIS property acquisition undertaken to generate planned new income (loss of PWLB funding and not proceeding with Huntingdon acq'n), Void units increased due to Covid 19 and also assumed loss of income from leisure/retail tenants withholding rent. Lower rental growth prospects across portfolio.</p> <p>Supplies and services: Not paying consultancy and MRP costs on acquisitions balances some loss of income</p> <p>Buildings: increase empty rates costs due to void units</p>	Permanent staff being recruited to replace interims	letting costs and lower rental growth
Chief Operating Officer	Building Control	2	152,540	91,526	(61,014)	-40.0			
Chief Operating Officer	Development Management	(338,960)	(425,985)	(343,089)	82,896	+19.5			
Chief Operating Officer	Environmental Protection Team	72,281	375,054	351,691	(23,363)	-6.2	Additional income and expenditure related to Government grants supporting Covid-19. Staffing underspend related to half post vacancy.		
Chief Operating Officer	Environmental Health Admin	60,041	143,794	126,163	(17,631)	-12.3	Positions have not been fully recruited following the departure of staff in the early part of this FY to provide an underspend that can assist with the increased costs of the Tascomi project.		
Chief Operating Officer	Closed Churchyards	0	(13,000)	700	13,700	+105.4	Income shortfall arising from previous savings item inserted with no clear delivery plan.	Assessment of deliverability to include liaison with Parish Councils with closed churchyards	

Service Grouping Summary

This list only includes service groups with a variance exceeding +/- £10,000

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Actuals to September 2020 £	Budget £	Forecast £	Variance £	Var %	Commentary on Result	Action Required	MTFS Impact
Chief Operating Officer	Licencing	(77,606)	(62,710)	(94,899)	(32,189)	-51.3	Income increased overall on Taxi & PH licencing income. Vehicle income dropped due to temporary 6mth licences instead of 12 mths issued pro rata due to covid. Driver income is increased due to finance balancing as part of move to 3yr licence. premise licence income up due to concerted effort to recover bad debts. salary savings due to vacant Operational Manager post partially offset by temp staff costs	No action required at present, decision by COO regarding recruitment to vacant Ops manager post	
Chief Operating Officer	Local Tax Collection	4,053	(227,770)	(217,690)	10,080	+4.4	This is a grant from CLG and the grant allocation is not know at budget setting.		
Chief Operating Officer	Housing Benefits	3,826,024	1,371,355	1,435,023	63,668	+4.6	<p>Employees: Salaries have been adjusted to absorb the salary costs from the Financial Investigator pilot.</p> <p>Income & Fees and Benefit & Transfer Payments: mid-year adjustments to spend and subsidy on Housing Benefit payments.</p> <p>Supplies & Services: Small adjustments to various elements of the budget, e.g legal fees due to reduced court work and pool car costs.</p>		
Chief Operating Officer	Housing Needs	435,598	1,145,981	1,074,635	(71,346)	-6.2	£40k in-year saving declared as no joint commissioning of Housing Related Support Services (HRS) this financial year.	No specific actions required at present.	£40k HRS in-year saving from above coming forward as

Service Grouping Summary

This list only includes service groups with a variance exceeding +/- £10,000

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Actuals to September 2020 £	Budget £	Forecast £	Variance £	Var %	Commentary on Result	Action Required	MTFS Impact
							Additional Government grants received totaling £166k to assist with homelessness reduction activities including the provision of a rough sleepers street outreach service until the end of 2020/21. A proportion of this grant is as yet uncommitted contributing to current underspend situation.		MTFS declared saving for future years.
Chief Operating Officer	Document Centre	120,038	175,580	221,000	45,420	+25.9	Staff vacancies not being filled has resulted in salaries underspend, however, there is increased forecast on spend for Agency staff whilst the Print and Hybrid mail outsourcing project continues, resulting in a (28k) underspend in salaries.	This has been addressed in the 21/22 budget setting	
Chief Operating Officer	Housing Miscellaneous	29,266	25,735	91,340	65,605	+254.9	Projected overspend due to historic water bill being finalised to replace previous estimates. Possible water leak being investigated as cause of unexpectedly high bill, there is also an additional estimated cost for the investigation of this leak. Electricity is climate dependent, most residents use electric fires to heat caravans.		
Programme Delivery Manager	Programme Delivery	1,400	69,549	36,208	(33,341)	-47.9	The staff vacancy has resulted in an underspend. The forecast shows the new Programme Delivery Manager has started in August 2020.		
Planning Policy Manager	Economic Development	(2,882,760)	185,434	159,683	(25,751)	-13.9	Salary savings due to long term sickness		

Service Grouping Summary

This list only includes service groups with a variance exceeding +/- £10,000

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Actuals to September 2020 £	Budget £	Forecast £	Variance £	Var %	Commentary on Result	Action Required	MTFS Impact
Planning Policy Manager	Planning Policy	319,719	633,058	495,536	(137,522)	-21.7	Employees: Salary savings due to vacancies Income: Income for priority service for a strategic site not budgeted as not guaranteed income; agreed after budget setting completed. Supplies & Services: CV19 delay to Local Plan preparation.		Unspent monies for Local Plan prep should roll over 21/22. CIL/S106 Report paused due to CV19 - unspent money to be forecast for 21/22
Corporate Leadership	Directors	357,988	508,300	612,379	104,079	+20.5	Additional staff costs incurred because cover for sickness leave was required to maintain HDC response to the impact of Covid-19 on the District.	This is an unavoidable in year situation.	
Corporate Leadership	Executive Support & Business Planning	56,031	95,014	105,211	10,197	+10.7	Additional costs of +£16k from LGA 3C share service project, off set by savings of £5k on stationery.		
AD Transformation	Transformation	174,629	400,988	239,554	(161,434)	-40.3	Transformation has been impacted by COVID, as we have paused some of our planned work in order to deliver support to how the council responds to COVID. This has delayed our planned spend on services and our ability to hire into posts as our planned work was delayed and capacity diverted into other tasks. We have also received grant funding from MHCLG to support our approach to community and economic recovery, this was also unplanned so results in increased income. This results in an improved position for Transformation.	Re-planning our work and re-forecasting to take into account likely activity to support a second wave of COVID over the winter period and handling the ongoing economic effects.	Some planned projects may be delayed into future financial years due to continuing diversion of resources to deal with COVID related work.

Service Grouping Summary

This list only includes service groups with a variance exceeding +/- £10,000

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Actuals to September 2020 £	Budget £	Forecast £	Variance £	Var %	Commentary on Result	Action Required	MTFS Impact
Head of Operations	CCTV	22,553	(89,496)	(68,029)	21,467	+24.0	+£7.4k HDC share of the tech consultancy costs with City Critec, +£5k for Klaxon marketing company who will run an exercise relating to the trading company. +£4k proposal to recover additional income from town and parish councils offset by income budgeted for HDC ventures which will not start in 20/21.	The costs for the marketing company and the tech consultancy are one off costs.	A budget bid has been submitted to take out the income expected from the trading company. This will be put back once the results of the marketing exercise is known.
Head of Operations	CCTV Shared Service	311,234	233,251	296,981	63,730	+27.3	+£21k relates to trading company income which will not occur in 20/21. +£48k relates to a forecasted reduction in recharge from City due to spending less on City only maintenance/equipment in 20/21. (£22k) forecasted to spend on new BT fibre circuit to replace last MLL circuit and annual maintenance contract with QSG	The amount that HDC can claim from City directly relates to the costs that HDC incurs for the CCTV shared service	Budget bid has been submitted to take out income from the trading company until the marketing exercise is complete.
Head of Operations	Street Cleansing	410,117	804,390	786,369	(18,021)	-2.2	- Additional income from Chorus home contract due to increased charges - Diesel actual figures are not up to date, forecast reflects budget - Vehicle maintenance costs have increased, going forward this will reduce as sweeper usage is cut down.		

Service Grouping Summary

This list only includes service groups with a variance exceeding +/- £10,000

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Actuals to September 2020 £	Budget £	Forecast £	Variance £	Var %	Commentary on Result	Action Required	MTFS Impact
Head of Operations	Waste Management	1,018,699	2,518,306	2,537,702	19,396	+0.8	+£19k for trade waste market entry strategy consultancy costs, +£48k increase in waste disposal costs for trade waste. +£8k overspend across multiple budget lines. (£17k) forecasting to reduce expenditure on waste vehicle related costs. (£43k) reduced employee costs due to vacant posts and capitalisation of costs relating to bin deliveries.	The trade waste market entry strategy costs are one off.	Budget bid submitted to increase trade waste's waste disposal budget.
Head of Operations	Markets	64,479	(34,550)	124,204	158,754	+459.5	Market sites have suffered income loss due to Covid-19 closure.		
Head of Operations	Car Parks - Off Street	273,576	(1,445,010)	(72,132)	1,372,878	+95.0	Car parks is anticipated based on current usage to suffer income losses due to Covid-19 of £1,603m offset by savings on contributions linked income sharing arrangements.		
Head of Operations	Car Park - On Street	(92,909)	(131,724)	(7,343)	124,381	+94.4	Car parks have suffered income loss due to Covid-19.		
Head of Operations	Countryside	103,924	255,023	305,226	50,203	+19.7	multiple sites with smaller contributory variances employees and Income & fees, due to COVID. less footfall, less income Paxton £59,000 grant carried over for bird hide construction but not yet completed	one off COVID issues, future budgets being amended to predict potential loss of footfall Bird hides to be constructed over coming months	

Service Grouping Summary

This list only includes service groups with a variance exceeding +/- £10,000

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Actuals to September 2020 £	Budget £	Forecast £	Variance £	Var %	Commentary on Result	Action Required	MTFS Impact
							Nursery £34,000 no longer managed by HDC		
							Countryside services management £30,000 - only £10,000 one off grant bid for St Ives country park delayed by COVID(Helen Lack leading)		
Head of Leisure & Health	One Leisure Active Lifestyles	112,432	155,819	265,339	109,520	+70.3	<p>Income has been significantly affected by Covid and the re-establishment of the classes and activities in the community and One Leisure Facilities. The loss of income is forecast to be £139K on budget but due to mitigations put in place by the service e.g reduced staffing costs / rationalisation of classes and implementing class price increases the net effect of this is £67K .</p> <p>In addition there is unavoidable growth of the following items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £35K bid for Playing pitch strategy - presumption that this would be CIL funded. Ongoing dialogue to seek to secure this funding £10K The Children and families project budget bid realignment not approved, leaving £10k additional income in these circumstances unlikely to be achieved or absorbed. 		

Service Grouping Summary

This list only includes service groups with a variance exceeding +/- £10,000

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Actuals to September 2020 £	Budget £	Forecast £	Variance £	Var %	Commentary on Result	Action Required	MTFS Impact
Head of Leisure & Health	St Ives Outdoor Centre	175,333	19,159	245,847	226,688	+1,183.2	<p>For Q2 reporting there is a Forecast £4.669M loss of Income due to 4 months of closure, restrictions and reduced capacity in place to remain Covid secure. For Impressions and Fitness classes the capacity has been reduced by 40/50% and Swimming by 50% of last year. Some of the activities remain closed such as Creche and Pure, and we are working hard to ensure that most of the 'Club' bookings can return safely. The forecast net out-turn position across all of One Leisure Facilities is £2.68m deficit (excluding Govt Income compensation scheme monies). There are savings in expenditure through staff being furloughed (variable staff) as well as reductions in building costs and other supplies and services.</p> <p>Currently memberships levels have stabilised and are currently running at 71% of last year's membership levels. There has been a recent upturn in the number of new memberships being taken out, through promotion and a 3-month membership offer. Participation in activities grows on a week by week basis as more people are confident to return to One Leisure. This is being re-enforced by media messaging that we are Covid Safe and staff are ensuring that it is safe to return to the facilities.</p>		The recovery timeline of the facilities will have an impact upon the MTFS and future delivery models are currently being worked upon to provide a new MTFS position.
Head of Leisure & Health	Leisure Centres Corporate	145,642	379,380	305,694	(73,686)	-19.4	See commentary above		
Head of Leisure & Health	One Leisure Management Team inc Alconbury Weald	102,317	149,731	226,613	76,882	+51.3	See Commentary above		

Service Grouping Summary

This list only includes service groups with a variance exceeding +/- £10,000

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Actuals to September 2020 £	Budget £	Forecast £	Variance £	Var %	Commentary on Result	Action Required	MTFS Impact
Head of Leisure & Health	St Neots Leisure Centre	370,412	(330,590)	585,626	916,216	+277.1	See Commentary above		
Head of Leisure & Health	Huntingdon Leisure Centre	294,120	(124,849)	510,731	635,580	+509.1	See Commentary above		
Head of Leisure & Health	St Ives Leisure Centre	472,504	(544,878)	562,729	1,107,607	+203.3	See Commentary above		
Head of Leisure & Health	Ramsey Leisure Centre	135,309	(3,893)	245,575	249,468	+6,408.1	See Commentary above		

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The approved gross Capital Programme 2020/21 is £16.611m. Schemes totalling £3.909m from 2019/20 have been rephased to 2020/21, to give the total gross capital programme for 2020/21 of £20.520m.

The Capital Programme is forecast to have an underspend of £10.802m, this includes underspends, overspends and growth.

The net spend on the Council's Capital Programme is financed via borrowing which has a revenue implication through the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP).

The table below shows the capital programme by scheme with proposed rephasing, expenditure to date and forecast outturn. The financing of the capital programme showing the funding from grants and contributions, capital receipts, use of earmarked and capital reserves and internal borrowing.

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, this has and may continue to affect delivery of some projects in terms of capacity of internal resources and the uncertainty within economical landscape for investments into property.

Capital Project Expenditure Summary

CAPITAL PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Department	Description	Original Budget (£)	Current Budget* (£)	Spend This Year to Date (£)	Forecast Spend (£)	Year-end forecast Variance (£)	Comment
Corporate Resources	Bridge Place Car Park Const	0	377,642	654	654	(376,988)	Dependant on the sale of bridge court car park which has been delayed.
Corporate Resources	HTC Grant	0	0	(50)	(17)	(17)	
Corporate Resources	VAT Exempt Capital	59,000	59,000	0	35,400	(23,600)	Will be impacted by the reduction in expenditure on captial schemes
Corporate Resources	Company Share Investment	0	100,000	0	0	(100,000)	Assuming the company will remain dormant in 20/21
Corporate Resources	Huntingdon Redevelopment	8,500,000	8,500,000	0	0	(8,500,000)	Will be delayed due to the pandemic and refocusing on prospectus for growth agenda.
Transformation	Crn Replacement	0	63,396	0	91,000	27,604	Forecast is for software licenses (£86k) with are annual in July and then rebuild by 3C ICT and API costs (£5k).
Transformation	Robotics	0	50,000	0	0	(50,000)	This project has put on hold in FY 19/20 due to lacking foundational capability awaiting other projects delivering key pre-requistes before looking to deliver a SaaS based robotics platform. The project will progress in 2021/22.
Transformation	Audio Visual Equipment	30,000	30,000	0	30,000	0	
Transformation	Customer Portal and Call Centre						
Transformation	Software	30,000	30,000	0	30,000	0	
Transformation	Voice Bots	34,000	34,000	0	10,000	(24,000)	Project delayed due to COVID, likely to carry into next year. Initial voice bots work well recieved during user testing.
Growth	A14 Upgrade	200,000	400,000	0	400,000	0	
Growth	Housing Company	0	206,000	0	206,000	0	
Chief Operating Officer	3CICT EFH Fire Insurance Settlement	0	0	3,435	0	0	
Chief Operating Officer	Traveller Security Improvements	0	0	0	20,333	20,333	Project originally expected to complete in 19-20. However, problems sourcing materials delayed completion until the current year

Capital Project Expenditure Summary

Department	Description	Original Budget (£)	Current Budget* (£)	Spend This Year to Date (£)	Forecast Spend (£)	Year-end forecast Variance (£)	Comment
Chief Operating Officer	Environmental Health Software	0	40,000	0	40,000	0	
Corporate Resources	Bldg Efficiency - Salix Funding	0	0	4,149	52,529	52,529	This overspend is funded from revenue savings in current and future years energy costs.
Corporate Resources	Retro-Fit Buildings	0	227,501	0	227,501	0	
Corporate Resources	Lighting - Loves Farm Footpath	16,000	16,000	0	16,000	0	
Corporate Operations	Wheeled Bins	238,000	238,000	76,257	262,898	24,898	This overspend relates to commercial bins. The forecast has been increased to cover the purchasing of more bins
Operations	Vehicles & Plant	1,199,000	1,254,746	797,313	1,273,230	18,484	Current fleet replacement is as planned
Operations	Godmanchester Mill Weir Improvements	0	0	12,802	12,802	12,802	Project is still in the feasibility phase and the final decision will be made by the end of October 2020 by the project board.
Corporate Resources	Oak Tree Remedial Work	1,000,000	1,911,811	11,100	777,000	(1,134,811)	Forecast reflects £300k costs to decant the premises to modular units and £450k costs for the start of the building works in March. The scheme is starting later than originally planned and will now run until July.
Corporate Resources	Alms Close	665,000	1,094,229	963,283	1,158,905	64,676	£135k overspend previously agreed with S151 Officer/PFH
Corporate Resources	Health and Safety Works on Commercial Properties	0	15,499	(918)	12,644	(2,855)	One remaining piece of work to undertake at Levellers Lane
Corporate Resources	Energy Efficiency Works at Commercial Properties	25,000	69,000	0	20,000	(49,000)	Forecast revised for this year to cover half a dozen failed units, next big tranche of certification is due for 21/22 which will require more works
Corporate Resources	Oak Tree Centre Car Park Redevelopment	0	0	0	50,000	50,000	Exploratory costs for Savills and Architects to look at other uses for the building
Chief Operating Officer	Disabled Facilities Grants	2,250,000	2,250,000	746,539	1,821,394	(428,606)	The budget spend is currently around 20% lower than 2019/20 at this point. Committed and Pipeline are down nearly 50% compared with last year. We may recover but this depends on referrals from OT's and contractors ability to carry out works.

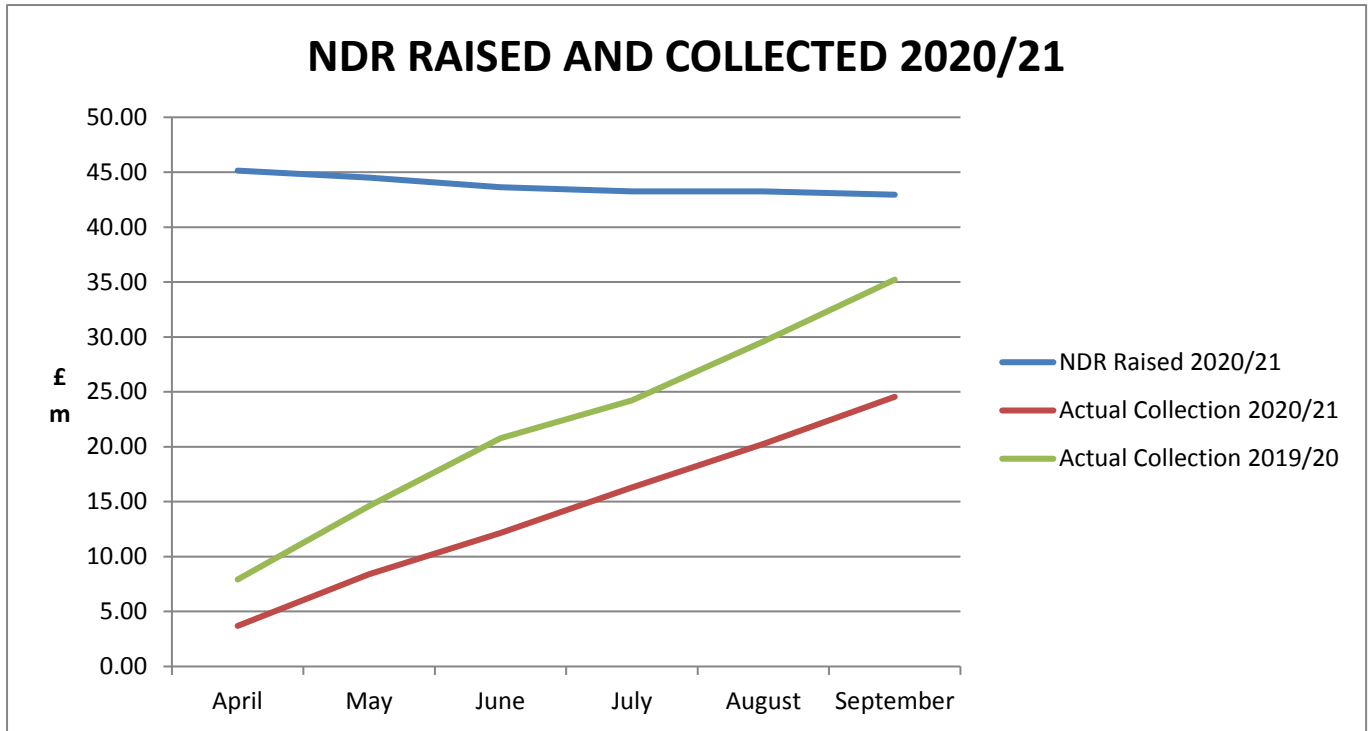
Capital Project Expenditure Summary

Department	Description	Original Budget (£)	Current Budget* (£)	Spend This Year to Date (£)	Forecast Spend (£)	Year-end forecast Variance (£)	Comment
Chief Operating Officer	Printing Equipment	0	16,000	0	4,000	(12,000)	This spend is dependant on the compatibility between Windows 10 and the existing scanners. 3 out of the 4 scanners are working with the new software in place and therefore do not currently require replacement for this reason. 1 scanner/PC is still waiting to be upgraded.
Leisure & Health	Hunt Leis C - Gen Improve (Cs)	0	0	257	0	0	
Leisure & Health	Leisure Cents - Future Improve	306,000	306,000	0	306,000	0	
Leisure & Health	Ramsey L C - Gen Improve (Cs)	0	0	37	0	0	
Leisure & Health	Sn Leis C - Gen Improve (Cs)	0	0	12,563	0	0	
Leisure & Health	St Ivo - General Improve (Cs)	0	0	1,541	0	0	
Leisure & Health	St Ivo L C - Outdoor Gen Mtce (Cs)	0	0	13,055	0	0	
Leisure & Health	One Leisure St Ives New Fitness Offering	0	0	24,415	24,415	24,415	This is the final balance payment for the project following snagging and additional works on changing room and ventilation. It was anticipated that Conditions Survey would fund this work, however some of the unforeseen ventilation works required were relating to the Training Shed facility
Growth	Community Infrastructure	0	0	114,865	768,459	768,459	The expenditure forecast is financed from CIL receipts and so has no impact on the general funds MRP requirement. Final pay and display machines are all installed and operational. Working on delivery of electric vehicle charging points
Operations	Parking Strategy	37,000	127,094	4,680	127,094	0	
Operations	Civil Parking Enforcement	217,000	217,000	0	0	(217,000)	This project does not align with the Council's parking strategy, decision required before project begins
Operations	Secure Cycle Storage	58,000	58,400	0	58,400	0	
3CICT	Generator - 3CICT Backup	27,000	27,000	0	27,000	0	
3CICT	Data Centre Storage	23,000	23,000	0	23,000	0	
3CICT	Wi-Fi Access Points	12,000	12,000	0	12,000	0	
Leisure & Health	OL St Ives Changing Rooms	0	250,000	2,028	250,000	0	

Capital Project Expenditure Summary

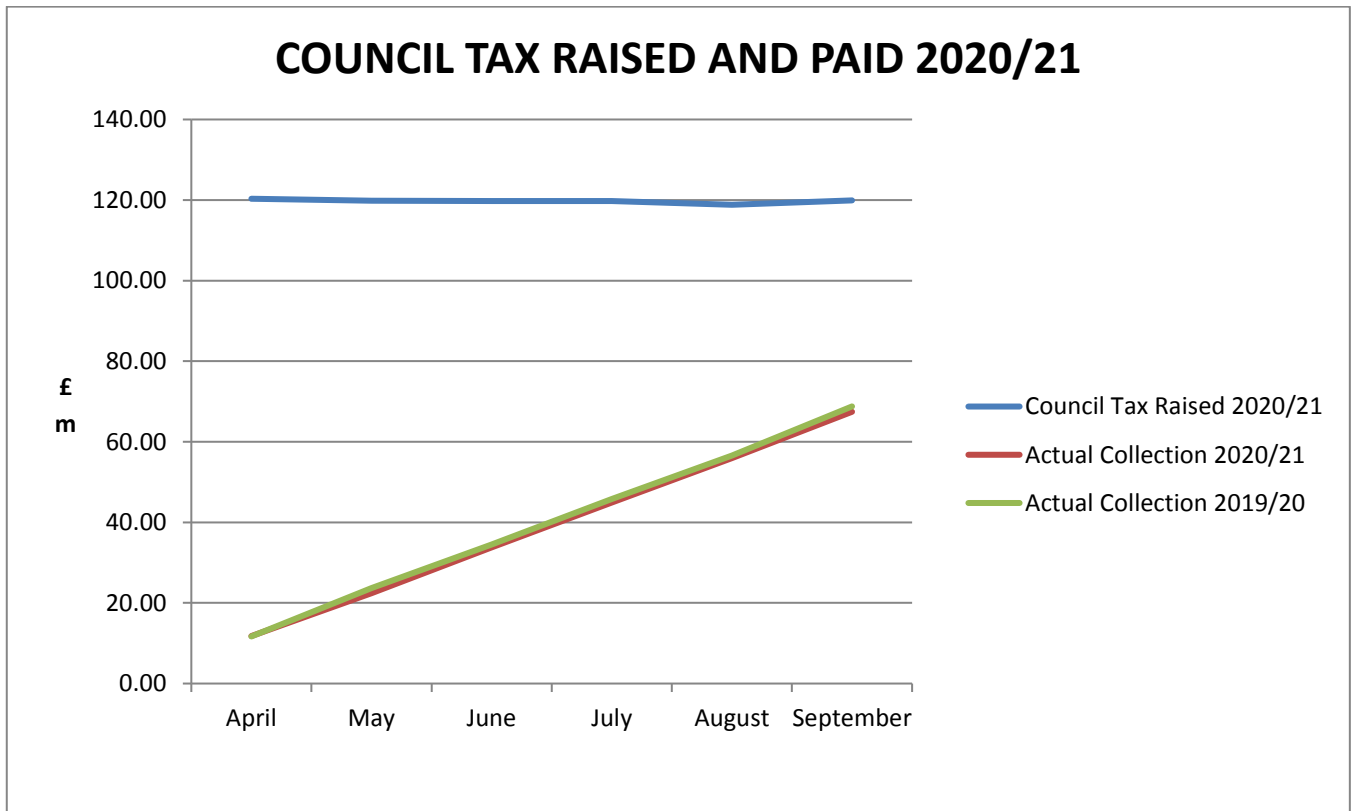
Department	Description	Original Budget (£)	Current Budget* (£)	Spend This Year to Date (£)	Forecast Spend (£)	Year-end forecast Variance (£)	Comment
Leisure & Health	One Leisure Ramsey 3G	0	593,512	23,173	875,991	282,479	120k of the additional cost is being funded from CIL and £138k of additional costs are being funded from external grants
Operations	Cctv PFH Resilience	0	20,000	10,195	16,370	(3,630)	
Operations	Cctv - Camera Replacements	0	0	1,215	85,664	85,664	Part of a 2 year project agreed to overspend but budget not increased to reflect this
Operations	Cctv - Wireless	0	0	0	7,409	7,409	
Operations	Lone Worker Software	0	20,000	0	20,000	0	
Operations	Play Equipment	53,000	53,000	0	53,000	0	
Operations	Park Fencing	12,000	12,000	(3,396)	12,000	0	
Leisure & Health	OL St Neots Synthetic Pitch	0	0	(8,879)	0	0	
Leisure & Health	OL St Neots Pool Building	0	0	180	180	180	
Operations	Operations Back Office	0	198,392	637	198,392	0	
Operations	Districtwide Signage	70,000	70,000	0	0	(70,000)	Due to Covid this project has not been progressed at all
Operations	Hinchingbrooke Country Park	1,550,000	1,550,000	41	300,000	(1,250,000)	Delays in securing the lease extension has meant the this project has been delayed
		16,611,000	20,520,222	2,811,172	9,717,649	(10,802,573)	

Financial Dashboard



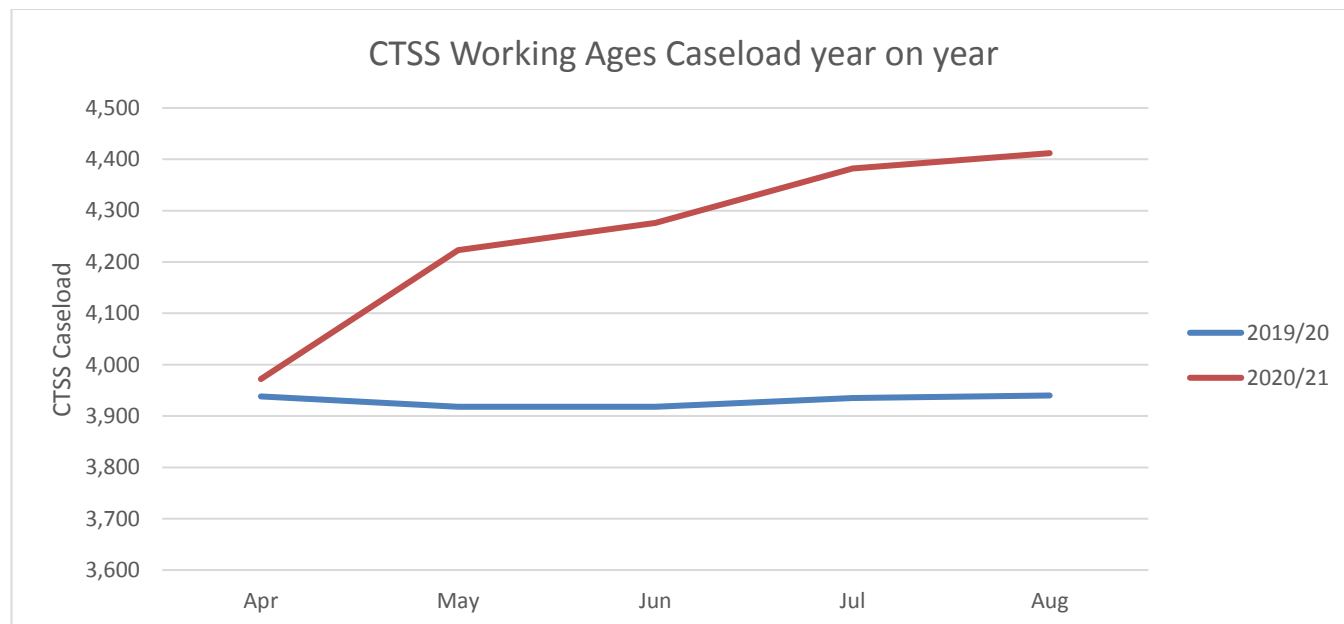
The NDR graph above shows the total amount of NDR bills raised in 2020/21 and the actual receipts received up to the end of June. For 2020/21 Central Government introduce significant reliefs for the retail and hospitality sector, which has reduced the annual billing by £20.851m. District Council's are being compensated for these reliefs in line with the normal grant income received via the Business Rate Retention Scheme. The Council tax graph below provides the same analysis.

Collection of Council Tax



Council tax collection rates during the initial phases of lockdown have not reduced significantly compared to 2019/20. However, during Q2 and Q3 the potential impact of the furlough scheme ending in October may have a significant impact on residence's ability to pay, if as anticipated, businesses are not able to continue to employ people at the pre-covid 19 levels.

Council Tax Support Scheme



The graph above shows the increase in Council Tax Support Scheme caseload, this is an increase of 11%.

Outstanding Miscellaneous Debt Overdue for Payment

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic the decision was taken to suspend debt recovery in support of the unusual circumstances of the whole economy in lock down, this has had a significant impact on the level of miscellaneous debt outstanding as at 30th June. The total outstanding debt as at 30th September is £4.575m (June 2020, £5.682m), of which 80%, became due for payment since 1st April and 45% of the total arrears is owed by other public sector bodies.

Over 90% of the debt is made up as follows:

Department	Amount Owed £m
3ICT Share Service	2.076
CIL	0.503
Commercial Estates	0.810
Housing	0.392
Planning	0.152
Operations	0.134

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The process of considering CIS opportunities is as follows:

Step 1

Property investment opportunities are both introduced by agents and actively sourced by the Commercial Estates Team. An initial review is undertaken against the outline criteria of the CIS such as yield, length of lease, tenant strength etc. and if they are judged to be reasonable investments, further preliminary initial due diligence is undertaken to determine the quality of the leases and an initial financial appraisal is undertaken.

Step 2

If Step 1 is passed, more detailed due diligence is undertaken (including detailed tenant strength review, ownership title, property energy efficiency, market analysis of rents and yield etc), this may lead to a site visit and more robust financial appraisal/modelling and further market scrutiny.

Step 3

If Step 2 is passed, then approval is sought from the members of the Treasury & Capital Management Group, the Managing Director, Corporate Director (Services) and the Head of Resources to submit a formal initial bid, subject to contract and relevant building and condition surveys.

Step 4

If the bid submitted at Step 3 is successful, then this progresses to consideration by Overview and Scrutiny and approval for Cabinet.

Step 5

Once approval is given, formal legal and building condition due diligence commences by instruction of lawyers and building/specialist surveys are undertaken. This may take several weeks during which all concerns raised on legal and lease title and building condition are satisfied. If any significant concerns are unsatisfied, these can either be negotiated on price or withdraw from the purchase.

Reviews Undertaken July – September 2020 (Q2)

Over the above period, 44 properties in total were considered, all to stage 1 only. By property type the investments considered in Q2 are as follows:

Offices	4	Distribution	2	Development sites	13
retail	10	Other	8		
Industrial/warehouse	3	Car parks	4		

Priority work is still targeted to manage existing tenants and sustain income as much as possible due to the impact on businesses due to Covid 19. Government consultation on use of PWLB funds for property investment continues.

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Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title:	Treasury Management 6 Month Performance Review
Meeting/Date:	Cabinet – 19th November 2020
Executive Portfolio:	Strategic Resources: Councillor J A Gray (Executive Councillor for Strategic Resources)
Report by:	Chief Finance Officer
Ward(s) affected:	All Wards

Executive Summary:

Best practice and prescribed treasury management guidance requires Members to be kept up to date in respect of treasury management activity for the first half of the year, including investment and borrowing activity and treasury performance.

The Council's 2020/21 Treasury Management Strategy was approved by the Council on the 26th February 2020 and this report sets out the Treasury Performance for period between 1st April 2020 and 30th September 2020.

The main purpose of Treasury Management is to.

- Ensure the Council has sufficient cash to meet its day to day obligations.
- Borrow when necessary to fund capital expenditure, including borrowing in anticipation of need when rates are low.
- Invest surplus funds in a manner that balances low risk of default by the borrower with a fair rate of interest.

The key market Treasury Management issues through the first half of 2020/21 influencing the Council's decision-making were.

- GDP has contracted by a massive 19.8% in Q2, inflation falling to 0.2% year on year in August, with unemployment rates increasing from 3.9% to 4.1% in Q2. It is forecast that unemployment could peak at around 8% to 9%, as furlough comes to an end in the coming months.
- The Bank of England Bank Rate at 0.01%.
- Market rates as a whole are very low, due to the Bank Rate remaining

historically low, reducing the Council's ability to earn a return on investments without increasing the risk of the investments. The Council's average investing rate was 0.25% (average interest rates obtained from Bank Deposits and Money Market Funds).

The Council's responses to the key issues were.

- When the Council has surplus funds, these will primarily be invested on a short term basis, in bank deposit accounts and money market funds.
- Where possible to take a higher return without sacrificing liquidity.
- When borrowing the Council has used the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), which offers low fixed rate borrowing, based on gilt yields over a long period.
- Where economic conditions are forecast to deteriorate it is vital to monitor financial institutions credit rating, and credit default swap rates (the cost to insure lending). This information is provided by the Council's treasury adviser - Arlingclose.

The Council's Commercial Investment Strategy (CIS)

The Commercial Investment Strategy commenced in 2015/16. Indicators relating to the investments are shown in **Appendix A section 3.4**.

These investments generated £1.3m of investment income for the Council in 2020/21 after taking account of direct costs. The breakdown of the property's portfolio is shown in **Table 6** and the proportion of the investment income in relation to gross service expenditure, in **Table 7 of Appendix A**.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet is recommended to

- Note the treasury management performance for the first 6 months of 2020/21 and to recommend the report to Council for consideration.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Council's treasury management activity for the first 6 months of the year, including investment and borrowing activity and treasury performance.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 It is regarded as best practice and prescribed treasury management practice, that Members are kept up to date with treasury management activity.
- 2.2 The Council approved the 2020/21 Treasury Management Strategy at its meeting on 26th February 2020.
- 2.3 All treasury management activity undertaken during the first half of 2020/21 complied with the CIPFA Code of Practice and relevant legislative provisions.
- 2.4 The investment strategy is to invest any surplus funds in a manner that balances low risk of default by the borrower with a fair rate of interest. The Council's borrowing strategy permits borrowing for cash flow purposes and funding current and future capital expenditure over whatever periods are in the Council's best interests.

3. ANALYSIS

Economic Review

- 3.1 An economic review of the year has been provided by our Treasury Management advisors, Arlingclose and is attached with an analysis of the local context implications in **Appendix A section 2.0**.

Performance of Council Funds

- 3.2 The treasury management transactions undertaken during the first 6 months of 2020/21 financial year and the details of the investments and loans held as at 30th September 2020 are shown in detail in **Appendix A section 3.0 to 3.2**.

Risk Management

- 3.3 The Council's primary objectives for the management of its investment are to give priority to the security and liquidity (how quickly cash can be accessed) of its funds before seeking the best rate of return. For more details see **Appendix A section 3.3**.

Non-Treasury Investments

- 3.4 The definition of investments in CIPFA's revised Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Council as well as other non-financial assets which the Council holds primarily for financial return. The full details of these investments can be found on **Section 3.4 of Appendix A.**

Compliance

- 3.5 Compliance with specific investment and debt limits are indicated in **table 8 and 9 of Appendix A.**

Treasury Management Indicators

- 3.6 The Council measures and manages its exposure to treasury management risks using indicators which are details in the **Appendix A section 5.0.**

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 4.1 The Panel received the Treasury Management Six Month Performance Review at its meeting on 4th November 2020. Members endorsed the report for submission to the Cabinet and report some observations on the loans to other organisations. While the loans appear to be beneficial to the Council, they were agreed a number of years ago when the interest rate was higher. Furthermore, the Council itself borrowed the money from another lender at a similar rate. There is a small margin to cover administration costs.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix A

- Economic review (source: Arlingclose)
- Borrowing and Investment as at 30th September 2020
- Risk Management
- Non-treasury Investments
- Treasury Management Indicators
- Outlook for the remainder of 2020/21

Appendix B


- Capital Prudential Indicators

Appendix C

- Glossary

CONTACT OFFICER

Claire Edwards, Chief Finance Officer

 01480 388822

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Treasury Management 6 Month Performance Review

1.0 Introduction

The Council adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve treasury management semi-annual and annual reports.

The Council's treasury management strategy for 2020/21 was approved at a meeting on 26th February 2020. The Council has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remain central to the Council's treasury management strategy.

The 2017 Prudential Code includes a requirement for local authorities to provide a Capital Strategy, a summary document approved by full Council covering capital expenditure and financing, treasury management and non-treasury investments. The Council's Capital Strategy, complying with CIPFA's requirement, was approved by full Council on 26th February 2020.

2.0 External Context

2.1 Economic background

The spread of the coronavirus pandemic dominated during the period as countries around the world tried to manage the delicate balancing act of containing transmission of the virus while easing lockdown measures and getting their populations and economies working again. After a relatively quiet few months of Brexit news it was back in the headlines towards the end of the period as agreement between the UK and EU on a trade deal was looking difficult and the government came under fire, both at home and abroad, as it tried to pass the Internal Market Bill which could override the agreed Brexit deal, potentially breaking international law.

Government initiatives continued to support the economy, with the furlough (Coronavirus Job Retention) scheme keeping almost 10 million workers in jobs, grants and loans to businesses and 100 million discounted meals being claimed during the 'Eat Out to Help Out' (EOHO) offer.

GDP growth contracted by a massive 19.8% (revised from first estimate -20.4%) in Q2 2020 (Apr-Jun) according to the Office for National Statistics, pushing the annual growth rate down to -21.5% (first estimate -21.7%). Construction output fell by 35% over the quarter, services output by almost 20% and production by 16%. Recent

monthly estimates of GDP have shown growth recovering, with the latest rise of almost 7% in July, but even with the two previous monthly gains this still only makes up half of the lost output.

The headline rate of UK Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) fell to 0.2% year/year in August, further below the Bank of England's 2% target, with the largest downward contribution coming from restaurants and hotels influenced by the EHO scheme. The Office for National Statistics' preferred measure of CPIH which includes owner-occupied housing was 0.5% y/y.

In the three months to July, labour market data showed the unemployment rate increased from 3.9% to 4.1% while wages fell 1% for total pay in nominal terms (0.2% regular pay) and was down 1.8% in real terms (-0.7% regular pay). Despite only a modest rise in unemployment over the period, the rate is expected to pick up sharply in the coming months as the furlough scheme ends in October. On the back of this, the BoE has forecast unemployment could hit a peak of between 8% and 9%.

The US economy contracted at an annualised rate of 31.7% in Q2 2020 (Apr-Jun). The Federal Reserve maintained the Fed Funds rate at between 0% and 0.25% but announced a change to its inflation targeting regime. The move is to a more flexible form of average targeting which will allow the central bank to maintain interest rates at low levels for an extended period to support the economy even when inflation is 'moderately' above the 2% average target, particularly given it has been below target for most of the last decade.

The European Central Bank maintained its base rate at 0% and deposit rate at -0.5%.

Credit review: Credit default swap spreads eased over most of the period but then started to tick up again through September. In the UK, the spreads between ringfenced and non-ringfenced entities remains, except for retail bank Santander UK whose CDS spread remained elevated and the highest of those we monitor at 85bps while Standard Chartered was the lowest at 41bps. The ringfenced banks are currently trading between 45 and 50bps.

After a busy second quarter of the calendar year, the subsequent period has been relatively quiet for credit changes for the names on our counterparty list. Fitch assigned a AA- deposit rating to Netherlands lender Rabobank with a negative outlook and prior to that, while not related to our counterparty list but quite significant, revised the outlook on the US economy to Negative from Stable while also affirming its AAA rating.

There continues to remain much uncertainty around the extent of the losses banks and building societies will suffer due to the impact from the coronavirus pandemic and for the UK institutions on our list there is the added complication of the end of the Brexit transition period on 31st December and what a trade deal may or may not look like. The institutions on Arlingclose's counterparty list and recommended duration remain under constant review, but at the end of the period no changes had

been made to the names on the list or the recommended maximum duration of 35 days.

Interest Rates Forecast

The Bank of England (BoE) maintained Bank Rate at 0.1% and its Quantitative Easing programme at £745 billion. The potential use of negative interest rates was not ruled in or out by BoE policymakers, but then a comment in the September Monetary Policy Committee meeting minutes that the central bank was having a harder look at its potential impact than was previously suggested took financial markets by surprise.

The historical low level of interest rates has made it difficult to achieve a higher rates returns on investment.

2.2 Financial markets

Equity markets continued their recovery, with the Dow Jones climbing to not far off its pre-crisis peak, albeit that performance being driven by a handful of technology stocks including Apple and Microsoft, with the former up 75% in 2020. The FTSE 100 and 250 have made up around half of their losses at the height of the pandemic in March. Central bank and government stimulus packages continue to support asset prices, but volatility remains.

Ultra-low interest rates and the flight to quality continued, keeping gilts yields low but volatile over the period with the yield on some short-dated UK government bonds remaining negative. The 5-year UK benchmark gilt yield started and ended the June–September period at -0.06% (with much volatility in between). The 10-year gilt yield also bounced around, starting at 0.21% and ending at 0.23% over the same period, while the 20-year rose from 0.56% to 0.74%. 1-month, 3-month and 12-month bid rates averaged 0.02%, 0.06% and 0.23% respectively over the period.

At the end of September, the yield on 2-year US treasuries was around 0.13% while that on 10-year treasuries was 0.69%. German bund yields remain negative across most maturities.

3.0 Local Context

On 31st March 2020, the Council had net borrowing of £21.37m arising from its revenue income and capital income and expenditure. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary

	31.3.20 Actual £m
General Fund CFR	71.3
Less: *Other debt liabilities	0.5
Total CFR	71.8
External borrowing	43.9
Internal borrowing	27.8
Less: Usable reserves	55.5
Less: Working capital	15.3
Net (Investing) or New Borrowing	(43.0)

The Council pursued its strategy of keeping borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing, to reduce risk and keep interest costs low.

The treasury management position as at 30th September 2020 and the change during the year is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Treasury Management Summary

	31.3.20 Balance £m	Movement £m	30.9.20 Balance £m	30.9.20 Rate %
Long-term borrowing	39.96	-0.27	39.69	2.76
Short-term borrowing	4.00	(4.00)	0.00	0.00
Total borrowing	43.96		39.69	
Long-term investments	10.46	(0.83)	9.63	(0.08)
Short-term investments	0.00	4.00	4.00	
Cash and cash equivalents	12.13	6.43	18.56	53.0%
Total investments	22.59		32.18	
Net borrowing	21.37		7.51	

The movement in short-term borrowing was as a result of maintaining cash balances over £10m to comply with the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID), that allows the council access to investment instruments as a professional client rather than a retail client, such Money Market Funds (MMF).

The movement in the cash and cash equivalent has been as result of council tax and NNDR receipts and Government cash funding for Covid 19 (reduction of payments to Central Government and increased S31 Grant income); these funds were invested in bank deposits and Money Market Funds for easy access and liquidity reasons.

3.1 Borrowing Strategy during the period

At 30th September 2020, the Council held £39.69m of loans, a decrease of £4.27m from 31st March 2020. Outstanding loans on 30th September are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Borrowing Position

	31.3.20 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	30.9.20 Balance £m	30.9.20 Weighted Average Rate %	30.9.20 Weighted Average Maturity (years)
Public Works Loan Board	39.96	-0.27	39.69	2.76%	22.9
Local authorities (short-term)	4.00	-4.00	0.00	0.73%	0.0
Total borrowing	43.96	-4.27	39.69		22.9

The Council's chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Council's long-term plans change being a secondary objective.

With short-term interest rates remaining much lower than long-term rates, the Council considered it to be more cost effective in the near term to use internal resources or short-term loans instead. The Council had not used short-term loans facility so far in this financial year.

Although it was anticipated that the Council's CFR would increase due to the capital programme, delays in the capital programme due to the pandemic no new loans have been taken out.

Long-dated Loans borrowed	PWLB Reference	Amount £	Rate %	Period (Years)
PWLB 1	495152	5,000,000	3.91	38.0
PWLB 2	495153	5,000,000	3.90	37.0
PWLB 3	502463	485,575	2.24	2.5
PWLB 4	504487	682,106	3.28	26.0
PWLB 5	504598	906,922	3.10	26.0
PWLB 6	504810	458,870	2.91	26.0
PWLB 7	504922	367,164	3.10	26.5
PWLB 8	504993	297,665	2.92	26.5
PWLB 9	505255	589,748	2.31	26.5
PWLB 10	505372	452,086	2.18	26.5
PWLB 11	505649	808,570	2.67	27.0
PWLB 12	506436	5,000,000	2.78	17.0
PWLB 13	508696	7,285,550	2.49	18.0
PWLB 14	508931	400,000	1.48	1.0
PWLB 15	509389	11,963,000	2.18	18.5
Total borrowing		39,697,256	2.76	22.9

The Council's borrowing decisions are not predicated on any one outcome for interest rates and a balanced portfolio of short- and long-term borrowing was maintained.

3.2 Treasury Investment Activity

The Council holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. The investment position is shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: Treasury Investment Position

The weighted average rate for the investment portfolio up to 30.09.2020 was 1.81%.

	31.3.20 Balance £	Net Movement £m	30.9.20 Balance £m	30.9.20 Income Return %	30.9.20 Weighted Average Maturity days
Banks & building societies (unsecured)	4,980,000	2,375,000	7,355,000	0.03%	1
Government (incl. local authorities)	0	4,000,000	4,000,000	0.04%	12.5
Money Market Funds	7,150,000	4,050,000	11,200,000	0.18%	1
Loans to other organisation	6,262,000	-456,004	5,805,996	3.23%	>365
Other Pooled Funds - <i>Property funds</i>	3,823,829	0	3,823,829	4.37%	>365
Total investments	22,215,829	9,968,996	32,184,825		

3.3 Risk Management

Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Council’s objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.

Given the increasing risk and low returns from short-term unsecured bank investments, the Council has maintained a diversified portfolio of asset classes as shown in table 4 above.

The progression of risk and return metrics are shown in the extracts from Arlingclose’s quarterly investment benchmarking in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Investment Benchmarking – Treasury investments managed in-house

	Credit Score	Credit Rating	Bail-in Exposure	Weighted Average Maturity (days)	Rate of Return
			%		%
31.03.2020	4.49	AA-	100	1	1.35
30.09.2020	4.54	A+	82	3	0.63
Similar LAs	4.15	AA-	65	51	1.83
All LAs	4.16	AA-	64	18	0.9

*Weighted average maturity

£3.84m of the Council’s investments are held in externally managed strategic pooled property funds – CCLA Property Fund where short-term security and liquidity are lesser considerations, and the objectives instead are regular revenue income and long-term price stability. This fund generated an average total return of £76,422 (4.37%), for period of 1st April to 30th September 2020 which is used to support services in year.

Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Council’s investment objectives are regularly reviewed. Strategic fund investments are made in the knowledge that capital values will move both up and down on months, quarters and even years; but with the confidence that over a three- to five-year period total returns will exceed cash interest rates. In light of their performance over the medium-term and the Council’s latest cash flow forecasts, investment in these funds has been maintained.

3.4 Non-Treasury Investments

The definition of investments in CIPFA's revised Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Council as well as other non-financial assets which the Authority holds primarily for financial return. This is replicated in MHCLG's Investment Guidance, in which the definition of investments is further broadened to also include all such assets held partially for financial return.

The Authority also held £55.04m of such investments in:

- directly owned property £54.9m
- shareholding in subsidiaries £0.1m

Table 6: Property held for investment purposes in £'000

Property	Actual	31.3.2020 actual	
	Purchase cost	Gains or (losses)	Value in accounts
Existing Portfolio	19,644	1,581	21,225
2 Stonehill	1,400	400	1,800
80 Wilbury Way	2,200	(330)	1,870
Shawlands Retail Park	6,500	(2,000)	4,500
1400 & 1500 Parkway	5,425	(1,025)	4,400
Units 21a, 21b,23a,b,c Little End Road, St Neots	3,200	(300)	2,900
Rowley Centre, St Neots	7,600	(1,850)	5,750
Tri-link, Wakefield	13,750	(1,250)	12,500
TOTAL	59,719	(4,774)	54,945

These investments generated £1.3m of investment income for the Authority from April to September 2020 after taking account of direct costs.

The Authority is dependent on profit generating investment activity to achieve a balanced revenue budget. The table below shows the extent to which the expenditure planned to meet the service delivery objectives and/or place making role of the Authority is dependent on achieving the expected net profit from investments over the lifecycle of the Medium Term Financial Plan. Current forecast is showing a

shortfall of expected net investment income of £975k due to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. Therefore, the Authority's contingency plans for continuing to provide these services, are to use reserves where necessary to offset any negative variances in the final outturn. Unallocated general fund balances and budget surplus reserve can be used in case of a downturn in investment income to meet any detrimental effect.

Table 7: Proportionality of Investments in £'000

	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Budget	2021/22 Budget	2022/23 Budget
Gross service expenditure	75,729	77,760	72,303	69,710	58,836
Investment income	2,753	3,283	5,654	5,290	5,345
Proportion	3.6%	4.22%	7.82%	7.59%	9.1%

4.0 Compliance

The Chief Finance Officer (s151 officer) reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the first half year complied fully with the CIPFA Code of Practice and the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy. Compliance with specific investment limits is demonstrated in table 9 below.

Compliance with the authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt is demonstrated in table 8 below.

Table 8: Debt Limits

	30.9.30 Actual £m	2019/20 Operational Boundary £m	2019/20 Authorised Limit £m	Complied?
General	10.00	70.00	80.00	Yes
Loans	5.44	15.00	20.00	Yes
CIS	24.25	30.00	30.00	Yes
Total debt	39.69	115.00	130.00	

Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the operational boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure. Total debt was below the operational boundary all through the quarter.

Table 9: Investment Limits

	30.9.20 Actual £m	2020/21 Limit £m	Complied?
Deposit Accounts			
NatWest	3.35	unlimited	Yes
Debt Management Office (DMO)	2.00	unlimited	Yes
Barclays	4.00	4.00	Yes
Thurrock Council	2.00		
Money Market Funds			
Aberdeen Liquidity Fund	4.00	5.00	Yes
BlackRock Institutional sterling liquidity Fund	0.00	5.00	Yes
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund	4.00	5.00	Yes
Federated Short Term Prime Fund	2.50	5.00	Yes
Insight Liquidity Funds	0.00	5.00	Yes
Invesco	0.00	5.00	Yes
Legal & General Sterling Liquidity Fund	0.70	5.00	Yes

5.0 Treasury Management Indicators

The Council measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

Security

The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

	30.9.20 Actual	2020/21 Target	Complied?
Portfolio average credit rating	A+	A-	Yes

Liquidity

The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three-month period, without additional borrowing.

	30.9.20 Actual £m	2020/21 Target £m	Complied?
Total cash available within 3 months	22.56	2	Yes

Interest Rate Exposures

This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise or fall in interests was:

Interest rate risk indicator	30.9.20 Actual	2020/21 Limit	Complied?
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	0*	£128,000	Yes
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	0*	£128,000	Yes

*no impact as borrowing is fixed rate

The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investment will be replaced at current rates.

Maturity Structure of Borrowing

This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of all borrowing were:

	30.9.20 Actual	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Complied?
Under 12 months	0%	80%	0%	Yes
12 months and within 24 months	2.74%	80%	0%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	0.00%	80%	0%	Yes
5 years and within 10 years	0%	100%	0%	Yes
10 years and above	97.26%	100%	0%	Yes

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Actual principal invested beyond year end	£7.79m	£7.08m	£6.80m
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£10.00m	£10.00m	£10.00m
Complied?	Yes	Yes	Yes

6.0 Outlook for 2020/21

The medium-term global economic outlook is weak. While the strict initial lockdown restrictions have eased, coronavirus has not been suppressed and second waves have prompted more restrictive measures on a regional and national basis. This ebb and flow of restrictions on normal activity will continue for the foreseeable future, at least until an effective vaccine is produced and importantly, distributed.

The global central bank and government responses have been significant and are in many cases on-going, maintaining more stable financial, economic and social conditions than otherwise. This has supported a sizeable economic recovery in Q3.

However, the scale of the economic shock to demand, on-going social distancing measures, regional lock downs and reduced fiscal support will mean that the subsequent pace of recovery is limited. Early signs of this are already evident in UK monthly GDP and PMI data, even before the latest restrictions.

This situation will result in central banks maintaining low interest rates for the medium term. In the UK, Brexit is a further complication. Bank Rate is therefore likely to remain at low levels for a very long time, with a distinct possibility of being cut to zero. Money markets have priced in a chance of negative Bank Rate.

Longer-term yields will also remain depressed, anchored by low central bank policy rates, expectations for potentially even lower rates and insipid inflation expectations. There is a chance yields may follow a slightly different path in the medium term, depending on investor perceptions of growth and inflation, or if the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Arlingclose expects Bank Rate to remain at the current 0.10% level and additional monetary loosening in the future most likely through further financial asset purchases (QE). While Arlingclose's central case for Bank Rate is no change from the current level of 0.1%, further cuts to Bank Rate to zero or even into negative territory cannot

be completely ruled out.

Gilt yields are expected to remain very low in the medium term. Shorter-term gilt yields are currently negative and will remain around zero or below until either the Bank of England expressly rules out negative Bank Rate or growth/inflation prospects improve.

Downside risks remain in the near term, as the government dials down its fiscal support measures, reacts to the risk of a further escalation in infection rates and the Brexit transition period comes to an end.

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Capital Prudential Indicators

Capital expenditure is where the Council spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles that will be used for more than one year. This includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets. The Council has some limited discretion on what counts as capital expenditure, for example assets costing below £10,000 are not capitalised and are charged to revenue in year.

The summary of the capital expenditure is shown in the Table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of Capital Expenditure in £m

	2020/21 Budget	2020/21 Outturn
General Fund Services	11.92	9.70
Capital investments	8.60	0.00
Total	20.52	9.70

All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council's own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing and leasing).

Table 2: The summary of Capital financing in £m

	2020/21 Budget	2020/21 Outturn
External sources	3.5	1.8
Own resources	1.0	0.3
Debt	16.02	7.6
Total	20.52	9.70

Debt is only temporary source of finance since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as minimum revenue provision (MRP).

Table 3: The summary of capital Financing Requirement in £m

	2020/21 Budget	2020/21 Outturn
General Fund Services	50.1	52.6
Capital investments	34.0	26.8
Total CFR	84.1	79.4

When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds known as capital receipts can be spent on new asset s or to repay debt. The Council is currently also permitted to spend capital receipts on service transformation project until 2021/22. Repayments of capital grants, loan and investments also generate capital receipts.

The summary of the capital receipt is show in Table 4 below in £m.

	2020/21 Budget	2020/21 Outturn
Asset sales	0.50	0.26
Loans repaid	0.32	0.31
Total	0.82	0.57

GLOSSARY**Bail in Risk**

Bail in risk arises from the failure of a bank. Bond-holders or investors in the bank would be expected to suffer losses on their investments, as opposed to the bank being bailed out by government.

Bank Equity Buffer

The mandatory capital that financial institutions are required to hold, in order to provide a cushion against financial downturns, to ensure the institution can continue to meet its liquidity requirements.

Bank Stress Tests

Tests carried out by the European Central Bank on 51 banks across the EU. The tests put banks under a number of scenarios and analyse how the bank's capital holds up under each of the scenarios. The scenarios include, a sharp rise in bond yields, a low growth environment, rising debt, and adverse action in the unregulated financial sector.

Bonds

A bond is a form of loan, the holder of the bond is entitled to a fixed rate of interest (coupon) at fixed intervals. The bond has a fixed life and can be traded.

Call Account

A bank account that offers a rate of return and the funds are available to withdraw on a daily basis.

Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

The CFR is a measure of the capital expenditure incurred historically, but has yet to be financed; by for example capital receipts or grants funding.

Collar (Money Market Fund)

The fund "collar" forms part of the valuation mechanism for the fund. LVNAV funds allow investors to purchase and redeem shares at a constant NAV calculated to 2 decimal places, i.e. £1.00. This is achieved by the fund using amortised cost for valuation purposes, subject to the variation against the marked-to-market NAV being no greater than 20 basis points (0.2%). (This compares to current Prime CNAV funds which round to 50 basis points, or 0.5%, of the NAV.)

Counterparty

Another organisation with which the Council has entered into a financial transaction with, for example, invested with or borrowed from.

Credit Default Swaps (CDS)

A financial agreement that the seller of the CDS will compensate the buyer in the event of a loan default. The seller insures the buyer against a loan defaulting.

Credit Ratings

A credit rating is the evaluation of a credit risk of a debtor, and predicting their ability to pay back the debt. The rating represents an evaluation of a credit rating agency of the qualitative and quantitative information, this result in a score, denoted usually by the letters A to D and including +/-.

Gilts

Bonds issued by the Government.

LIBOR

London Interbank Offered Rate is the rate at which banks are willing to lend to each other.

LIBID

London Interbank Bid Rate is the rate at which a bank is willing to borrow from other banks.

Liquidity

The degree to which an asset can be bought or sold quickly.

LVNAV Money Market Fund

Low volatility net asset value. The fund will have at least 10% of its assets maturing on a daily basis and at least 30% of assets maturing on a weekly basis.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

An amount set aside to repay debt.

Money Market Funds

An open ended mutual fund that invests in short-term debt securities. A deposit will earn a rate of interest, whilst maintaining the net asset value of the investment. Deposits are generally available for withdrawal on the day.

Public Works Loans Board (PWLB)

The PWLB is an agency of the Treasury, it lends to public bodies at fixed rates for periods up to 50 years. Interest rates are determined by gilt yields.

Transactional Banking

Use of a bank for day to day banking requirement, e.g. provision of current accounts, deposit accounts and on-line banking.

Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy Review
Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 19th November 2020
Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning
Report by: Arboricultural Officer, Tamsin Miles
Wards affected: All

Executive Summary:

This report sets out the steps taken in the review of the Council's existing 2015 Tree Strategy and documents the development of the Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020-2030 and its Action Plan.

The Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020 – 2030 is a collaborative document (written by Officers alongside a Councillor Working Group) which builds on the Council's existing 5-year tree strategy.

The 2020 Tree Strategy is an evidence-based document which sets out a clear direction for arboricultural management across all Council services which interact with trees. At the heart of the strategy is a robust vision which focuses on sustainability and creating a legacy of tree establishment and management.

The revised strategy contains updated policies relating to all aspects of Local Authority tree management and incorporates national issues such as biosecurity, canopy cover management and subsidence.

Alongside the revised strategy, a 10-year Action Plan has been developed which sets out key projects and tasks to be completed over the life of the strategy. These set out how we can meet the key aims of document and works towards its vision. The report concludes with resource implications, implementation proposals and wider considerations of the document's endorsement.

RECOMMENDED

To endorse the Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020 – 2030 and the proposed 10-year Action Plan

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek endorsement of the Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020 – 2030, its vision (*'managing our districts trees in a sustainable way to ensure that their benefits are experienced by current and future generations'*) and the 7 key aims which underpin the strategy.
- 1.2 The report also seeks the endorsement of the proposed Action Plan.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The current Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy (2015 Strategy) was developed and adopted by the Council in 2015 and covered a 5-year period to 2020.
- 2.2 The 2015 Strategy focussed on gaining a better understanding of our own tree stock (trees owned managed by the Council) and developing standards for others to work to in relation to protected trees and development. The strategy included a broad action plan covering tasks to be completed over the strategy period and set policies in relation to the management of Council owned trees and woodlands.
- 2.3 While the 2015 Strategy provided a sound grounding for the arboricultural functions of the Council, it not only reflected a different organisation to that which we have today, but also an arboricultural industry which has changed significantly in the 5 years since its adoption. These organisational and industry-based changes resulted in a recommendation by Officers that a wholesale review of the 2015 Strategy was required.
- 2.4 To facilitate this review, a Councillor lead Tree Strategy Working Group (under the scope of the Overview and Scrutiny – Customers and Partnerships) was created 2017. The working group, alongside Arboricultural Officers from Development and Operations set about reviewing the content and 2015 Strategy, developing a new vision for the 2020 Strategy, and setting the scope for any new topic areas to be included.
- 2.5 Final proposals for the vision and scope of the 2020 Strategy were presented to Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships) in October 2019 with a view to have a revised Tree Strategy ready adoption in mid-2020.

3. THE KEY CHANGES TO THE TREE STRATEGY

- 3.1 The tree strategy review process has looked at all elements of the 2015 Strategy and considered their relevance in light of modern arboricultural management. It responds to current national issues that affect trees, considers how our residents interact with them and incorporates these into the core of the document. While many of the central themes and policy areas contained in the 2015 Strategy have been retained as part of the this review, the 2020 document takes a more strategic approach to tree population management and looks to what may be required of local

authorities over the next 10 years. The principal changes proposed in the 2020 Strategy include:

- 3.2 **A move to managing trees at a strategic level:** During the tree strategy review process a number of different Government consultations have been issued which propose changes to how local authorities will need to manage their own tree stock. These also propose the introduction of statutory monitoring against key indicators such tree planting and canopy cover.
- 3.3 One of the most likely requirements is the need to produce a Tree Strategy, with one of the consultations going so far as to indicate the likely required content for such. To ensure the Council is as best placed as possible in the face of any changes, the 2020 Strategy incorporates key topic areas which are likely to become a statutory duty. Taking this higher-level approach enables the Council to embed these expected changes into our day to day working and allow the impact of these to be fully considered without the pressures of them being imposed by a set date.
- 3.4 **Inclusion of a central vision:** A central “vision” has been introduced to the document which leads onto 7 core aims. These were developed with the Councillor Working Group and are intended to ensure all the Council’s actions in the management of the districts tree population (regardless of service area or department) are working towards one core purpose.
- 3.5 **A focus on data analysis:** A key element of the 2020 Strategy is that its aspirations and the policies are based on detailed analysis of current data concerning the district’s tree population (section 2 of the 2020 Strategy). The collection of data required to be able to do this was a key action of the 2015 Strategy and has formed the basis for the review.
- 3.6 Our analysis of this over the review period has allowed us to focus the polices and actions of the 2020 Strategy on known strategic issues that affect Huntingdonshire (woodland cover statistics for example) while also being in a position to identify and address detailed challenges such as the limited age diversity of our own trees. The combination of these different strategic issues ensures a robust tree strategy can be put in place which promotes effective tree management.
- 3.7 **Engagement with national initiatives:** During the life of the 2015 Strategy, organisations such as The Woodland Trust and The Tree Council have developed national initiatives and campaigns which look to manage tree populations as a whole. These include the Tree Charter (by the Tree Council) which aims to promote “the creation of greener landscapes with trees”. The principles of these national campaigns have been embedded into the 2020 Strategy and would enable the Council to publicly endorse these initiatives should we wish to.
- 3.8 **A Review of all policies:** All the existing polices contained in the 2015 Strategy have been reviewed, revised, or removed where needed. The

2020 Strategy contains a total of 20 policies covering all aspects of modern arboriculture in a local authority setting. 5 new policies have been incorporated to cover the following topics:

- Managing ancient and veteran trees (Policy TM5)
- Recycling of tree surgery arisings (Policy TM6)
- HDC action in cases of tree vandalism (Policy TM10)
- Managing trees in the urban environment (Policy TM11)
- Biosecurity management (Policy TBS1)

3.9 Where policies were present in the 2015 Strategy which solely covered the Council's statutory duty on a matter (reviewing dangerous trees (2015 Policy TP14) or owners' rights to raise objections to new designations (2015 Policy TP2) for example) these have been removed and the topic embedded into the text of document as they do not need to be re-covered at a policy level.

3.10 All of the policies included in the 2020 Strategy have been written (and re-written in the case of those retained from the 2015 Strategy) in such a way that they clearly set out the Council's position in subject. Where possible, technical arboricultural terms have been removed from the policy text and the policies are structured to ensure they can be easily understood by a wide range of groups and the residents of Huntingdonshire. (A full policy list is contained in Appendix 1)

3.11 **Updated Action Plan:** A new Action Plan has been written to accompany the 2020 Strategy. While an Action Plan was included in the 2015 Strategy, it focused on our everyday tree management operations. In addition, many of the projects set out have been completed or were no longer relevant. The 2020 Action Plan takes a more strategic stance and looks at projects across all service areas, such as increasing Huntingdonshire's Canopy Cover, managing pest and disease outbreaks and increasing planting. The revised Action Plan includes an indication of a project priority and at suggests at what stage each task should be considered. At this stage the Action Plan does not contain a set timescale for the completion of a task, as these are likely to be resource dependant.

3.12 **A revised format:** The 2015 Strategy comprised of a core document and 8 separate guidance notes. The 2020 Strategy has incorporated the content of these (where necessary) into one document to ensure it is easy to navigate.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4.1 The Panel received the Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy Review at the meeting on 5th November 2020. Members commended the Tree Strategy and thanked Officers and the Overview and Scrutiny Tree Strategy Working Group for their time and effort in conducting the review and producing the updated Strategy.

4.2 Members have discussed whether the Strategy should contain reference to the species Black Poplar, which used to be a common species in Huntingdonshire. It has been confirmed that there are efforts to plant Black Poplars and,

accordingly, Section 4.9 (Page 21) has been amended to include reference to “special trees” including Huntingdon Elm and Black Poplar.)

- 4.3 The Panel has noted that there are a number of actions which, in order to be completed, require grants to be obtained and additional resources allocated. It has been suggested that the Council should take steps to acquire the resources needed to fulfil the aims of the Action Plan. It is further suggested that the actions should be prioritised so that the ones deemed most important are completed first.
- 4.4 It has been noted that the table on page 16 uses old Ward boundaries. The Panel recommends that the document should contain up to date information including referencing the current the Ward boundaries. (Additional Officer note: While this is noted by Officers, the Wards used are set data fields in the Council’s tree surveying software and cannot be altered at this time. However, this will be reviewed in the future to determine if boundary and Ward changes can be made. A note to reflect this position has been made in the document (Figure 9, Page 16))
- 4.5 Members have examined the number of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) that have been issued. The figures are cumulative, but it is suggested that this information should be presented based on the number of TPOs issued year on year or during a particular 5-year period. (Additional Officer note: Officers note this point and have altered Figure 15 (Page 22) to show cumulative totals of orders made. However, it has not been possible to show the number of Orders made by year using the data the Council currently holds.)
- 4.6 An observation has been made that tree planting and the installation of street furniture on new build estates are not planned as effectively as they could be. However, it is understood that the new Urban Design Manual will better address these matters in the future.
- 4.7 On a connected matter, it has been suggested that when Members are informed of planning application / decisions it would be beneficial to identify any matters relating to trees.

5. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 5.1 Failure to endorse this evidence-based Tree Strategy will impact on the direction of our arboricultural operations (across all service areas) to 2030. Key policies are included in the 2020 Strategy which are aimed at altering the way in which some of our key services are provided to ensure they are as efficient and robust as possible. This would also allow Officer’s time to be concentrated on other project based tasks.
- 5.2 The Action Plan sets out key projects based on the sustainable management of the wider tree population of Huntingdonshire. Some of the projects included are based around national environmental issues (decreasing canopy cover in urban areas for example) which are becoming increasingly important in the face of a changing climate.
- 5.3 While there are likely to be future funding and resource requirements for projects set out in the Action Plan, endorsement of the Action Plan is key to ensuring that we maintain a sustainable and robust tree stock and its benefits to our communities can be maximised.

6. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

- 6.1 The 2020 Strategy will cover the Council's arboricultural functions across all services to 2030. It includes a robust monitoring programme (section 17) which sets out annual monitoring and reporting to Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the use of the document and Action Plan. This regular reporting also allows minor changes to be made to the content of the overall document, ensuring it consistently reflects the services provided by the Council and modern arboricultural practices.
- 6.2 An in-depth review is proposed at year 5 to allow any significant changes to be made without the need for a full review.
- 6.3 The Action Plan has been developed in such a way that the primary targets are for the scoping of projects which are for completion later in the strategy period. This allows Officers to fully explore options for all the objectives and present funding and resourcing options for each on a regular basis. These projects will then be the subject of separate funding bids.

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

- 7.1 The 2020 Strategy and Action Plan aligns with the following aspirations of the Council's Corporate Plan:
- PLACE – Create, protect and enhance our safe and clean built and green environment.
 - PEOPLE – Support people to improve their health and well-being.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The endorsement of the 2020 Strategy and Action Plan does not bring about any additional legal obligations for the Council. However, it does place focus on the Council's duty of care in respect of its tree management operations (across all service areas) and highlights our statutory functions and how they are met.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 To allow the successful implementation of the 2020 Strategy continual revenue funding for arboricultural services across the Council is required.
- 9.2 The Action Plan which accompanies the 2020 Strategy (Appendix 3) sets out a range of broad tasks and projects to be completed between 2020 and 2030. Where additional resources and/or funding is required to undertake standalone projects, these will be subject to additional revenue bids and funding cycles over the life of the strategy.

10. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Trees can have a significant positive impact on the health of our residents and improve our physical and mental wellbeing.
- 10.2 Research shows that a direct correlation exists between proximity to tree cover and indicators such as increased life expectancy, improved education rates and decreased hospital admissions.
- 10.3 A study of the East London Green Grid (a proposed network of interlinked, multi-purpose and high quality open spaces) by the Arboricultural Association, estimated that increasing the establishment of greenspace (with a quarter of this covered with trees) over an area of 100km² by only 5.5% could avert two deaths and two hospital admissions per year. Further studies by the Tree People indicates that areas with organised community tree planting projects and events have an increased a sense of community empowerment, community ownership and improved wellbeing.
- 10.4 The 2020 Strategy looks to harness the benefits trees can bring to the overall health of residents in Huntingdonshire through our polices and projects set out in the Action Plan.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 **Climate change and environmental improvement:** The 2020 Strategy aims to provide a tangible approach to how the Council can play a part in tackling the challenges of a changing climate.
- 11.2 Though the 2020 Strategy is not an overall solution in tackling climate change across Huntingdonshire, trees are recognised as a key resource in managing environmental issues such as:
 - Decreasing particulate pollution
 - Improving air quality through carbon sequestration
 - Decreasing water runoff and preventing nutrient loss in soils
 - Improving urban drainage
 - Providing urban cooling
 - Creating and improving wildlife corridors
- 11.3 The 2020 Strategy and associated Action Plan places significant importance on these issues and sets about putting in place projects (such as identifying land for planting and assessing and increasing urban canopy cover) from which a direct environment benefit can be realised.

12. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 12.1 In the review of the 2015 Strategy and the development of the 2020 Strategy and Action Plan, new policies and ways of working are proposed that are based on detailed analysis of our own tree stock (and those trees where we play a part in their management). The 2020 Strategy responds to modern arboricultural issues and looks to embed these into our working practices, bringing the Council up to date with industry changes.

12.2 The Action Plan sets out a clear set of objectives to be achieved over the life of the document which support the 7 key aims of the 2020 Strategy to ensure a sustainable tree stock across Huntingdonshire is ensured for the future.

13. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – List of policies included in the Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020-2030

Appendix 2 – Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020 - 2030

Appendix 3 - Huntingdonshire Tree Action Plan

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Tree Strategy Working Group Final Report.](#) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships) – 3rd October 2019.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name/Job Title: Tamsin Miles Arboricultural Officer
Tel No: 07864 604 208
Email: Tamsin.miles@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

List of policies included in the Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020-2030

Management of HDC Trees

Policy included in 2020 Strategy	Action taken for policy inclusion
TM1: HDC tree management priorities	Replace 2015 Policy TP8 TP9 and TP10 (Tree works)
TM2. HDC tree surveying programme	
TM3. HDC tree maintenance works	
TM5. Supporting further health investigations	
TM6. Managing ancient and veteran trees	New policy
TM7. Recycling of tree surgery arisings	New policy
TM8. Public pruning requests	Replaces 2015 Policy TP10 (Tree works requests)
TM9. Extenuating circumstances and tree work	Replaces 2015 Policy TP8 (Tree works considerations)
TM10. Large scale tree operations	Replaces 2015 Policy TP17 (large scale works)
TM11. HDC action in cases of tree vandalism	New policy
TM12. Managing trees in the urban environment	New policy

Strategic Management Policies

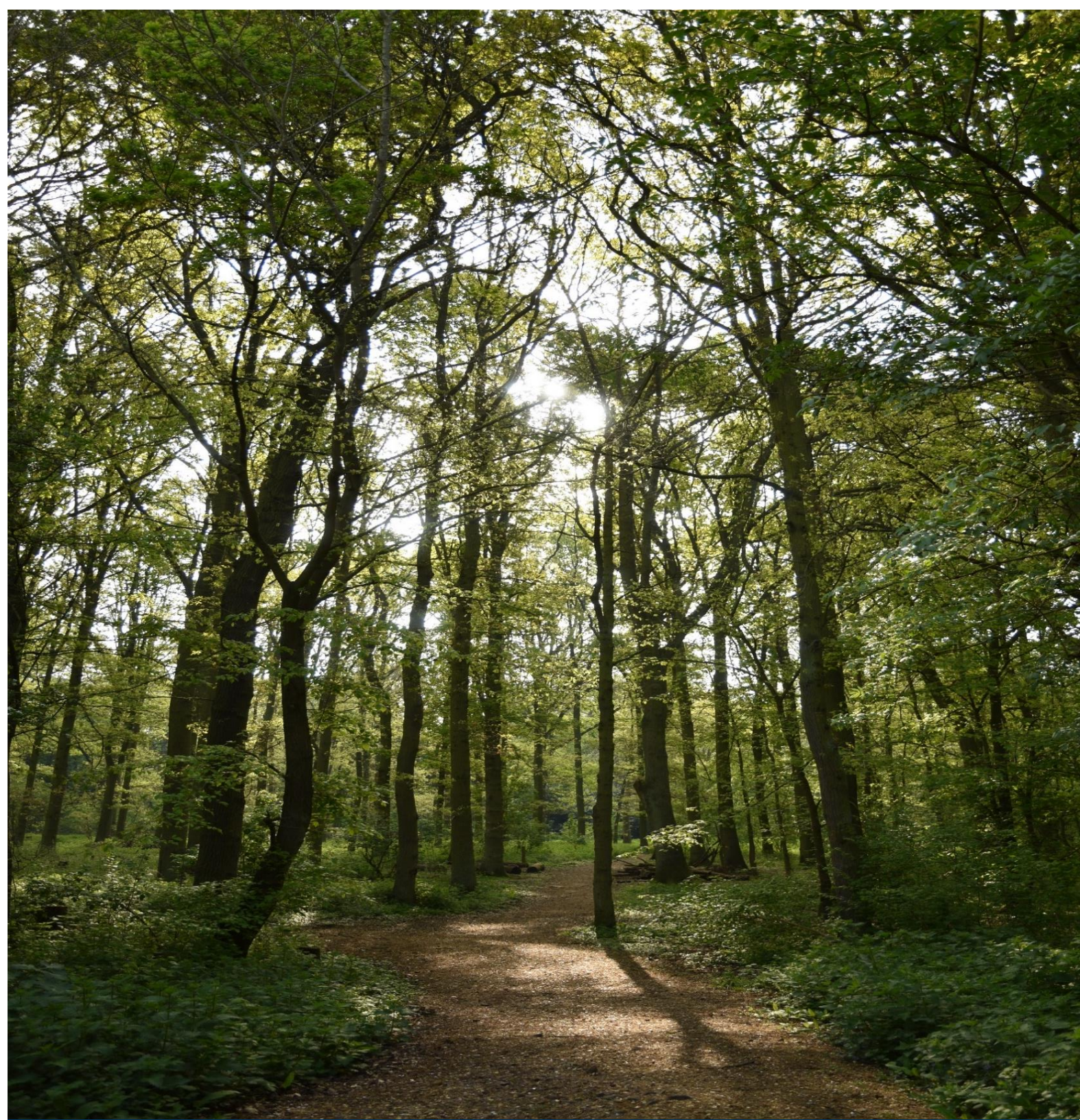
Policy included in 2020 Strategy	Action taken for policy inclusion
TP1. Tree planting	Replaces 2015 Policy TP18 – 21 (Planting considerations)
TS1. Subsidence	Replaces separate tree guidance note.
TBS1. Biosecurity management	New policy
PT1. Management of private trees	Replaces 2015 Policy TP14 (Dangerous private trees)

Statutorily Protected Trees

Policy included in 2020 Strategy	Action taken for policy inclusion
PRT1. Managing protected trees	Replaces 2015 Policy TP4 (Works to TPOd trees)
PRT2. Works to protected trees	Replaces 2015 Policy TP3 (Works to TPOd trees)
PRT3. Tree Preservation Orders	Replaces 2015 Policy TP1, TP2 & TP7 (Making TPO and ownership rights)
PRT4. Trees in conservation areas	Part new policy and combination with 2015 Policy TP3)

Trees and Development

Policy included in 2020 Strategy	Action taken for policy inclusion
TDM1. Trees and development	Replaces 2015 Policy TP6, TP16 (Trees and development)
TDM2. Development and planting	Replaces 2015 Policy TP6 (Trees and development)

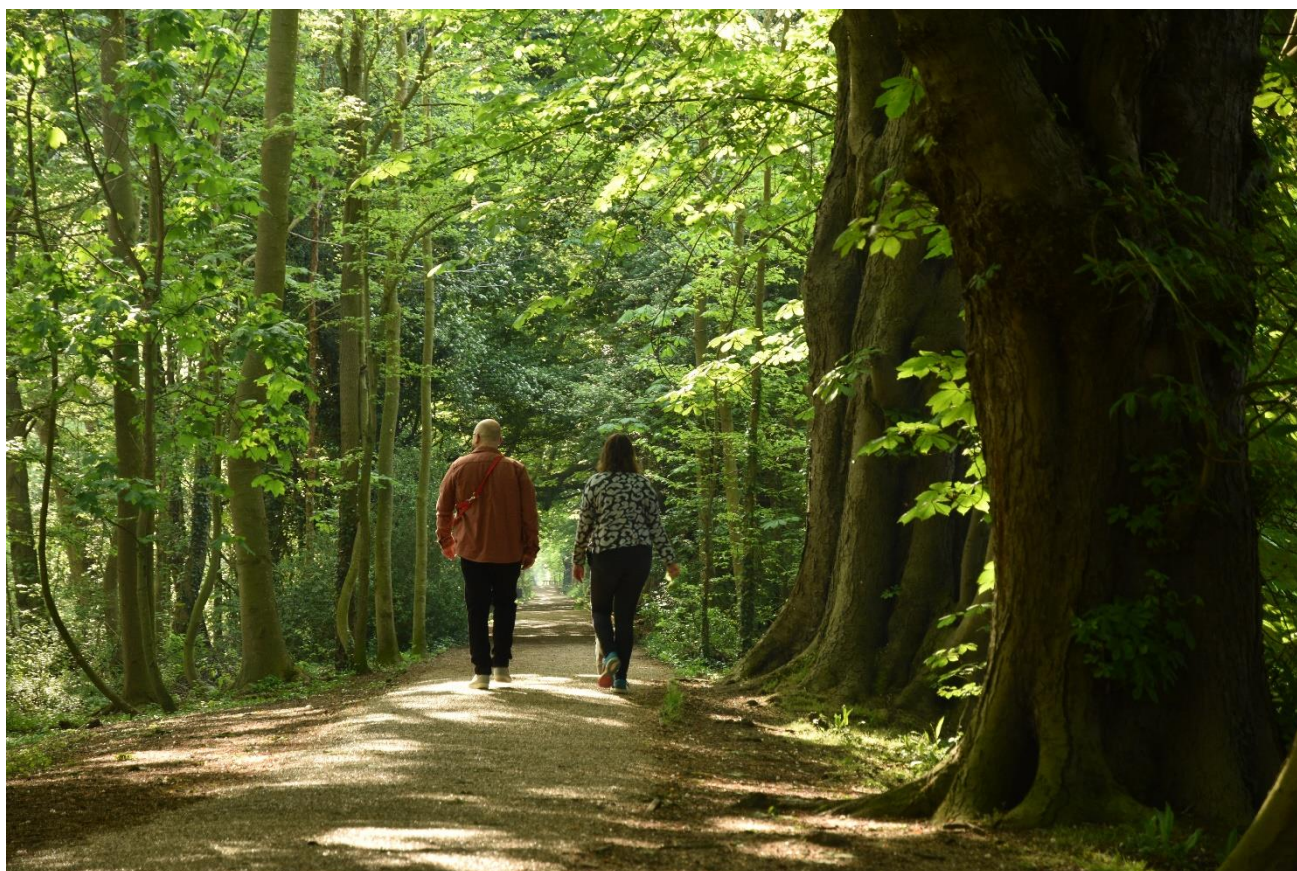


Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020-2030



Foreword

(To be added prior to adoption)



Horse chestnut walk. Hinchingsbrooke Country Park (HCP)



Contents

Introduction.....	3
Part 1. Review	5
1. Overview of Huntingdonshire.....	6
2. Policy Context of the Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020 – 2030	8
3. Achievements since the adoption of the 2015 Tree Strategy	9
Part 2. Analysis.....	11
4. Understanding the tree population of Huntingdonshire	12
4.2 Trees managed by Huntingdonshire District Council	12
4.3 Species composition of Council owned and managed trees	12
4.4 Age distribution of Council owned and managed trees.....	15
4.5 Location analysis of Council owned and managed trees.....	16
4.6 Woodland, shelterbelts and spinneys owned and managed by the Council	17
4.7 Privately owned trees and those managed by other bodies.....	19
4.8 Orchards in Huntingdonshire.....	20
4.9 Ancient, Veteran and special trees in Huntingdonshire.....	21
4.10 Protected trees	21
4.11 Canopy Cover	23
5. Future Challenges	25
6. Vision and Aims	28
Part 3. Vision.....	28
6. Vision and Aims	29
Part 4. Tree Management Policies.....	30
7. Managing trees owned by the Council.....	31
8.4 Routine Tree Maintenance	33
8.5 Detailed health and condition Investigations.....	34
8.6 Statutorily protected trees owned by the Council	35
8.7 Managing veteran and ancient trees	35
8.8 Recycling	35
9. Reactive tree management	36
9.7 Complaints	38
9.8 Consultation of large-scale works	38
9.9 Anti-social behaviour & vandalism management	39
10. Managing trees in the urban environment.....	40

12. Subsidence and building damage management	42
13. Biosecurity management	43
15. Protected tree management	46
15.3 Tree Preservation Orders and managing tree works applications	47
15.4 Making and managing Tree Preservation Orders	48
15.5 Trees in conservation areas	49
16. Trees and development	51
17. Delivery, Monitoring and Review	53

Table of Figures

Figure 1. Summary of the benefits of trees.....	3
Figure 2. Structure of the Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020-2030	4
Figure 3. Landscape character areas in Huntingdonshire	7
Figure 4. Summary of the Key aims of the 2015 Tree Strategy	9
Figure 5. Huntingdonshire District Council tree population by deciduous and coniferous species. .	12
Figure 6. Huntingdonshire District Council tree population composition by percentage.	13
Figure 7 Huntingdonshire District Council tree population age classification.	15
Figure 8. Overview of age classifications used by the Council.	15
Figure 9. Number of trees managed by Huntingdonshire District Council by Ward.	16
Figure 10. Woodlands managed by Huntingdonshire District Council by area.....	17
Figure 11. Pocket Woodlands managed by Huntingdonshire District Council by area	18
Figure 12. Shelterbelts managed by Huntingdonshire District Council by area.....	18
Figure 13. Woodland cover across Huntingdonshire	19
Figure 14 Significant Ancient Woodland sites in Huntingdonshire.....	21
Figure 15. Number of Tree Preservation Orders made by year.....	22
Figure 16 Canopy cover in the 4 key urban areas in Huntingdonshire	23
Figure 17 Tree canopy cover by ward in Huntingdonshire.....	24
Figure 18 Key tree management areas undertaken by the Council	32
Figure 19 Hierarchy of maintenance works undertaken by the Council.....	37
Figure 20. Principals of the Tree Health Resilience Strategy	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 21 Tree Strategy review programme.....	53

Appendices

Appendix 1. Policy context

Appendix 2. Pruning limitations

Appendix 3. Subsidence and building damage

Appendix 4. Glossary of terms

Introduction

- I. Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) acknowledge the valuable contribution trees and woodlands make to the district as a connection between nature and modern living.
- II. The care and protection of trees is at the forefront of our agenda and the services we provide to our communities. We recognise the significant benefits our trees offer and aim to make sure we pass on a legacy of a healthy and attractive tree population for future generations.
- III. These benefits are widely recognised and are not just limited to those surrounding the visual contribution trees and woodlands make to an area. Trees bring significant benefits to the economy, our environment, our communities and our health and wellbeing. Their key benefits are detailed in Figure 1.

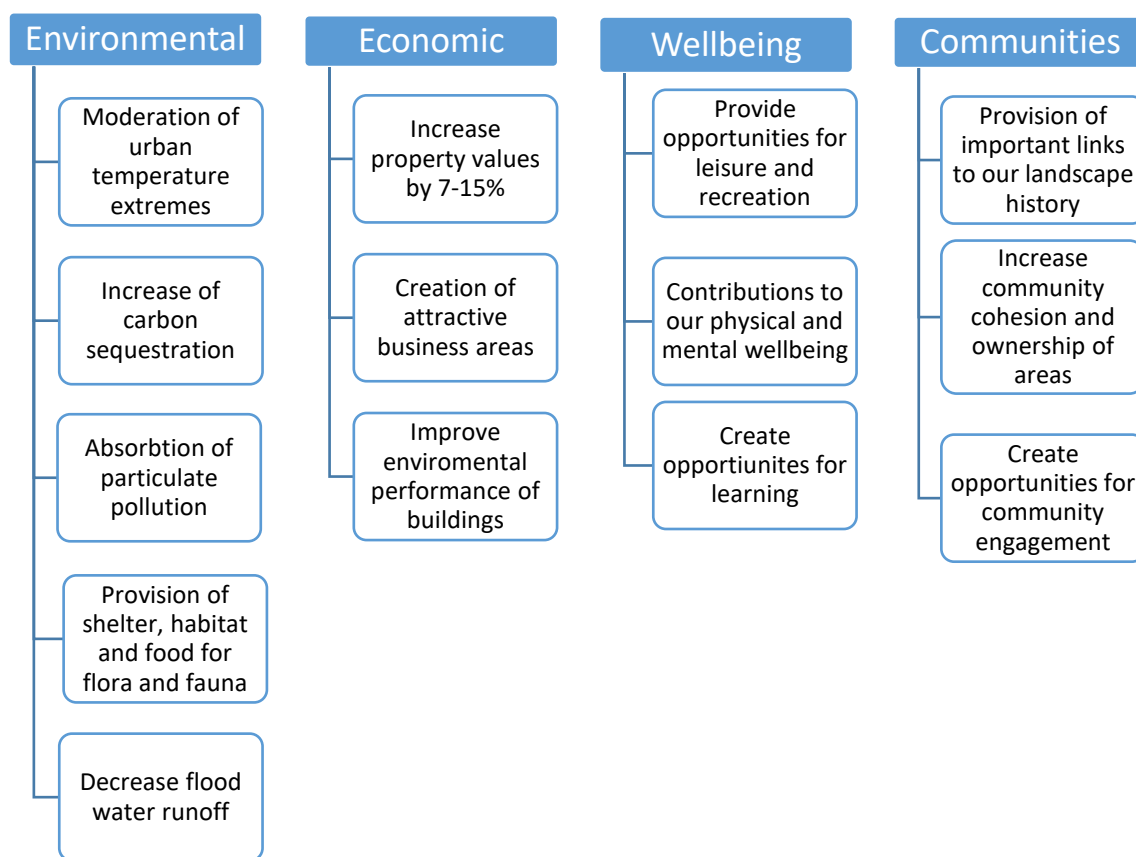


Figure 1. Summary of the benefits of trees¹

¹**Reduction in stormwater runoff by attenuating precipitation in leaves** (Thomas, H., Nisbet, T.R. (2007). An assessment of the impact of floodplain woodland on flood flows. *Water and Environment Journal*, 21, pp. 114–126.)

Reduction in peak summer temperatures (Doick, K., Hutchings, T. (2012). *Air temperature regulation by urban trees and green infrastructure*. FCRN012 Forest Research)

Tree absorption of airborne particulates (Escobedo, F., Nowak, D (2009). Spatial heterogeneity and air pollution removal by an urban forest. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 90 (3-4) pp. 102-110.)

- IV. The Council has an important role to play in the management of the districts' tree population; as well as looking after trees and woodlands on Council-owned land and protecting trees on private property, we have a role in raising the awareness of the importance of trees and influencing their positive management by acting as an example of best practice.
- V. The Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020-2030 builds on the achievements and progress made under the first Tree Strategy published by HDC in 2015. This document is a revision of this work and forms part of the Council's ongoing review of our tree management. This Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020-2030 seeks to raise awareness of the importance of trees, confront the environmental challenges that have arisen since the adoption of the 2015 strategy and contribute to a sustainable tree population.
- VI. This strategy is designed to clearly set out our policies in relation to tree and woodland management and provide guidance to those whose activities bring them into contact with trees. This document comprises of four main sections:

Part 1. Review:
A review of the role of the 2015 Tree Strategy and the need for a revised document.

Part 2. Analysis:
A detailed analysis of the District's tree population and the challenges in its management.

Part 3. Vision:
Details of our strategic vision and aims for the next 10 years of tree and woodland management.

Part 4. Policies:
Our policies for the management of our trees and how we will work with others whose operations brings them into contact with trees.

Figure 2. Structure of the Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020-2030

- VII. Finally, this strategy embeds the 10 values of The Woodland Trust's Tree Charter² (which aims to promote the creation and promotion of greener landscapes and the benefits of trees for the future) into our tree management policies. Through our adoption of these wider principles, we are demonstrating the Council's commitment to excellent arboricultural management and the promotion of a sustainable tree population.

The presence of larger trees in gardens and as street trees adds from 3% to 15% to home values (Wolf, K.L. (2007). City Trees and Property Values. Arborist News 16 (4), pp. 34-36.)
7% higher rental rates are achievable for commercial offices having high quality treescapes (Laverne and Winson-Geideman, 2003).

² Charter for Trees, Woods and People. Woodland Trust. <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/support-us/act/tree-charter/>

A close-up photograph of birch leaves. The leaves are bright green with serrated edges and prominent veins. A small, brown, cylindrical catkin is visible among the leaves. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting a dense forest or garden.

Part 1. Review

1. Overview of Huntingdonshire

- 1.1 Huntingdonshire covers an area of approximately 91,000 Ha (350 square miles) and lines the western boundary of Cambridgeshire. The landscape of the district is extremely diverse with flat, expansive fenlands in the north east, rolling uplands in the west and the Ouse and Nene river valleys running through the centre of the district. Our landscape has been constantly shaped by human activity, mainly through agricultural practices and the development of the strategic transport links which dissect the district, all of which have had a significant influence on the composition and distribution of the population throughout the landscape. Because of our geographic location, Huntingdonshire has important connections to the Capital and the cities of Cambridge and Peterborough resulting in the district being an attractive location for businesses and development.
- 1.2 Tree cover across Huntingdonshire has been slowly decreasing since Saxon times. While our overall tree cover is low, there is a range of important trees and woodlands present within the topographic character areas (Figure 3).
- 1.3 Today, the tree population is principally comprised of clusters of woodland concentrated at the centre of the district, hedgerow trees in our agricultural landscapes, street trees in our urban and peri-urban areas, trees within parks and open spaces, orchards and trees on private land. With continued strategic development planned for Huntingdonshire and a predicted increase in population, the contribution the tree population makes to our residents, businesses and the environment is ever rising.
- 1.4 Understanding the initial development and character of landscape, our typologies, the composition of existing trees, and the contribution future planting can make to the district is key in developing robust plans for its management.

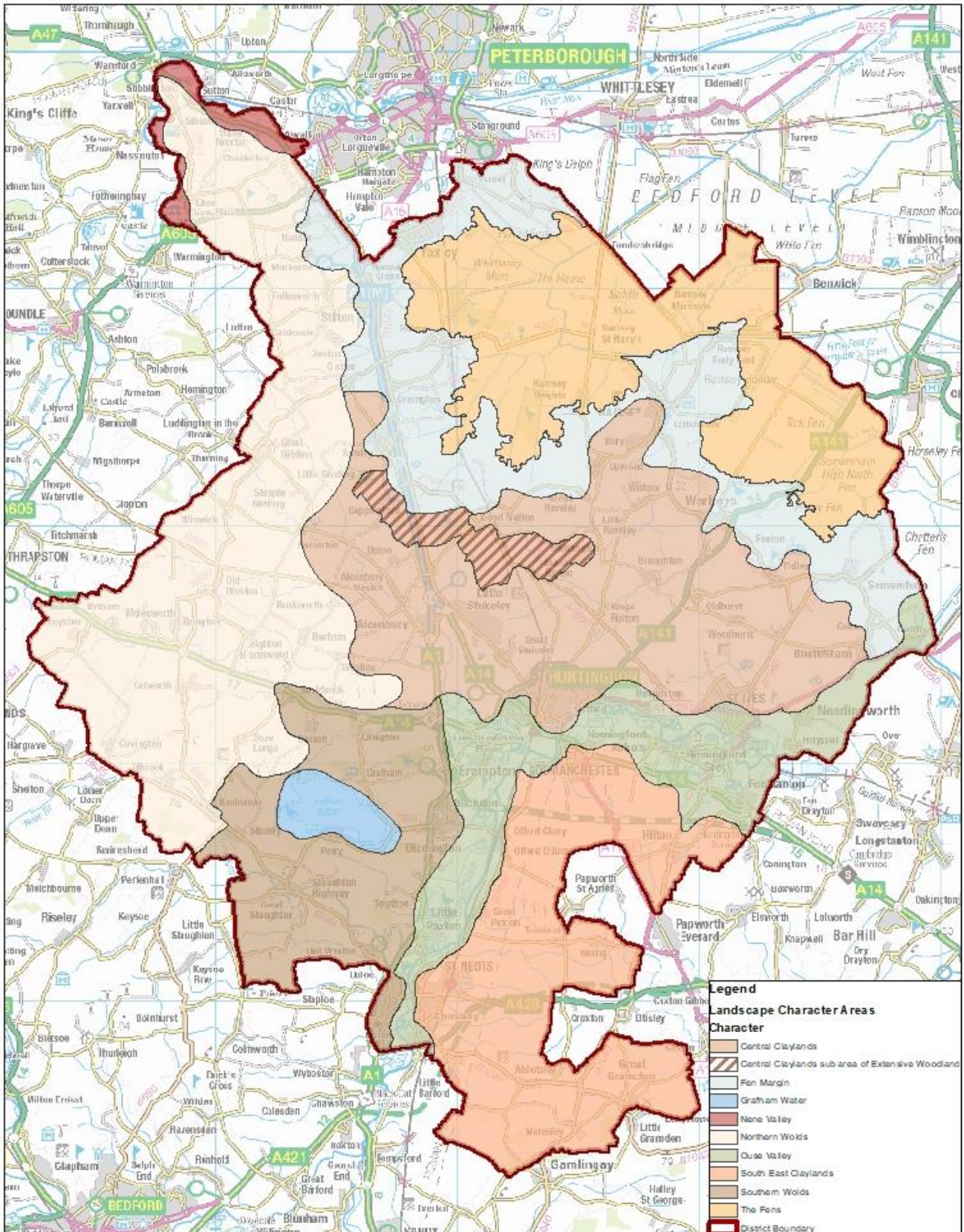


Figure 3. Landscape character areas in Huntingdonshire As defined in the Landscape and Townscape SPD (2007) or successor documents.

2. Policy Context of the Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020 – 2030

- 2.1 The Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy forms part of a suite of policy documents which shape our environment and influence how we respond to it. This strategy sits within a wider framework of national, regional and local policy documents which set overarching principles in relation to climate change, biodiversity and ecology, planning and development, biosecurity, health and wellbeing and landscape character; all of which are highly influenced by trees and their management.
- 2.2 At a national level, this strategy reflects the principles set out in *Trees in the Townscape: A Guide for Decision Makers*³ in respect of maximising the benefits of the trees, and uses the baseline data from the research paper *Trees in Towns II*⁴ as part of our action and policy setting. The Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy endorses the values of the *Tree Charter* and the *Emergency Tree Plan*⁵ for the UK and seeks to incorporate these into our approach to tree management where appropriate.
- 2.3 Regionally, the development of this strategy sits within wider policy documents associated with green infrastructure and wildlife management in Cambridgeshire.
- 2.4 At a corporate and local scale, the Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy supports the Council's vision set out in the current *Huntingdonshire District Council Corporate Plan*⁶ regarding the creation and management of a safe, healthy and prosperous place where communities and businesses can thrive. The Strategy also uses the information contained in the *Huntingdonshire Landscape & Townscape Assessment* as part of baseline tree population analysis and builds on the policies contained in the Council's *Healthy Open Spaces Strategy Open Space Strategy, Local Plan, and Design Guide*. A comprehensive exploration of the relevant policies and strategies that affect the Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy can be found in Appendix 1.

³ Trees in the Townscape. Trees and Design Action Group. http://www.tdag.org.uk/uploads/4/2/8/0/4280686/tdag_treesinthetownscape.pdf

⁴ Charter for Trees, Woods and People. Woodland Trust. <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/support-us/act/tree-charter/>

⁵ Emergency Tree Plan for the UK. The Woodland Trust. 2020. <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/publications/2020/01/emergency-tree-plan/>

⁶ HDC Corporate Plan 2018 - 2022 <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/1390/corporate-plan.pdf>

3. Achievements since the adoption of the 2015 Tree Strategy

3.1 The 2015 Tree Strategy set a range of actions and targets to be achieved over the life of the plan. A summary of the three key aims and associated actions is shown in Figure 4.

	Key Aim 1 <i>“Protect trees within Huntingdonshire district through sustainable management”</i>	Key Aim 2 <i>“Care for the trees within Huntingdonshire district by practising and promoting good tree care”</i>	Key Aim 3 <i>“Plant more trees in Huntingdonshire district by promoting and carrying out appropriate tree planting”</i>
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a computerised record of the Council’s trees. • Initiate a prioritised survey of Council owned trees. • Identify and evaluate important groups of trees and woodlands and promote them to the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make, manage and review Tree Preservation Orders. • Create an information strategy and supplementary document. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake planting as part of the Council’s arboricultural management. • Use enforcement powers to secure new tree planting. • Provide information about trees to the wider public. • Promote tree planting as part of development sites and wider community projects

Figure 4. Summary of the Key aims of the 2015 Tree Strategy

3.2 A significant change in available resources since the adoption of the 2015 Tree Strategy resulted in re-prioritisation of our actions during the strategy period. However, despite this, there has been considerable progress in the management of our arboricultural functions. Our main achievements are:

- ***Implementation of a Tree Management Programme:*** A key part of our work since 2015 has been the adoption of a computerised tree inspection and management system. This has enabled a robust programme of tree surveying to be put in place and has allowed public tree works requests, urgent, and programmed works to be managed effectively. To date, this system has been used to survey the majority of trees and woodland owned and managed by the Council with the intention to have all our trees surveyed and plotted in the future. This work has formed the basis for responses to public requests for tree works and has allowed a priority works system to be implemented. This work has formed the basis of our understanding of the composition of the Council’s tree population and will shape the work we undertake in the future.

- Tree works priorities: A new priority system has been developed to manage tree pruning requests raised by the public, which is based on current legislation and legal duty of care. This also encompasses tree works generated from the Council's routine tree surveying program. The new priority system allows the Council to focus its resources more effectively to ensure our trees are managed appropriately.
- Move to use of contractors: The Council now uses Arboricultural Contractors to undertake technical and large-scale tree maintenance work. This also includes the use of Arboricultural Consultants to undertake detailed health and condition investigations, allowing us to make more informed tree management decisions.
- Tree Planting: Significant work has been undertaken to develop and implement a programme of tree planting. The Council has adopted a method for tree species selection; committed to the use of only nursery suppliers with robust biosecurity policies and implemented an aftercare programme for newly planted trees. We have also promoted the planting of Memorial Trees, a tree planting service available to outside bodies and the wider public. The continuation of this work forms a key part of this strategy, through the expansion of community tree planting projects.
- Protected tree replacement: A programme has been developed to ensure the replacement of protected trees (those subject to a Tree Preservation Order) where they have been removed as part of an application for felling. This has aided the creation of a new phase of planting of protected trees and contributes to the creation of a sustainable tree stock.
- Providing information: Significant work has been undertaken to provide details of protected trees on the Council's website. This allows applicants, third party organisations and the public to access details of trees in Conservation Areas and those subject to Tree Preservation Orders through interactive mapping.
- System review: A large scale review of how the Council operate tree-based planning functions has been undertaken. This has resulted in significant improvements to the way in which we make and manage our Tree Preservation Orders, assess applications for works to protected trees and carry out enforcement investigations.
- Tree Subsidence investigations: A review has been undertaken of investigation procedures where Council-owned trees have been identified as contributing to building subsidence, ensuring adoption of a consistent approach to insurance cases.

3.3 These achievements represent a considerable improvement to the way in which the Council's Arboricultural Services operate and how we manage the wider tree stock in Huntingdonshire. However, now these new systems and ways of working are in place, similar effort and focus is needed to secure the future of our tree stock and to maximise the benefits realised from our trees.

A low-angle photograph of a large tree trunk and its canopy against a blue sky. The trunk is thick and textured, extending from the bottom center towards the top. The canopy is dense with green leaves, filling the upper half of the frame. The sky is a clear, bright blue, visible through the branches and leaves. The overall composition is vertical and emphasizes the height and scale of the tree.

Part 2. Analysis

4. Understanding the tree population of Huntingdonshire

4.1 Having a detailed understanding of the district's tree population as well as the composition of our own tree stock is a vital component in being able to effectively manage our urban and rural trees. Our assessment of these assets has provided essential baseline information on the condition of our own trees and the management implications of features such as woodlands and spinneys and the number and age of protected trees across Huntingdonshire. This information allows us to set management objectives and policies that are tailored to the current needs of the district's trees.

4.2 Trees managed by Huntingdonshire District Council

4.2.1 Analysis of data initially collected from our tree surveying project (an action set out in the Council's previous Tree Strategy) allows us to fully explore the composition of our tree population. The data collected between 2016 and 2020 utilises the information gathered during the initial tree surveying project and is subject to ongoing updates as part of our day to day tree management operations.

4.2.2 This data not only gives us a benchmark of our current tree stock composition, but also allows us to accurately plan our future management and focus our resources to ensure we maintain a sustainable and robust tree population.

4.3 Species composition of Council owned and managed trees

4.3.1 Analysis of our survey data indicates that 98% of our trees are deciduous species (Figure 5). While this data does not take account of trees in woodlands, spinneys, or shelterbelts, it clearly indicates that our tree population is dominated by broadleaved species with coniferous species only comprising 2% of our overall stock. Further analysis is required to understand the geographic distribution of these two types to increase species diversity and support smaller conifer populations.

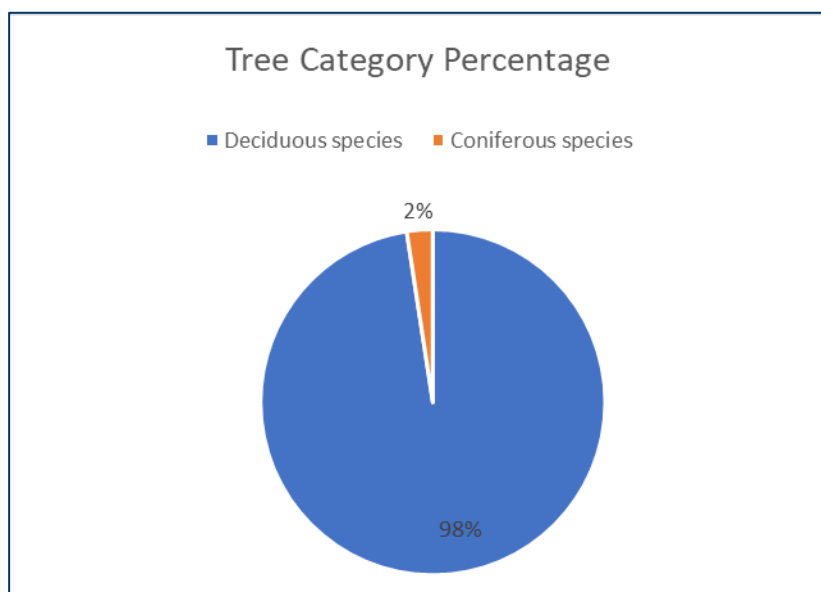


Figure 5. Huntingdonshire District Council tree population by deciduous and coniferous species.

4.3.2 A more detailed assessment of our species composition indicates a further dominance of certain species within the deciduous category. *Acer* (Maple) family species (including Field, Norway, Silver leaf and Purple leaf Maple and Sycamore, are the dominant genus and make up 20% of our deciduous trees. *Fraxinus* (Ash) species (including Common & Narrow leaf species) are the second largest tree genus, making up 11% of the overall recorded population. *Prunus* (Cherry) family species (including Bird, Wild, and Plum) contribute 8% of our trees. Species recorded in the coniferous category consist of *Sequoia*, *Thuja*, *Pinus*, *Picea* and *Chamaecyparis* and contribute to only 3% of overall recorded trees managed by the Council.

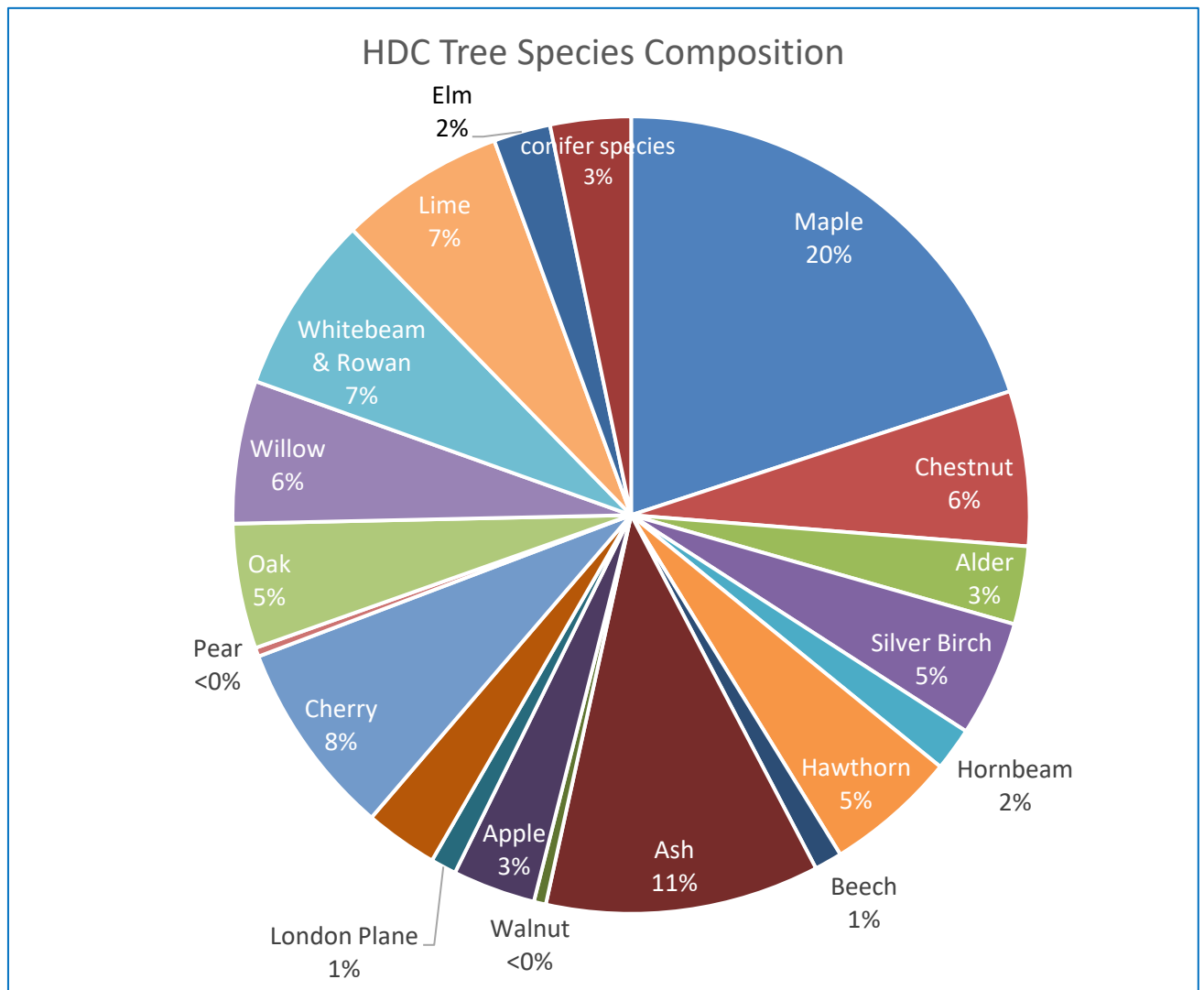


Figure 6. Huntingdonshire District Council tree population composition by percentage.

4.3.3 Tree species which generally have smaller canopies (such as Cherry, Whitebeam / Rowan, and Hawthorn) make up a total of 7% of our tree population. A large proportion of these species occupy the open spaces in our urban areas and are likely to have been planted as part of large-scale residential development carried out in the 1960s. Given the increased benefits derived from trees with larger canopies, this information indicates an opportunity to introduce larger sized trees to our urban open spaces to maximise tree related benefits to the community.

- 4.3.4 Species which are considered to have increased environmental benefits through pollution filtration (such as London Plane – 1%) comprise a very small proportion of our tree population. This demonstrates that there is an opportunity for further investigation into the benefits derived from certain tree species in urban areas to allow focused planting in higher pollution settings.
- 4.3.5 Although this data highlights that our tree population is greatly unbalanced in terms of species diversity, it does reflect the planting trends in landscape design throughout the second half of the 20th century and has created character areas in the district. This information can now be used to reinforce any of these planted character areas as well as looking at new species to increase seasonal interest, biodiversity value and environmental benefits.
- 4.3.6 The data in Figure 6 also demonstrates that the Council's tree stock is vulnerable to certain pests and diseases. The dominance of species such as Ash (11%), Maple (20%) and Chestnut (6%) increases the potential for significant losses through known health issues such as Ash Dieback, Sooty Bark Disease and Bleeding Canker. Large scale loss of vulnerable species will not only impact on the landscape of Huntingdonshire but also on our resources to manage any significant outbreaks. Recognising these issues and raising awareness of species dominance will help combat pests & diseases, allowing the Council to develop a more resilient tree stock through planting of a wider range of species.



Trees at St Mary Magdalene. Brampton

4.4 Age distribution of Council owned and managed trees

4.4.1 Figures 7 and 8 provide an overview of the percentage of our trees in certain age categories. The combined percentage of semi-mature and mature trees equates to 75% of the total figure of our trees (Figure 8). This reflects the dominance of mature trees across the population and a limited age diversity among our trees. 22% of our trees are classified as “young” which have the potential to become the next generation of mature trees as they develop.

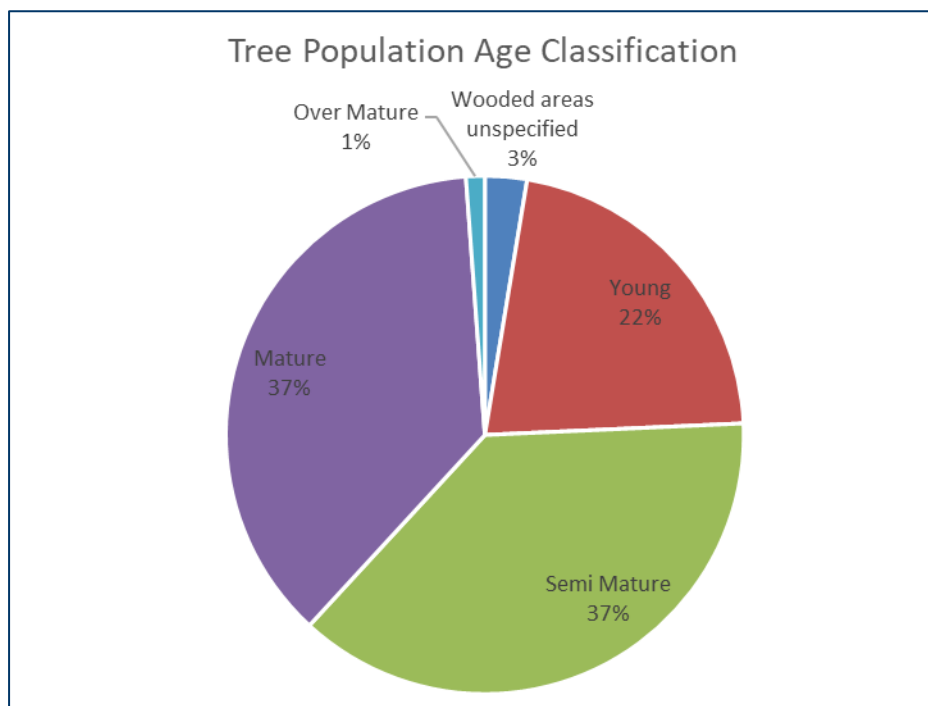


Figure 7 Huntingdonshire District Council tree population age classification.

4.4.2 Only 1% of the trees managed by the Council are classified “over-mature”, a category which includes veteran and ancient trees. Given the increased historical, ecological, and environmental benefits of trees of this age, increasing the number of trees that have the potential to grow into this category will form part of our actions. The need to further investigate the condition and location of our veteran and ancient trees will also form part of our future work.

Unspecified	Young	Semi-mature	Mature	Over mature
Encompassing small tree groups, shelter belts, pocket woodland and woodland areas. (3%)	Encompassing trees that have been planted since 2016, also including trees that have been estimated to be up to 20 years old. (22%)	Encompassing trees that are an estimated age range of 20 to 50 years old. (37%)	Encompassing trees that are an estimated age range of 50 to 150 years old. (37%)	Encompassing trees that are estimated as being over 150 years old. Categorized based on tree species & condition. (1%)

Figure 8. Overview of age classifications used by the Council.

4.5 Location analysis of Council owned and managed trees

4.5.1 The distribution of trees managed by the Council throughout the district is greatly concentrated within the Wards which cover our key urban areas. Figure 9 shows the number of trees managed by the Council per ward and shows that a large proportion of our tree stock is within the urban areas of St Neots, St Ives and Huntingdon.

4.5.2 While this data is influenced by the landholding of the Council in certain wards (which is generally lower in more rural areas) it also reflects the proportion of the trees that the Councils manage in residential areas dating from the 1960s and 1970s (highest in the Wards of Huntingdon and St Ives) and those areas which contain our largest parks and open spaces. This data highlights the need to secure and utilise open spaces within villages under Council ownership in order to maximise tree planting opportunities and increase tree canopy cover across the district

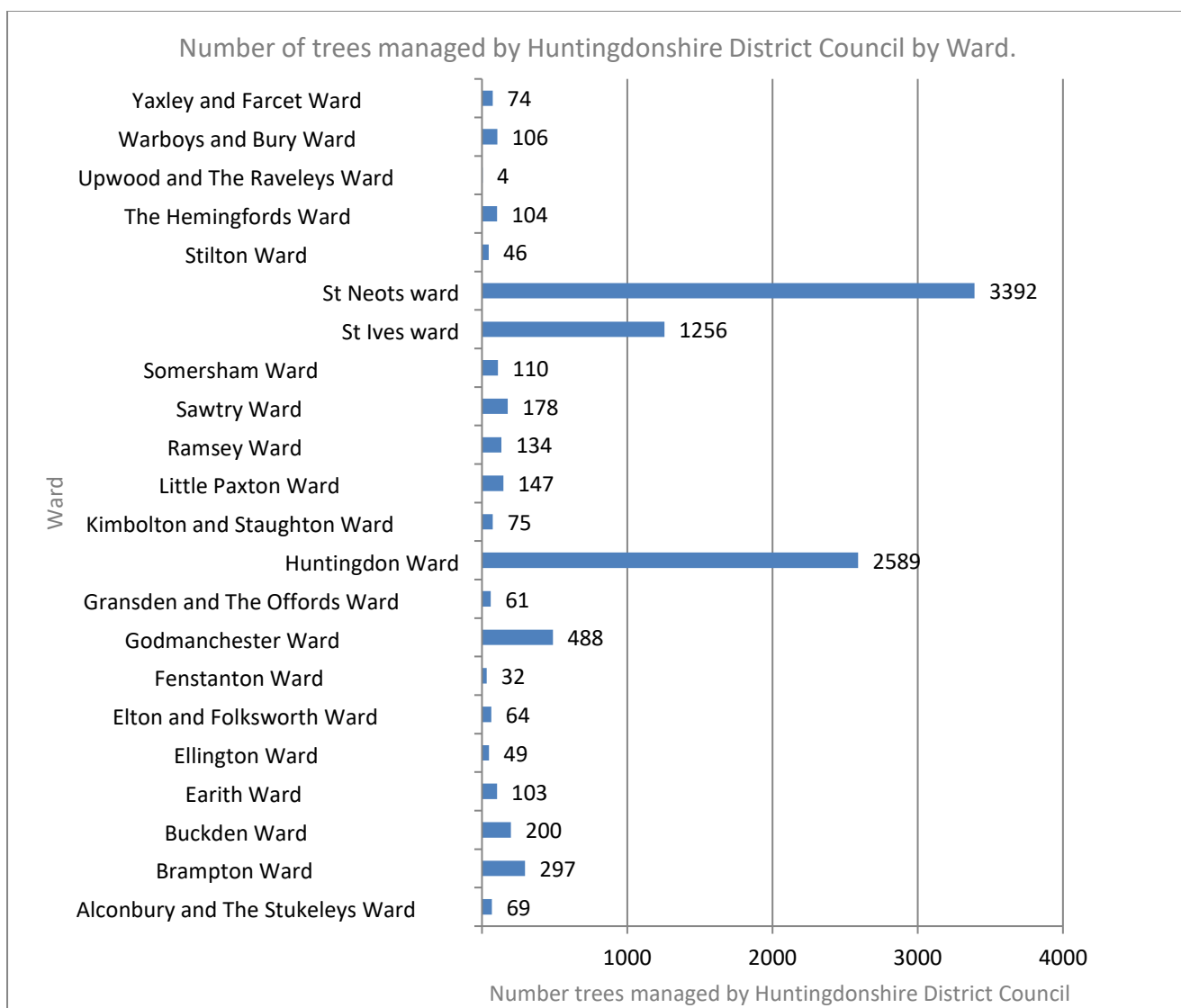


Figure 9. Number of trees managed by Huntingdonshire District Council by Ward. (Note. These Ward designations are as set out in the Council's tree surveying software and may not represent recent Ward boundary and name changes)

4.6 Woodland, shelterbelts and spinneys owned and managed by the Council

4.6.1 The Council own and manage approximately 42.8 Ha of woodlands which is comprised of “Woodland”, “Pocket Woodland” and “Shelterbelts”. These important areas not only make a significant contribution to our tree stock, but also present management challenges.

4.6.2 The Council currently manage an estimated 28.2 Ha of woodland throughout Huntingdonshire (Figure 10). These are of mixed species and age class which varies depending on their geographic location and history. In the southeast of the district, woodlands such as that in Priory Park comprise native deciduous tree species such as Oak Quercus / Ash and Sycamore with a Hawthorn understory. Whereas other woodland areas throughout the district contain predominantly Chestnut. These types of woodlands are classed as a non-working woodland and are managed for recreation as part a formal park.

4.6.3 Other woodlands, such as those at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, are managed predominantly for habitat and as part of a working woodland programme as part of the park's management scheme. These are also mixed in terms of their species compositions and structure.

Woodland location	Size m ² (Approx.)
Priory Park St Neots: Southeast woods	4.1Ha
Priory Park St Neots: Northwest woods	1.5Ha
Hinchingsbrooke Country Park: Bobs wood	13.5Ha
Hinchingsbrooke Country Park: Eastside wood	9.1Ha

Figure 10. Woodlands managed by Huntingdonshire District Council by area

4.6.4 In addition to the woodlands, we manage approximately 8.6Ha of “Pocket Woodland” (Figure 11). These are small woodlands which are not connected to a continuous tree line or are otherwise isolated from other woodland areas. Most of these pocket woodlands consist of native tree species such as Ash, Oak and Chestnut, with small areas of Willow. These areas are publicly accessible and while being isolated, they support a diverse range of flora and fauna.

	Pocket woodland location	Size m² (Approx.)
St Neots	Priory Park	0.7Ha
	Beatty Road Play Park	0.07Ha
	Barford Road Pocket Park	2.4Ha
	Top Wood Loves Farm	0.5Ha
St Ives	The Thicket,	2.7Ha
	Hill Rise Park	1.2Ha
	Long Plantation	0.8Ha
Huntingdon	Coneygeare Court	0.3Ha
	Falcon Drive	0.2Ha
	Hinchingbrooke Country Park	4.9Ha

Figure 11. Pocket Woodlands managed by Huntingdonshire District Council by area

4.6.5 An estimated 6 Ha of our woodland cover is defined as “shelterbelts” (Figure 12). These are areas of trees that envelop housing estates and open spaces. They can form visual screens and sound barriers to roads and other land uses, they significantly contribute to our local wildlife corridors and can support local health and recreation. Most of our shelterbelts consist of mixed native deciduous species such as Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Birch, Ash, Cherry and Oak.

Shelterbelt location	Size m² (Approx.)
Stukeley Meadows, Huntingdon	1.8 Ha
Hartford, Huntingdon	1.4 Ha
Flamsteed Drive, Hinchingbrooke,	0.7 Ha
Loves Farm, St Neots	2.1 Ha

Figure 12. Shelterbelts managed by Huntingdonshire District Council by area

4.7 Privately owned trees and those managed by other bodies

4.7.1 Data from The Woodland Trust⁷ for the two parliamentary areas in Huntingdonshire (Huntingdon and North West Cambridgeshire) suggests that woodland cover throughout the district is significantly lower than the national cover level of 13%. Woodland cover in Huntingdon constituency is 4.2% and 7.8% in North West Cambridgeshire (Figure 13). While this figure is low, it does not take account of our primarily agricultural landscape which does not typically include woodland areas.

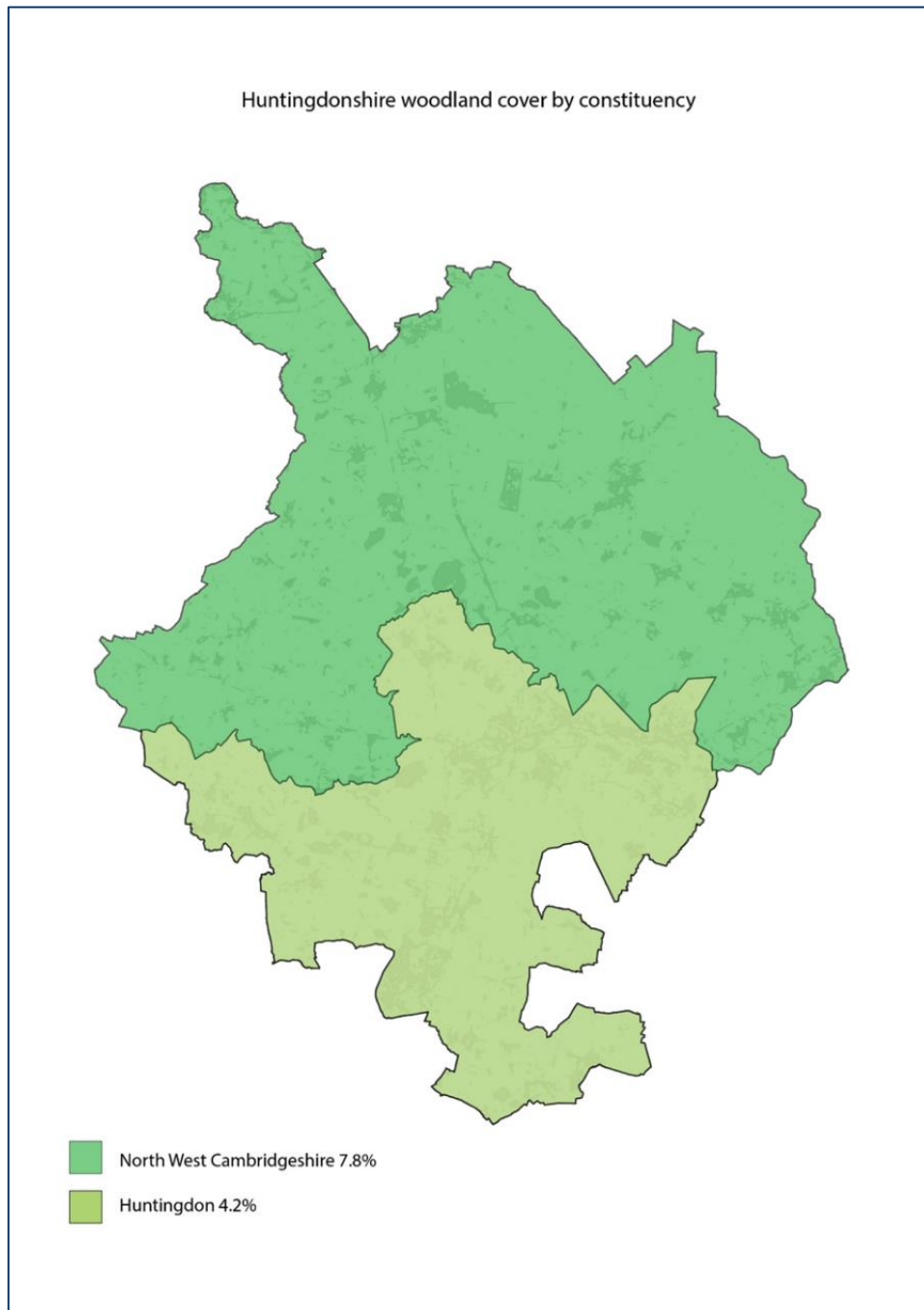


Figure 13. Woodland cover across Huntingdonshire

⁷ Woodland indicators by parliamentary constituency. The Woodland Trust.
<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/43913/woodland-indicators-by-parliamentary-constituency.pdf>

4.7.2 Further research undertaken by The Woodland Trust⁸ sets out that to maximise the benefits of woodlands on public health, no person should live more than 500 metres from accessible woodland. Nationally, 18.2% of the British population meet this target. In Huntingdon constituency, 2.8% of the population live within 500 metres of accessible woodland, and 11.9% of the population in North West Cambridgeshire constituency.

4.8 Orchards in Huntingdonshire

The east of the district has a long tradition of fruit production, with large swathes of commercial orchards around Somersham, Bluntisham and Colne. The number of remaining orchards has declined rapidly in the last fifty years and is now included as a UK Priority Habitat. Collaborative work between a range of organisations intends to undertake further research into our current orchard population and its condition.



Apple Orchard in Huntingdonshire (HDC)

⁸ Space for people - Targeting action for woodland access. The Woodland Trust. May 2017
<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/1721/space-for-people-woodland-access.pdf>

4.9 Ancient, Veteran and special trees in Huntingdonshire

- 4.9.1 Ancient and Veteran trees form an important part of our landscape character and have significant benefits in terms of the flora and fauna they support, the connection they have to historic landscapes, and their national rarity. The Ancient Tree Inventory records these important trees, allowing them to be recognised. Data from this inventory suggests that most ancient and veteran trees are unrecorded; however, data collected so far indicates that recording these trees is becoming more prevalent.
- 4.9.2 Current data from The Ancient Tree Inventory for the two parliamentary areas in Huntingdonshire suggests that 152 trees have been recorded in North West Cambridgeshire, but only 8 are recorded for Huntingdon. This significant difference is likely to reflect a lack of recording between the two areas rather than a limited population of ancient and veteran trees.
- 4.9.3 Ancient Woodland covers just 2% of the UK, yet these are irreplaceable environments which contain complex communities of plants, fungi, insects and other microorganisms. In Huntingdonshire there are in the region of 45 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) sites and 25 Plantation on Ancient Woodland (PAWS) sites, totalling approximately 1500 Ha of woodland (Figure 14). Huntingdonshire contains no ASNW or PAWS known to be currently under threat.
- 4.9.4 In addition to those species and woodlands which are recognised nationally due to their significant age, the district also holds important populations of increasing rare species such as native Black Poplar and Huntingdon Elm.

Ancient Woodlands in Huntingdonshire	Ancient Replanted Woodland in Huntingdonshire:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brampton Wood (north east of Grafham Water) • Monks Wood (south west of Wood Walton) • Aversley Wood and Archer's Wood (south of Sawtry) • Raveley Wood and Lady's Wood (south of Ramsey). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brampton Wood • Bevill's Wood (adjacent to Monks Wood) • West Wood and Diddington Wood (Grafham Water).

Figure 14 Significant Ancient Woodland sites in Huntingdonshire

4.10 Protected trees

- 4.10.1 As of January 2020, the Council currently administer 858 Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs); this equates to approximately 10,000 individual trees and 3000 Ha of protected woodland, groups, and areas of trees.
- 4.10.2 Our earliest valid TPO was made in 1951, with 30 orders dating from pre 1970. A significant proportion of our orders were made between 1985 and 1995 and reflect a period of considerable change in the district (Figure 15). Geographically, the parishes which contain the highest number of TPOs follow our river valleys, with the highest number of orders per parish being found in Hemingford Grey and Hemingford Abbots (the Hemingfords) at the centre of the district.

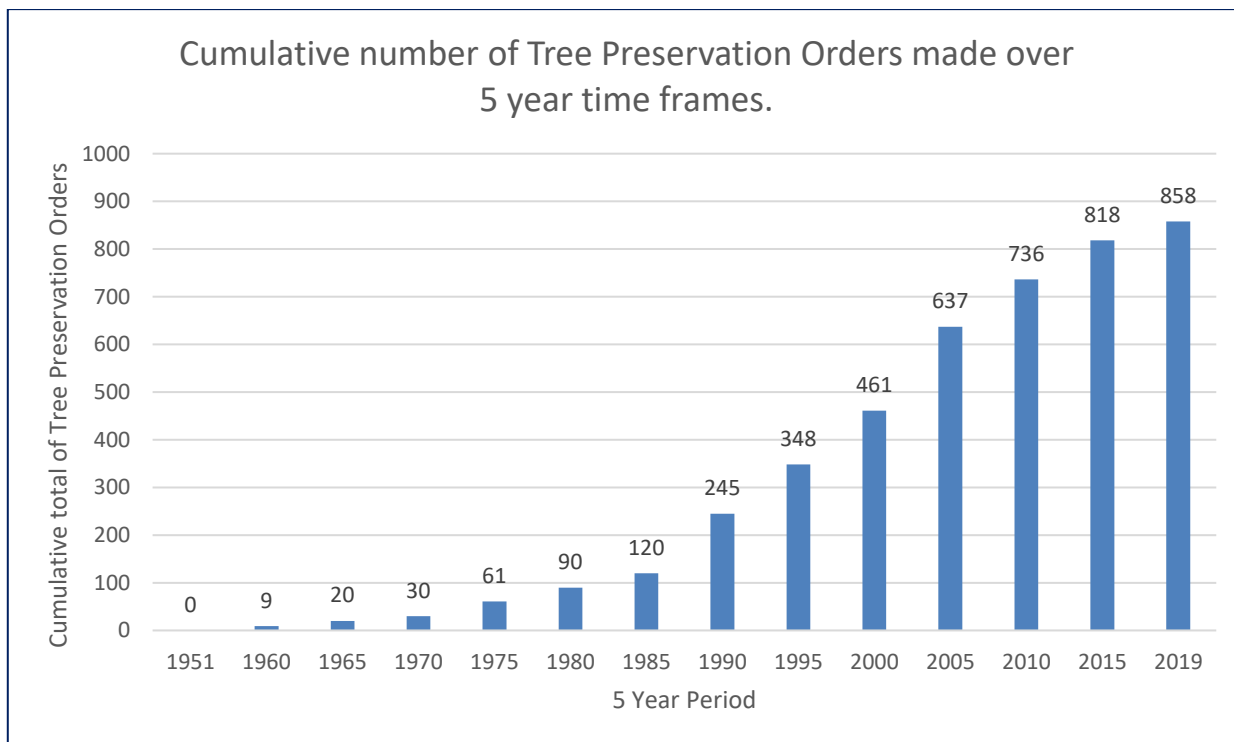


Figure 15. Number of Tree Preservation Orders made by year.



Kimbolton School Grounds (HDC)

4.11 Canopy Cover

4.11.1 Canopy cover is the area of leaves, branches, and stems of trees covering the ground when viewed from above⁹. Assessing the level of cover in urban and semi urban areas can aid in understanding the scale of a tree population across an area. By evaluating these levels, we can better understand how the benefits offered by trees can be maximised and target planting and management efforts to areas where the levels are lower and fewer tree benefits are being derived. In addition, research suggests that even small increases in canopy cover can help urban areas and their residents adapt to the effects of climate change¹⁰. To maximise the benefits we derive from our trees, a study by Forest Research considers that a minimum canopy cover of 20% in urban areas is required.

4.11.2 A recent assessment of Huntingdonshire has provided important baseline information on the level of cover and its distribution across our towns and urban areas. This assessment highlighted canopy cover levels ranging from 15.9% to 18.8% in the four key urban areas. This compares to a national average of 15.8% in urban areas¹¹.

Urban Area	Canopy cover %
Huntingdon	18.2%
St Ives	15.9%
St Neots	17.6%
Ramsey	18.8%

Figure 16 Canopy cover in the 4 key urban areas in Huntingdonshire

4.11.3 A review of the canopy cover of the whole district indicates a total cover of 8.7%. While this is low, it does reflect the predominance of an agricultural landscape found in Huntingdonshire and may not accurately reflect the canopy cover benefits derived in our Wards (Figure 17). Further work is required to allow a full assessment of the district's canopy cover at a finer grain and, where possible, drawing comparisons against factors such as health, mortality rates and deprivation to allow effective management of our tree population for future generations.

⁹ A report on New York City's present and possible urban tree canopy. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. 2006.

¹⁰ Adapting Cities for Climate Change: The Role of the Green Infrastructure. 2007.

¹¹ The Canopy Cover of England's Towns and Cities: baselining and setting targets to improve human health and well-being. https://www.charteredforesters.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Doick-et-al_Canopy-Cover-of-Englands-Towns-and-Cities_revised220317_combined.pdf

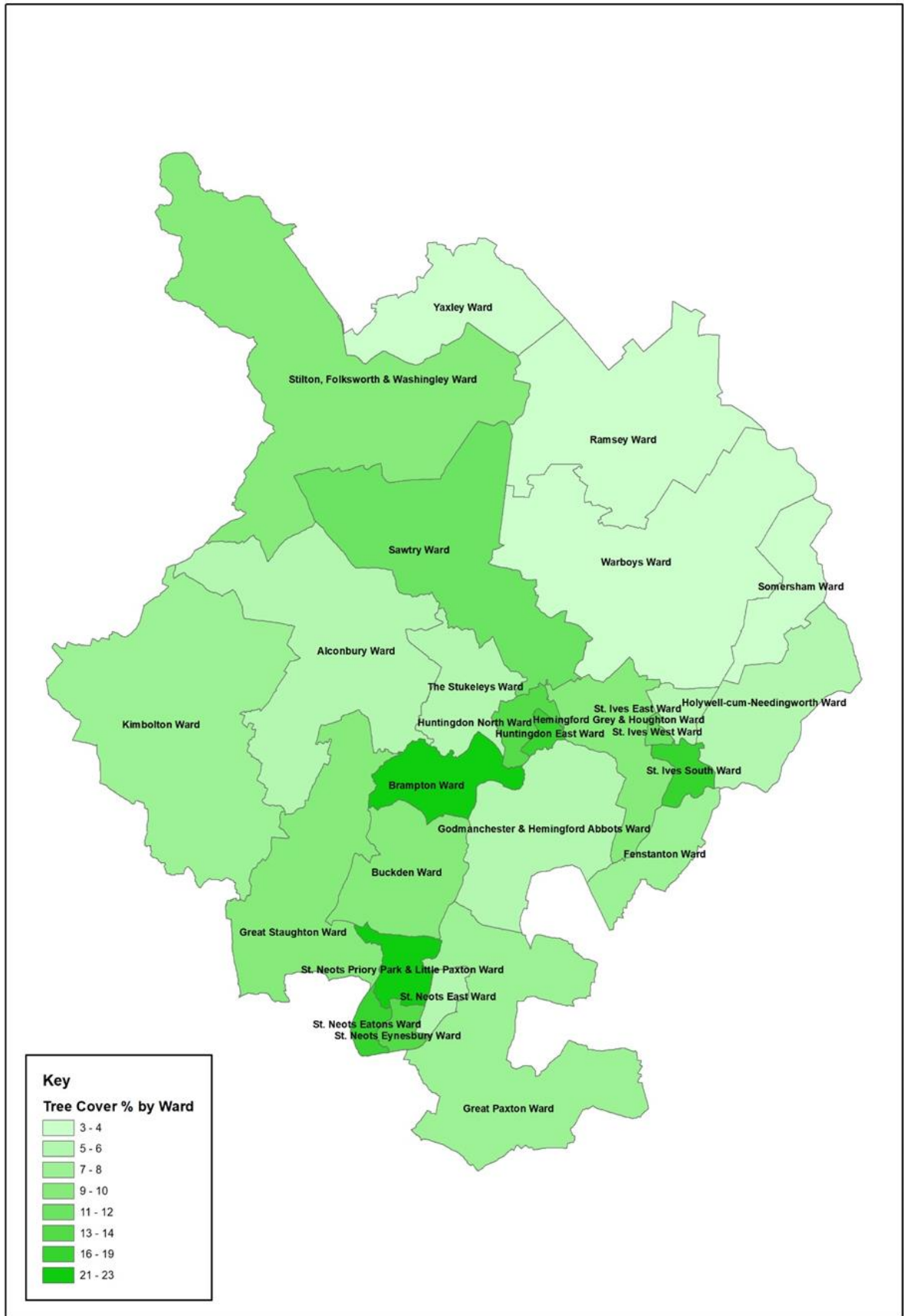


Figure 17 Tree canopy cover by ward in Huntingdonshire

5. Future Challenges

5.1 Our trees, the overall population they form part of and our ability to manage them face a range of challenges. These challenges can have a negative impact on a tree at all stages of its life, from planting and establishment through to their growth and maturity. All of which affect a trees ability to deliver its maximum potential benefits.

5.2 These challenges are broad reaching and, in some cases, are national rather than specific to Huntingdonshire. However, to achieve the aims of this strategy the following will need to be considered and managed.

- Climate change: The effect of a changing climate will impact on our trees and woodlands. This is likely because of increasing occurrences of extreme weather such as high winds, heavy rainfall, and higher average temperatures. These factors may affect the rates of establishment for new trees and decrease the resilience of our existing tree population to pests and disease.
- Increasing environmental pressures: Environmental legislation surrounding the management of our trees and the reporting of arboricultural statistics has the potential to greatly impact on our resources. In addition, the time over which the strategy will be in place (to 2030) is likely to see the introduction of various national policies and targets in relation to tree management.
- Canopy cover distribution: While an initial assessment of the canopy cover across the district indicates that our urban areas have a cover level similar to that of the rest of the UK, the cover in our rural wards is notably low. In some areas this is due to the surrounding landscape character, however there is a noted loss of canopy cover on the edge of the urban areas, with little graduation of the tree stock in these areas. Furthermore, where there are important canopy populations in rural areas, they tend to be fragmented, decreasing their ecological and biodiversity potential.
- Limited diversity in our tree stock: A review of the composition of our own tree stock has shown limited diversity in terms of species mix, age classification and tree canopy size.

A significant proportion of our trees are Maple or Ash species. Given the current threat to Ash trees, there is the potential that our tree population could be significantly affected by an outbreak of Ash Dieback in the district. Should a pest or disease affecting Maple species become established, this is likely to have a similar impact. This lack of species diversity makes our tree stock highly susceptible to significant losses through pest and disease outbreaks.

Approximately 40% of our trees are classified as “semi mature”. This has the potential to increase the likelihood of a large proportion of our trees maturing and eventually entering decline at a similar time. Not only does this have the potential to lead to large scale tree loss in a relatively short period of time, but also has resource implications of managing an aging tree population. Similarly, only a small

proportion of our trees are classified as “over mature” limiting the future benefits we can derive from our oldest trees.

Data concerning tree species mix also indicates that much of tree stock is comprised of tree species with typically small size canopies at mature, such as Rowan and Cherry. While these species still form an important part of our tree population, their benefits are limited when compared to trees with a larger growth potential such as Oak and Beech, especially in maturity.

- Limited woodland connectivity: The species mix and location of our woodlands, spinneys and shelterbelts give rise to challenges in their management. At present, many of the woodlands have limited connection to other habitat areas and corridors, limiting the ecological benefits they could provide.
- Damage and vandalism: Damage to trees through deliberate acts is common and places significant pressure on the Council to manage a sustainable tree population. Regular instances include the cutting of branches, lighting fires under mature trees, and poor-quality pruning of trees near domestic property.

Young and newly planted trees often have branches torn out or their stems snapped against their supports. These, and all other acts of vandalism to Council owned trees prevents strategic allocation of our resources to managing our trees.

- Damage associated with the installation and repair of utility services: While the benefits of street trees are well documented, they are extremely vulnerable to damage from utility works. For example, poor pruning to give overhead line clearance and root damage from trenching and service installation.
- Dated TPO designations: The assessment of our legal designations has indicated that a significant proportion of our protected trees fall within Tree Preservation Orders that were made prior to 1990. Many of the older orders cover trees which are no longer present and may not reflect the current tree population.
- Establishment rates: At present, the rate of successful establishment of new trees on development sites is unknown. This prevents a full understanding to be gained regarding the likely future tree populations created as part of new development.
- Recognition of special trees: While the Council recognises the importance of ancient and veteran trees, there is currently a lack of recording of these trees throughout the district. This lack of knowledge could result in their unintentional loss or their importance not being recognised.
- Loss of orchards: The number and extent of orchards in Huntingdonshire has declined rapidly in the last fifty years and they are now a threatened habitat. Work undertaken by other organisations has started to record traditional orchards, however a current lack of understanding of the Council’s potential orchard ownership results in us not being able to proactively plant or manage any fruit trees in our ownership.

5.3 To tackle these challenges, the policies set out in this strategy and the tasks detailed in a supporting action plan will include (but not be limited to) projects which seek to:

- Aim to address the challenge of a changing climate on our tree population.
- Increase the age, species, and size diversity in our own tree stock.
- Respond to changes in arboricultural sector in respect to information reporting and changes in national tree management policies.
- Put in place a strategy for preventing and mitigating against deliberate and accidental damage to our trees.
- Better understand the establishment rates for newly planted trees on development sites.
- Locate and record our veteran and ancient trees.
- Understand the composition of our canopy cover and increase it in the most deprived areas.
- Increase the connectivity of our woodlands, spinneys and shelterbelts.
- Better understand the composition of any orchards in our ownership and how we can support the wider management of traditional orchards in Huntingdonshire.
- Review the potential for a review of our Tree Preservation Orders.



Riverside Park Huntingdon (HDC)

A close-up photograph of a tree branch with several bright green, serrated leaves. The leaves are in sharp focus, while the background is blurred, showing more foliage and a light-colored tree trunk. A white rectangular text box is positioned in the upper right corner of the image.

Part 3. Vision

6. Vision and Aims

6.1 At the heart of this strategy there is a core vision which will guide the way in which we manage trees in Huntingdonshire. Its purpose is to ensure that we are working in a consistent way, towards a common goal, regardless which Council department or stakeholder organisation is contributing towards our aims. The vision for the Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020-2030 is:

“To manage our districts trees in a sustainable way to ensure that their benefits are experienced by current and future generations”

6.2 This integrated management approach to achieving the Council's long-term vision has the following aims:

- I. To promote sustainable management of the Council's trees through effective use of our resources.
- II. To maximise the environmental, economic and health benefits of trees across the district;
- III. To fulfil the Council's duty of care in respect of the management of its tree stock;
- IV. To create a legacy of tree planting across the district;
- V. To promote community engagement in all aspects of tree planting and management, realising the maximum benefits they can provide;
- VI. Make efficient and strategic use of the Council's regulatory powers for the protection of trees of current and future value.
- VII. To recognise, promote and protect important tree populations within Huntingdonshire.



Part 4. Tree Management Policies

7. Managing trees owned by the Council

- 7.1 Huntingdonshire District Council currently manages over 9000 individual trees, tree groups, shelterbelts and woodland within country and amenity parks and open spaces. It has been estimated that the tree stock is 400 Ha across the district. We recognise that our trees across the portfolio of our land makes a significant contribution within the urban and rural setting of the district. To ensure we are managing our tree population effectively, we employ professional staff experienced in arboriculture.
- 7.2 We view our trees as an asset that requires an approach of care that reflects their importance. Tree retention is our priority when managing our trees, promoting the benefits they bring to the urban and rural landscape. Management and care of our trees is achieved by ensuring tree management is to follow current best practice and legislation.
- 7.3 Trees in publicly accessible areas may, from time to time, require management. This work may include the removal of some trees, pruning of others and replacement planting, with the aim of maintaining the overall tree cover in a safe, healthy, and sustainable condition.

Policy TM1: As part of the Council's arboricultural functions we will ensure our actions are based on :

1. Meeting our duty of care when managing trees in our ownership.
2. Managing trees for their ecological and habitat benefits where practicable.
3. Increasing the tree canopy cover by committing to continued tree planting.
4. Recognising our tree stock as an asset that enhances the local area.

- 7.4 Our tree management is based on tasks from two key sources, our planned inspection routine and associated tasks and requests for tree works from the public and other outside sources. While all aspects of our operations are important, our resources need to be balanced to ensure we are delivering thorough management of our trees. Figure 18 sets out our key work areas. When considering tree works to Council trees the following Acts will be adhered to:
1. Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981
 2. Town & Country Planning Act 2012
 3. Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
 4. Highways Act 1980

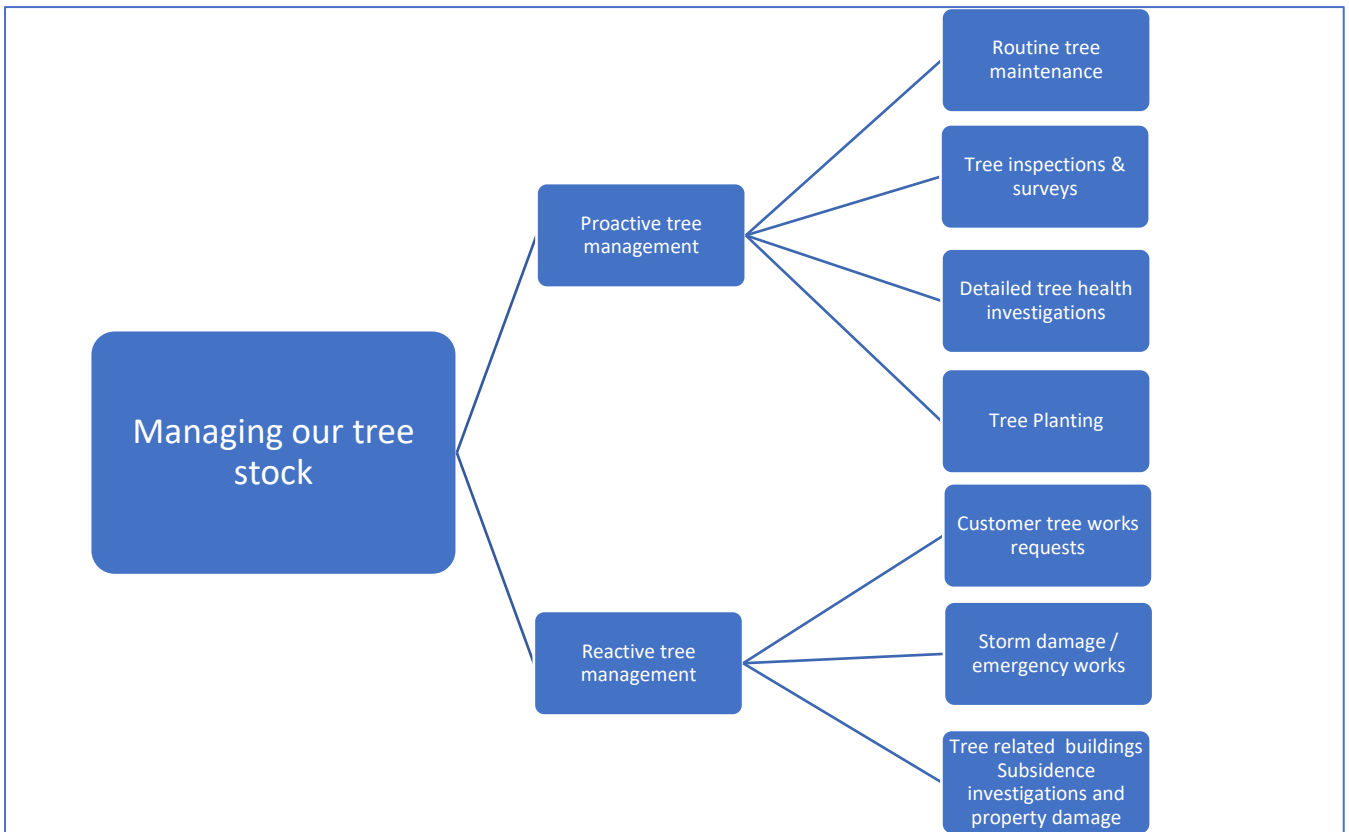


Figure 18 Key tree management areas undertaken by the Council



PiCUS test on a Beech tree (HDC)

8. Proactive tree management

- 8.1 The Council has a responsibility to maintain the trees in our ownership and management to ensure they are in a safe condition and not causing an unreasonable danger or actionable nuisance.
- 8.2 Council-owned trees are surveyed and inspected for safety and information gathering purposes, the results of which are recorded on a computer-based tree management system. This information includes details on species, age, condition, and any recommendations for work. The frequency of surveys and inspections is dependent on a range of factors such as tree location, condition, and our management objectives. This allows us to organise tree maintenance programs based on our priorities and objectives.
- 8.3 The main aim of the inspection is to identify trees which pose a risk to people or property, but other management issues are also identified such as obstruction to paths, roads, street signs, street lighting and where branches physically touch fences and buildings. Tree maintenance recommendations generated from our routine tree surveying are prioritised to reflect our legal responsibilities.

Policy TM2. The routine surveying of our trees is based on:

1. Protecting public safety so far as is reasonably practicable and to minimise damage to property.
2. Continuing to use and develop a computerised tree surveying software to inspect all trees on Council land.
3. Conserving, protecting, maintaining and enhancing the district's tree resources by analysing tree data collected using modern surveying practices.
4. Escalating identified tree safety concerns efficiently to ensure acceptable tree investigation procedures are met.

8.4 Routine Tree Maintenance

- 8.4.1 There are trees within the Council's ownership that require management pruning on a cyclical basis such as pollarding and footpath clearance. Such trees may be subjected to a pruning plan to prevent them from becoming a hazard or legal nuisance.
- 8.4.2 All work to our trees is to be carried out by appropriately qualified and experienced staff or by approved Arboricultural Contractors. We ensure appointed persons undertaking work to the Council's trees adhere to current UK and EU legislation, Arboricultural Industry Code of Practices¹², British Standard 2010: BS 3998¹³, Arboricultural HSE guidance¹⁴.

¹² Industry Code of Practice for Arboriculture – Tree Work at Height

¹³ British Standard 2010: BS 3998 (Tree Works – Recommendations)

¹⁴ Health & Safety @ work Act & Arboricultural and Forestry Advisory Group (AFAG)

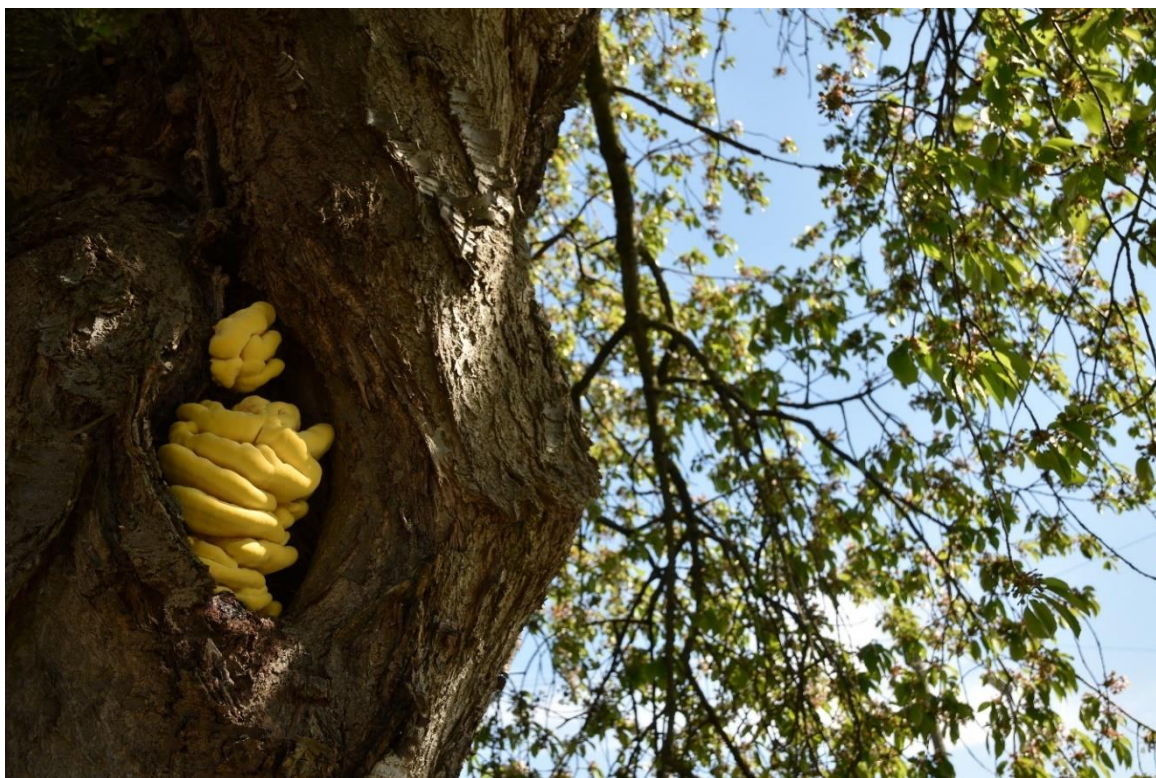
Policy TM3. Tree maintenance undertaken to Council trees will be in accordance to Health & Safety procedures and industry best practice and be justified through the Council's hierarchy of accepted reasons. The Council will ensure that:

1. Tree works which follow the principles set out through current industry best practice unless there is overriding arboricultural justification as to why this cannot be undertaken are carried out.
2. Appointed persons undertaking maintenance works to Council tree will adhere to HSE and industry best practice.
3. Recycle opportunities will be explored with waste generated from Council maintenance tree works.

8.5 Detailed health and condition Investigations

8.5.1 We also recognise that there are limitations to the level of tree assessment we are able to undertake and we may require additional skills and expert opinion. In such cases the Council may call upon an independent Arboricultural Consultant to undertake further investigations.

Policy TM4. Where the Council identifies a tree has a health or condition issue which requires further investigation, we will appoint an Arboricultural Consultant to undertake further assessments and analysis to support our management decisions.



8.6 Statutorily protected trees owned by the Council

- 8.6.1 Some of the Council's trees are protected via statutory protection such as Tree Preservation Orders. In cases where tree maintenance work has been identified to protected trees belonging to the Council, we will follow the statutory procedures to notify our Local Planning Authority and provide public notification if required.
- 8.6.2 If we are requested by a member of the public to undertake works to Council owned protected trees, there will need to be a greater justification for the work to be undertaken. In such cases, timeframes for the completion of work may exceed our usual response periods to allow for a more detailed investigation to be undertaken and to allow for application procedures to be followed.

8.7 Managing veteran and ancient trees

- 8.7.1 Managing Ancient and Veteran trees owned by the Council is an important part of our operations. These trees require increased levels of care and specialist management techniques. This not only ensures they can be retained but allows them to continue to support their own ecosystems and retain the valuable links they give us to the past.

Policy TM5. The Council will protect veteran and ancient trees owned or managed in our ownership by:

1. Managing the natural ageing and degeneration of these trees in a sensitive manner, following current best practice guidelines.
2. Carefully manage the area around these trees to create the most favourable conditions for their retention.
3. Where appropriate, undertake tree works to "veteranize" mature trees to create niche habitats.
4. Record ancient and veteran trees owned and managed by the Council with the Ancient Tree Forum.

8.8 Recycling

- 8.8.1 Waste generated from Council tree maintenance operations will be recycled to reduce the impact on the environment and costs to the organisation. Opportunities will be explored to utilise by-products such as woodchip and wood to support local environmental projects or re-used on Council land with open space projects.

Policy TM6. As part of the Council's tree management options, we will endeavour to adopt a closed loop system for recycling of arisings.

9. Reactive tree management

- 9.1 A significant proportion of our work arises from public or third-party requests for tree works. All requests are recorded and prioritised according to their urgency; with safety issues being given the greatest weighting. This allow for equal assessment and prioritisation of work.
- 9.2 We assess all requests to determine our initial course of action and may include a site visit. Where a site visit is required, we will endeavour to do it within 4 weeks of the request and the customer advised of the decision within a week of the visit. Where longer response times are anticipated the customer will be informed.
- 9.3 Any tree works we consider to be required are programmed dependent on its urgency, appropriateness, and availability of resources. Some tree works may be recommended for inclusion within existing programs of work.
- 9.4 Our tree pruning commitments are based on common law, duty of care and best practice approaches to tree management. Because of the adverse impacts that pruning can have on trees, we carefully consider situations where pruning is requested. Appendix 2 provides examples of tree pruning requests that we deem not justifiable.

Policy TM7. Customer tree pruning requests will be managed in line with the following stages:

1. The Council will only respond to customer tree pruning requests that are reported through the Council's adopted reporting systems, unless overriding personal circumstances apply.
2. All customer requested tree works will be accessed against "*Hierarchy of tree maintenance works*" table (Figure 19).
3. The Council will endeavour to respond and complete a customer request in the agreed timeframe, during busy periods this may be extended and customers notified.
4. Exceptions & Exclusions will be considered when assessing customer tree pruning requests.
5. Complaints will be investigated and managed case by case, outcomes will be within a reasonable timeframe.

- 9.5 All of our maintenance tree works conform to the tree maintenance hierarchy table (Figure 19). All customer tree pruning requests will be assessed against this table, as it allows the Council to effectively allocate resources and focus on priority tree maintenance work.

Priority Level	Response Times
High Priority	A site visit will be made on the same day or within 24 hours in respect of a working 5-day week (Monday to Friday). Timescales for action will be organised on the outcome of the Council's site visit.
<p>Cases where it has been reported that Council tree(s) are in such a condition that they may cause immediate harm to persons or damage to public and private properties, roads, and footpaths or other public and/or private land. These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees which are dead, dying or imminently dangerous • Snapped, broken, branch failure, dangerous structural parts of a tree • Up rooted trees or those with root plate disturbance • Tree structural defects such as cavities, cracks, and hollows • Trees with pest and diseases • Storm damage • Trees with mushrooms and fungi 	
Secondary Priority	A site visit will be undertaken in accordance with our inspection timescales for that geographical area. Actions following our site visit may take up to 6 months depending upon a site assessment, findings, and planned maintenance schedules.
<p>Tree work which has been requested and work has been identified, but does not sit in the "High Priority" category and is, therefore, managed within a longer timeframe may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal nuisance (causing direct damage to property). For example, part of a tree is damaging property or have reached property. Identified work will be organised by the Council's tree maintenance procedures set out in this guidance notes. • Tree in relation to subsidence claims. (See section 9) • Woodland and shelterbelt management. Areas as such have been identified through routine surveying or reported by members of the public – dead trees / storm damage / hazard trees • Young tree maintenance of newly established trees. For example, newly planted trees require watering and monitoring to insure they establish ensuring there are trees in place to replace maturing tree stock. • Vandalism. For example, fire dangerous or physical structural damage that results in the tree to become a hazard to person or property. In such reports the Police will be notified of the suspected act of vandalism to record the criminal offence and to raise a crime number in the eventuality that if further evidence is provided which may support seeking further investigation. • Reducing anti-social behaviour activities with tree populated areas. • Tree; roads & footpaths. The Council will undertake work to trees in council ownership / management to maintain a minimum 5.2 metres clearance over roads, 2.4 metres over footpaths. This include trees obstruction road junction visibility and footpath & cycle path visibility. In accordance to The Highway Act 1980 	
Low priority	12 months where possible but works may not be undertaken as a priority. If works are not completed in this timeframe, we will reassess the need of the request.
<p>Cases where tree works request did not fall into the above categories and are not within the scope of works contained in Appendix 2. <i>*completion timescales may be extended based on unforeseen circumstances that are outside of the Council's control, such as: storm damage, subsidence claims, works generated from tree surveying, poor weather conditions and contractor commitments</i></p>	

Figure 19 Hierarchy of maintenance works undertaken by the Council

- 9.6 Where it has been identified that Council trees are obstructing CCTV cameras, pruning works will be considered by firstly investigating the desired level of work required to improve lines of sight. We will also undertake work to a Council owned tree to maintain clear sight lines (where feasible) at junctions, access points (associated with a street, road or highway), traffic signals and street signs.

Policy TM8. Where elderly, infirm or disabled persons who spend a significant amount of time within their home are affected by trees, the Council will take a flexible approach to tree management. Where it can be established that the presence of trees is detrimental to the health of such residents, further consideration will be given to our management approach. This consideration will also take into account the quality and importance of the tree in question, as well as the benefits to the wider community. The Council will consider the following:

1. Effecting light to property
2. Closeness to the property
3. Effecting / obstruction access to property
4. Tree species characteristics

9.7 Complaints

All recommended tree works will be guided by Council policy. However, if an individual is unsatisfied with the decision and following further discussion with the Arboricultural Managers and agreement cannot be reached, a formal complaint can be made using the Council's existing procedures¹⁵.

9.8 Consultation of large-scale works

- 9.8.1 Where proposed tree works are of public interest, if there are special circumstances or the work deviate from the normal standards we work to, public consultation may be undertaken. Generally, pruning works within the Councils guidelines will not require public consultation.
- 9.8.2 Where large scale work is to be carried out, such as woodland felling or the thinning of a shelter belt as part of routine management, local residents, Ward Councilors, and any other local groups such as Parish and Town Councils will be informed before works commence. Any responses will be considered prior to works commencing. Where trees present an immediate hazard such that felling is the only practical urgent solution it may not be possible to inform interested parties before the work is carried out.

¹⁵ Complaints: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/contact-us>

Policy TM9. Where large scale tree works operations have been identified, the Council will undertake consultation with the following parties:

1. Residents that may be directly affected by the identified works
2. Parish & Town Councils
3. Ward members
4. Community groups where appropriate

9.9 Anti-social behaviour & vandalism management

9.9.1 The Council's ethos is to ensure trees are valued by the community as part of our environment. However, sometimes our trees are the subject of deliberate damage such as unauthorised pruning, removal of newly planted trees, fire damage and poisoning.

9.9.2 Investigating and managing these instances not only has a detrimental impact on our environment, but also impacts on the allocation of our resources. The Council will seek compensation from any external organisation or party responsible for wilfully damaging or removal of any Council owned tree(s) to the value as calculated by CAVAT.

Policy TM10. The Council will act on cases of damage and vandalism to trees in our ownership. Where such cases are experienced, we may:

1. Report the incident to the local police and/or Wildlife Protection Officer if appropriate.
2. Encourage local communities to report incidents of vandalism.
3. Publicise cases of tree-based vandalism.
4. Seek compensation for damage as appropriate.

10. Managing trees in the urban environment.

- 10.1 Trees form an important part of our urban environment and their environmental benefits are often apparent in these locations. However, these places can be challenging for trees, and their growth and development can be significantly reduced due to a range of factors such as drought, increased reflective heat and pressures for space from different uses.
- 10.2 To ensure that trees in these challenging locations thrive and offer the most benefits to our residents, we strive to manage their environment carefully. This includes taking an engineering approach to new tree planting in hard surface areas, adoption of special planting techniques and protecting our existing urban trees from damage.

Policy TM11. Where the Council are planning for new trees or managing existing trees in hard surfaced or highly urbanised areas, we will:

1. Plant trees using specialised planting techniques which ensure adequate soil volumes, appropriate hydration, and prevent damage from other users.
2. Select species which can tolerate the site-specific conditions.
3. Utilise alternative surfacing methods around trees where repairs are required to address surface cracking.



Hornbeams; Huntingdon (HDC)

11. Tree planting

- 11.1 Tree planting forms one of our key priorities and is undertaken by different teams and services across the Council.
- 11.2 As part of our own tree works programme, where felling is undertaken, we will endeavour to plant new trees on a 2:1 replacement ratio unless exceptional circumstances prevent this. Where we are not able to, or do not wish to replace trees in the same location (due to immediate site conditions and nearby features rendering replanting unsuitable for example), we will endeavour to seek nearby Council land that may be more suitable.
- 11.3 Alongside our reactive replacement planting, we administer a tree planting programme which was initiated in 2017. This programme identifies land owned by the Council which may be suitable for tree planting which is not currently treed. As part of this work, we encourage working with residents and user groups who are interested in tree planting projects and engage tree planting schemes administered by national environmental organisations.
- 11.4 Where we undertake any new tree planting we actively support the ethos of “right tree, right place” and look to increase species and age diversity as part of all of our planting operations to ensure the maximum benefits can be derived from our new trees.
- 11.5 As part of our commitment to new tree establishment, we follow a detailed aftercare programme for all our new trees to ensure successful establishment and that our new trees thrive. This covers basic operations such as programmed watering to more skilled young tree care operations such as formative pruning and tree health and support checks.

Policy TP1. The Council is committed to planting trees on land owned or managed by the Council. We will do this by:

1. Ensuring replacement tree planting is undertaken on a 2:1 ratio where possible.
2. Investigate opportunities for new, strategic tree planting on Council owned land where appropriate.
3. Work with community groups and utilise schemes administered by national environmental organisations to procure and plant trees.
4. Developing a young tree maintenance aftercare program to maintain young tree establishment rates.
5. Select tree species and stock types that are suitable for the surrounding environment.

12. Subsidence and building damage management

- 12.1 We consider our trees as an environmental asset that enhance the landscape within urban areas. However, from time to time our trees may be identified as contributing to building damage. We understand the distress subsidence may cause to property owners and ensure we follow a detailed route of investigation in these cases. Due to the legal implications that are involved with the investigation process this may impact the speed of the investigation. If you believe that your property is being damaged because of tree related subsidence you should firstly contact your building insurer for advice.
- 12.2 Where a claim is made against a Council owned tree the Council will reasonably expect an appropriate level of evidence provided to demonstrate that the tree in question is an influencing cause in the subsidence. Please refer to appendix 3.
- 12.3 In the case of a protected tree (those subject to a TPO or located in a Conservation Area) this evidence is mandatory. Without this information it is unlikely that the Council will be able to take an informed view on any proposed works or an appropriate solution. Please refer to Appendix 3.

Policy TS1: The Council will only consider claims where there is supporting evidence made in writing and contain the required evidence in Appendix 3.

13. Biosecurity management

- 13.1 The threats facing our trees is increasing at an unprecedented rate. Global travel, the importation of goods and a changing climate all have the potential to introduce pests and diseases which can have highly damaging impacts on our national and local tree populations. These outbreaks not only have the potential to have a devastating impact on the landscape of Huntingdonshire but can also impact on our ability to strategically allocate our resources to manage the district’s trees effectively.
- 13.2 Outbreaks have already impacted on the district’s tree population through the loss of Elm from Dutch Elm Disease in the early 1970s. The current rate of infection from Ash Dieback is predicted to have a similar impact on our native Ash species. In addition, newly recognised pests and diseases are being regularly found among the Country’s tree population which can have devastating impact on tree stock.

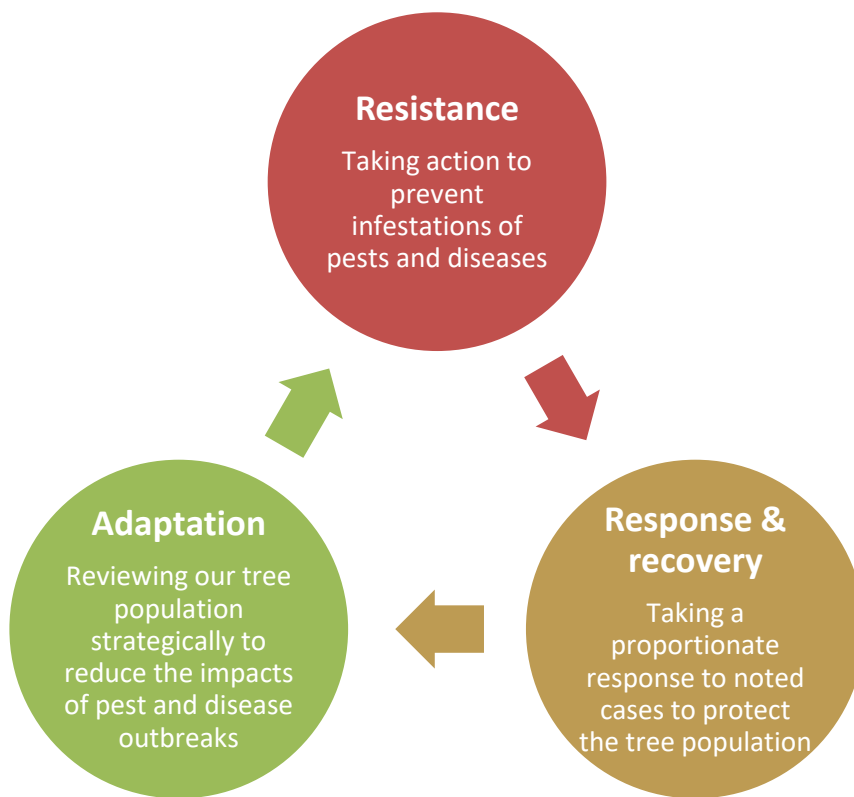


Figure 20. Principals of the Tree Health Resilience Strategy

- 13.3 To reduce the risk of tree pests and diseases having a harmful impact on the Huntingdonshire tree population, the Council follow current government and industry best practice in relation to biosecurity matters¹⁶ and endorse the principles set out the tree Health Resilience Strategy¹⁷ (Figure 20) as part of our approach to managing pests and disease establishment.

¹⁶ Government and industry documents include the Arboricultural Association’s guidance notes (https://www.trees.org.uk/Trees.org.uk/media/Treesorg.uk/Documents/eBooks/AA_GuidanceNote2_BiosecurityArboriculture-ebook.pdf) and current guidance form Forest Research.

¹⁷ Tree Health Resilience Strategy. DEFRA. 2018 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/710719/tree-health-resilience-strategy.pdf

13.4 We understand that we are not able to address biosecurity issues as a standalone organisation and owner of trees. However, through the adoption of these values, having robust biosecurity practices in place and working with other organisations and tree owners we can effectively respond to any new pest and disease outbreaks.

Policy TBS1: The understanding, promotion and implementation of good biosecurity practices will form a key part of the Council's arboricultural operation. We will do this by:

1. Reporting the instances of notifiable pests and diseases to the appropriate national bodies.
2. Developing Local Action Plans where necessary to address pest and disease outbreaks.
3. Ensuring our appointed contractors have up to date biosecurity plans working practices in place.
4. Maintaining a high level of training in biosecurity matters for our employees who encounter trees.
5. Only procuring new trees from UK Nurseries with high biosecurity standards in place (including how they source their growing stock).
6. Developing diversity in our own tree population.
7. Promoting high standards of biosecurity to our partner organisations and the public.

14. Managing privately owned trees

- 14.1 While the benefits of trees can be clearly demonstrated, they can sometimes be a source of concern. While the Council are not able to directly influence the management of privately owned trees (or those on land owned by other public bodies), there are certain circumstances where we can investigate and take action to prevent the risk of imminent damage to persons or property.
- 14.2 These fall within the obligations of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976¹⁸ and seeks to prevent damage from dangerous trees in emergency situations. However, these provisions cannot be used as a resolve to general management concerns and these should be discussed between parties privately or through a mediation service.
- 14.3 Where trees are located on the Highway or are managed by another organisation, the Council will direct enquiries about their management to them. Contact details for other organisations that manage trees such as Cambridgeshire County Council can be found on our website.

Policy PT1: The Council will utilise its statutory powers to address health and safety issues surrounding private trees where no legal owner of the tree(s) can be identified and there is a confirmed imminent risk to persons or property. To do this we will:

1. Only investigate cases where the complainant has attempted to resolve the situation as far as they reasonably can. Complainants will be expected to have undertaken Land Registry searches and have sought to contact landowners before they seek the advice of the Council.
2. Only use our resources in cases where a clear and imminent risk is identified. Where no owner can be identified and / or the owner is not able or willing to undertake works themselves.
3. Seek to recover all associated costs from undertaking any required actions.

¹⁸ S.23 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1976/57/part/I/crossheading/dangerous-trees-and-excavations>

15. Protected tree management

- 15.1 A significant proportion of the trees and woodlands in the district are on privately owned land and cover areas ranging from agricultural fields and country estates to business parks and private gardens. While these trees are outside of the management of the Council, the contribution they make to the district's tree population is considerable.
- 15.2 Many of these trees benefit from some form of statutory legal protection, which either gives them legal status in their own right (such as Tree Preservation Orders), because they are located in a designated place such as conservation areas or are protected by certain arboricultural or forestry based legislation. The protection of these trees form a significant part of the work undertaken by the Council. While these designations provide opportunities to promote excellence in tree management, they also have significant resource implications.



Church Lane, Brampton; TPO'd Beech tree (HDC)

15.3 Tree Preservation Orders and managing tree works applications

15.3.1 Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990¹⁹ gives Local Planning Authorities the power to protect trees on private land with a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) where this is in the ‘interests of amenity’. While the current Regulations²⁰ do not specifically define amenity, it can be generally considered as a phrase to describe a feature which can be seen by the general public or has some level of quantifiable importance.

15.3.2 A TPO prohibits the cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting, wilful damage, and wilful destruction²¹ of protected trees without the Local Planning Authority’s written consent. Undertaking works without the prior permission of the Council is a criminal offence.

15.3.3 The Council assess on average 165 applications for works to protected trees each year, which range from large scale woodland management proposals to basic pruning requests. The Council assess all applications in line with current planning guidance relating to protected trees and promote good arboricultural management in all cases. Should an application for tree works be refused, an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate²² can be made. Where felling is permitted, replanting will be sought unless there are exceptional circumstances to prevent this. Any works undertaken without the prior permission of the Council will be subject to an investigation by the Council’s Planning Enforcement Team.

Policy PRT1. The Council will seek to maintain a robust and sustainable population of protected trees by:

1. Developing a review programme which focusses on assessing key orders.
2. Ensuring replacement trees are required as part of all applications for the felling of protected trees, except where there are clear arboricultural reasons why this is not appropriate.
3. Promoting the planting of a diverse range of tree species, ensuring that the species selection follows the principals of “right tree, right place”.
4. Attach conditions to planning applications to conserve, enhance or replace trees where appropriate.
5. Taking enforcement action when replanting requirements have not been complied with.
6. Actively encourage the planting of replacement trees in conservation areas.

15.3.4 Where works are proposed to Council owned and managed trees which are subject to TPO’s, these will be coordinated by a lead officer in the Arboricultural Operations Team. All works to Council owned protected trees will be advertised through a site notice displayed on or near the tree. The proposals will be assessed by the Council’s Arboricultural Team in Planning Services.

¹⁹ Town and Country Planning Act 1990 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/part/VIII/chapter/1>

²⁰ The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/605/contents/made>

²¹ S.13 The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/605/regulation/13/made>

²² Appealing a decision about a Tree Preservation Order <https://www.gov.uk/appeal-decision-about-tree-order>

Policy PRT2. The Council will promote excellence in the management of protected trees and woodlands by:

1. Only validating applications for works to protected trees which clearly describe the proposed operations and follow the application requirements set out by current planning practice guidance.
2. Resisting applications for works to protected trees which do not follow the recommendations contained in current industry best practice guidelines.
3. Investigating any reported breaches to the TPO legislation in accordance with our enforcement procedures.
4. Working to increase public awareness of good arboricultural management practices.
5. Attach conditions to planning applications to conserve, enhance or replace trees within or adjoining development sites as appropriate.



Brampton Park tree line (HDC)

15.4 Making and managing Tree Preservation Orders

15.4.1 The Council receive, on average, 20 requests annually to designate new TPO's. These requests originate from a range of sources, such as members of the public, Parish and Town Councils or local groups. When new requests are received, the Council's Arboricultural Officer will assess the trees to determine their suitability for a new designation using a structured assessment method.

15.4.2 Where a new designation is being considered, the trees will usually be visible from public areas. However, in some circumstances this may not be the case and other

overriding factors will be in place, such as species rarity and historical importance. Similarly, the tree being visible as a standalone factor will not usually result in a designation being made. Where trees are under good management (by a private or public landowner) we will not seek to make them subject to a TPO, unless there is a clear risk of harm to them.

Policy PRT3. The Council will consider all new requests for Tree Preservation Orders. As part of our assessment, we will:

1. Consider the expediency and necessity for applying a legal designation to trees where a new order has been requested.
2. Assess all requests for new orders in accordance current government and industry guidance and best practice.
3. Only consider requests for new orders where they are received in writing, unless the tree(s) is in immediate risk of loss or damage.
4. Give clear reasons for any cases where we decide not to make a new order.

15.5 Trees in conservation areas

15.5.1 In addition to TPO'd trees, the Council administer 60 Conservation Areas. The main aim of these designations is to protect the special historical and architectural interest of an area. However, they also provide a level of statutory protection for all trees with a stem diameter of 75mm or more when measured at 1.5m from ground level.

15.5.2 Where tree works are intended to be undertaken in a conservation area, any applicant must serve 6 weeks' notice on the Council prior to starting works²³. This allows us to determine the likely impact of any tree work on the special character of the surrounding area. The Council assess on average 450 notifications for tree works in a conservation area a year.

15.5.3 All notifications will be assessed by the Council's Arboricultural Officers and will not be subject to consultation with interested groups or neighbours unless there are extenuating circumstances. Where the Council have concerns regarding the impact of any proposed works on the character of the conservation area, these will first be discussed with the applicant. In cases were the Council consider that the works will be to the detriment of the surrounding area, they will seek to make the trees subject to a TPO.

15.5.4 Many of the trees owned and managed by the Council fall within a conservation area. While there is no requirement for other Council departments to serve notice on the Local Planning Authority before works are completed, to ensure clear working procedures are followed, the Councils Arboricultural Team will informally notify the Planning Services Team before undertaking any works to trees in a conservation area.

²³ Tree Preservation Orders and trees in Conservation Areas <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas#Protecting-trees-in-conservation-areas>



Honey Hill, Brampton (HDC)

Policy PRT4. The Council will seek to protect and enhance the special character of our conservation areas through our arboricultural functions. We will do this by:

1. Promoting excellent arboricultural management of trees in conservation areas.
2. Encouraging the use of the national notification forms from all potential applicants.
3. Only validating notifications for assessment where the proposals are clearly described.
4. Objecting to notifications for tree works in conservation areas which will have a negative impact on trees with a high level of visual amenity value through the making of a Tree Preservation Order.
5. Investigating any reported breaches to the TPO legislation in accordance with our enforcement procedures.
6. Encouraging replanting where felling is proposed.
7. Attaching conditions to planning applications to conserve, enhance or replace trees within conservation areas where appropriate.

16. Trees and development

- 16.1 Growth and development forms a key part of the Council's strategic agenda with large scale development planned over the life of the Tree Strategy within the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036²⁴. These, along with other smaller forms of development, create opportunities for a strategic tree management, new planting and offer opportunities to increase tree and woodland cover across the district.
- 16.2 Research shows that the retention of existing trees as part of new development can have significant benefits to the desirability of new developments. However, retained trees can be damaged as a result of construction, which ultimately degrades the character of any new scheme. To ensure that the full range of tree related benefits can be realised, the Council promotes the appropriate integration of existing natural features in all development schemes and promotes tree protection as part of the development process.

Policy TDM1. The Council will utilise its planning powers to retain and protect good quality trees where development is proposed. We will do this by:

1. Considering planning applications where trees could be affected, assessing them against current national and local planning policies.
2. Engaging with developers and applicants to promote appropriate tree retention and protection at all stages of a development.
3. Ensuring that planning applications which are likely to have arboricultural implications are supported by appropriate supporting information and those which do not contain such information are not validated. Conditions will be attached to a planning permission to retain and protect trees within a development where appropriate.
4. Seek additional new trees within landscaping proposals for major scale developments.
5. Where necessary, using the planning enforcement options available to the Council to protect trees in the face of unapproved forms of development.

²⁴Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/3872/190516-final-adopted-local-plan-to-2036.pdf>

16.3 In addition to protecting existing trees and natural features, developments provide a key opportunity for new tree planting. This can help increase canopy cover, diversify our existing tree population, and help to ensure a sustainable future tree stock is created.

Policy TDM2. The Council will promote appropriate tree planting as part of new developments. We will do this by:

1. Considering the number, type and proposed location of new trees where landscaping proposals are included within a planning application and assessing them against current national and local planning policies.
2. Seeking to enhance the local landscape character by ensuring the provision of appropriate species for the specific location.
3. Promoting the establishment of structural landscape belts to mitigate against adverse impacts associated with new or existing developments.
4. Seek additional new trees within landscaping proposals for major scale developments.
5. Conditions will be attached to a planning permission to retain and protect trees within a development where appropriate.

Where necessary, using the planning enforcement powers available to secure new tree planting and maintenance strategies are implemented according to their permission. Encouraging developers to achieve biodiversity net gain on sites by planting trees adapted to climate change and which will increase biodiversity.



Forster Road, Brampton (HDC)

17. Delivery, Monitoring and Review

17.1 This strategy covers a 10-year period from 2020 to 2030 and will be subject to regular monitoring by the Council’s arboricultural teams. The following delivery, monitoring and review programme is proposed:

	To whom	Information to be included in review
Annual reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant committee / panel • Updates published on the Council’s website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide updates on the progress made to meeting the actions set for that year and on the progress made on achieving longer term actions. • Provide details of any changes that may need to be made to the Action Plan so that the aims of the Tree Strategy can be best met. • A review of the resources used in that year to implement the actions set in the Action Plan and identify any potential areas for greater resources to best deliver the remaining actions of the Action Plan and overall visions and aims of the Tree Strategy. • Provide details on any industry or organisational changes that are likely to impact the use of the Tree Strategy or Action Plan and update both accordingly.
5 Year Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with stakeholder and working group. • Relevant committee / panel • Updates published on the Council’s website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the effectiveness of the policies within the Tree Strategy. • Provide details on the achievements and successes over the first 5 years as well as details on the remaining actions or progress yet to be made on outstanding actions. • Provide details on potential changes to the Tree Strategy to best meet outstanding actions and to reflect any changes in position.
10 Year Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with stakeholder and working group. • Reporting to Relevant committee / panel • Updates published on the Council’s website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a full review of the Tree Strategy. Set out a summary of the achievements made, what actions were successfully undertaken and any that require further work or need additional resources to address which can be taken forward into a new Tree Strategy.

Figure 21. Tree Strategy review programme

Appendix 1. Policy Context.

National Policies and Strategies

- **Trees in Towns II (*Department of Communities and Local Government. 2008*)**

This report sets out the results of a national survey which intended to estimate the tree stock in our urban areas and review its management by local authorities. The study concludes that although the management of the urban forest is a local government function and sets a number of targets in relation to this (including the production and adoption of a Tree Strategy), it promotes the use of partnership working with other organisations to ensure the throughout management of our urban trees.

- **National Planning Policy Framework (*Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government National Planning Policy Framework February. 2019*)**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England along with a framework for preparing local development plans and for making planning decisions. In paragraph 7 it states that 'the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development'. One of the three overarching objectives of the planning system is to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural environment and development plans should contain strategic policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and to address climate change (Paragraph 20c).

The NPPF states that planning policies should aim to enable and support healthy lifestyles, for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure (paragraph 91), plan green infrastructure to mitigate and adapt to climate change (paragraphs 149 and 150) and reduce the causes and impacts of flooding, including the use of sustainable drainage systems (paragraphs 157 and 165).

NPPF also advises that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment (paragraph 170) by protecting valued landscapes and sites of biodiversity and recognising the economic and other benefits of trees and woodland. In particular, developments resulting in the loss or deterioration of vulnerable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists (paragraph 175). Further, more detailed, guidance on planning for trees and woods is included in Planning Practice Guidance on implementing the NPPF.

- **Trees in the Townscape: A Guide for Decision Makers (*Trees and Design Action Group. 2012*)**

Trees in the Townscape: A Guide for Decision Makers takes a 21st century approach to urban trees, one that keeps pace with and responds to the challenges of our times. It offers 12 action-oriented principles spanning the range of planning, design, works and management issues that must be addressed for maximum economic, social and environmental returns. Each principle is supported by explanations of benefits and delivery mechanisms, as well as references for further reading.

- **Woodland Trust Tree Charter (*The Woodland Trust. 2017*)**
The Charter is based on 10 principles including planning greener local landscapes and planting for the future. The principles of the Charter are to be embedded within the Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy.
- **The National Adaptation Programme and the third strategy for climate adaptation reporting (*Department for Agricultural and Rural Affairs. 2018*)**
The National Adaptation Programme (NAP) sets out the actions that government propose to adapt and address climate change in the UK. The strategy sets out certain key actions to be taken over a set period.
- **Emergency Tree Plan for the UK. How to increase tree cover and address the nature and climate emergency (*Woodland Trust January. 2020*)**
This policy document sets out the key recommendations of The Woodland Trust in response to the climate and nature crisis. The document sets out how local authorities should maintain trees, create new polices for managing trees and woodlands and increasing canopy cover.

Regional Policies and Strategies

- **Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011)**
The County wide GI strategy is designed to assist in shaping and co-ordinating the delivery of Green Infrastructure in the county. Initially developed in collaboration with Cambridgeshire local authorities and statutory and non-statutory nature conservation organisations, it focuses on biodiversity, mitigating against climate change, promoting sustainable growth and supporting health and wellbeing.
- **Doubling Nature - A Vision for the Natural Future of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough in 2050 (*Natural Cambridgeshire*)**
This joint vision aims to double the area of rich wildlife habitats and natural green-space, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Huntingdonshire District Council is a partner organisation and supports the aims of putting nature at the heart of Cambridgeshire's development. The document specifically aims to increase tree cover and the network of woodlands, hedgerows, within and around our towns and cities which can be directly influenced by the Tree Strategy.

Local Policies and Strategies

- **Huntingdonshire District Council 2018 – 2022 Corporate plan**
The Council's Corporate Plan sets out our priorities for 2018-2022 and relates to all areas of service provision. The vision in the plan sets out our aspirations for the People of Huntingdonshire to live in a safe, healthy and prosperous Place where communities and businesses can thrive. The Corporate Plan makes specific reference to supporting people to improve their health and well-being and creating, protecting and enhancing our safe and clean built and green environment; both elements which are reflected in the Tree Strategy.
- **HDC Healthy Open Spaces Strategy.**
This strategy is based on extensive consultation with the public and user groups of our parks and open spaces to understand how our open spaces are used, enjoyed and valued by the community. The document sets out four strategic themes; shaping our parks and

open spaces with a community based approach to the development of these areas, creating communities through open space to tackle social isolation and improve wellbeing, celebrating our open spaces and seeking to reinvigorate our parks. The strategy seeks to rethink how HDC manage parks and open spaces to bring most benefit to the communities that use them.

- **Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036**

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 sets out the Council's approach to securing sustainable development from 2011 to 2036. The plan identifies key areas of land for development (known as allocations) to deliver the homes, jobs and services needed in the district, and includes policies against which all planning applications are considered. The Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy links directly to policy LP31 (Trees, woodlands and hedgerows) and more widely to a policies surrounding green infrastructure, landscape character, design and biodiversity.

- **Huntingdonshire Landscape & Townscape Assessment Supplementary Planning Document 2007. Forthcoming update 2020**

The revised SPD will provide information on the visual character of Huntingdonshire's landscape, spatial planning areas and key service centres. It will support the delivery of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 by raising awareness and understanding of the special qualities of the District, and assist the Council and neighbourhood plan groups in considering future priorities for the conservation, enhancement and regeneration of the area's countryside, villages and towns as well as providing developers with further guidance for planning proposals.

- **Huntingdonshire District Council Infrastructure Delivery Plan and November 2017 Update**

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan is an evidence base document that supports the Local Plan. It assesses the suitability of existing infrastructure provision (including green infrastructure elements) and identifies the infrastructure investment required to support growth.

- **Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2017**

This Supplementary Planning Document sets out design principles based on recognised best practice and explains key requirements that the Council will take into consideration when assessing planning proposals. Section 3.6 of the SPD addresses the Councils approach to the design of the public realm, which is of relevance to the Tree Strategy.

- **Conservation Area Appraisals**

A conservation area is 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. There are 61 conservation areas within Huntingdonshire, the majority of which have a Conservation Area Appraisal document. These designated areas may vary in character and size from a small group of buildings to a major part of a town, but their status means that they are worthy of protection. These areas provide a level of legal protection to certain trees within the designations and provide an important notification function for all tree works.

- **Neighbourhood plans**

Neighbourhood plans allow local communities to develop a shared plan for their local area to shape the development and growth of their own neighbourhood. There are a growing number of Neighbourhood Plans in Huntingdonshire, which in some cases do make reference to tree management matters.

Appendix 2. Pruning limitations

The following information provides guidance about the types of customer requests for tree works where Huntingdonshire District Council do not consider there to be justification for maintenance works. Each topic has a policy statement that outlines the reasons why the Council will not undertake trees in these situations.

Topic / Justification	Policy statement	Guidance
Tree Blocking Light	We do not prune or remove trees to improve natural light into a property or for solar panels in accordance to Common Law rights.	In law, there is no general right to light.
Trees overhanging garden (branch encroachment)	We do not prune or remove trees to stop the nuisance of overhanging branches in accordance with Common Law rights.	<p>You have a Common Law right to cut back any branches encroaching onto your property from a Council owned tree. However, this is only from the point where it crossed over onto your boundary.</p> <p>Before you consider doing any works to a tree(s), you should find out if it is protected by a Tree Preservation Order or is in a Conservation Area. If the tree(s) are protected, you will need to gain consent by making an application for tree works.</p> <p>Please see tree touching building section.</p>
Trees growing too big	We do not prune or remove a council owned tree because it is considered to be too big or tall. There are many types of tree species that vary in size, shape, and form. There is no obligation to prune trees to a uniformed shape or height.	<p>A tree may seem too big for where it is, but this does not make it dangerous.</p> <p>Our trees are visually surveyed for safety. Frequency of the visual survey will be between one to three years, depending on the trees condition and location.</p>
Low tree branches – Road, cycle, or foot path	<p>In accordance with the Highways Act 1980, we will carry out work to Council owned tree to maintain the following clearance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road – 5.5m height clearance • Cycle path next to a road or highway – 3m height clearance • Footpath next to a road or highway – 2.5m height clearance 	Any works necessary to prevent an obstruction in the width of a carriageway, cycle or foot path associated with the highway due to the presence of a Council owned tree would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Trees blocking my view	We do not prune or remove trees to improve the view from a private property.	Viewpoints from a dwelling may naturally change as a result of trees within the landscape.
Trees blocking my TV signal	We do not prune or remove trees to prevent interference with TV / satellite installation / reception.	Your satellite or TV provider may be able to suggest an alternative solution to the problem. Signal boosters should be considered.
Trees growing into telephone line	We do not prune or remove trees to stop or reduce interference with telephone wires.	Your telephone service provider may be able to suggest an alternative solution to the problem.
Leaves are falling into my garden	We do not prune or remove trees to stop or reduce leaf fall or remove fallen leaves from private property. Leaf fall is part of the natural cycle of deciduous trees in autumn	The loss of leaves from trees in the autumn is part of the natural cycle and cannot be avoided by pruning. The maintenance of gutters is the responsibility of the landowner and the Council is not obliged to remove leaves that may have fallen from our trees. In parks and green spaces, foot and cycle paths and areas of hard standing are regularly cleared.
Trees dropping; blossom / Fruit / berries / nuts / seeds	We do not prune or remove trees to stop or reduce fruit, berries, nuts or seeds falling as this part of the natural cycle of the tree species Extenuating circumstances: If the tree species is deemed to bearing poisonous fruit, it will be investigated and managed in accordance with the Council's tree policies	Blossom is a natural occurrence, which cannot be avoided by pruning. If you wish to exercise your Common Law right to abate the nuisance associated with encroaching trees - see Common Law Right. The maintenance of gutters is the responsibility of the landowner and the Council is not obliged to remove fruit/berries/nuts/seeds or seedlings that may have fallen from council owned trees. Should fallen fruit lead to a significant anti-social problem the Police should be contacted.
Tree roots and drainage systems	We do not prune, remove, or cut the roots of trees to prevent roots entering a drain that is already broken or damaged.	Tree roots typically invade drains that are already broken or damaged. Trees themselves very rarely break or damage a drain. Tree roots found in drains are usually due to an underlying problem with a broken pipe. If you are concerned about the condition of your drains, we advise you to contact your water and sewerage company.

Pollen, Allergies, Hay fever etc.	We do not prune or remove trees to stop or reduce the release of pollen. These are classed as seasonal cycles of certain tree species	We do not prune or remove a Council owned tree where a request has been made to do so because of a personal medical condition. If you are experiencing seasonal allergies, the normal advice is to close window to reduce the levels of pollen entering your property.
Tree dropping sap/sticky residue on property/car etc.	We do not prune or fell trees to remove or reduce honeydew or other sticky residue from trees. These are classed as seasonal cycle of certain tree species	Honeydew is a natural and seasonal problem that is related to a natural relationship between tree species and insects. When honeydew affects your car, wash with warm soapy which will help remove it. Also consider parking your vehicle away from the tree during the of year honeydew is dropping from the tree.
Birds in trees are making a mess on property/car etc.	We do not prune or remove a council tree to stop or reduce bird droppings from trees or remove bird droppings from private land. Birds are protected under the Wildlife & Country Act; it can be classed as a criminal offence deliberately disturbing or destroying a nesting site	Bird droppings may be a nuisance, but the problem is not considered a sufficient reason to prune or remove a tree. Nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (and other related wildlife law). Warm soapy water is usually sufficient in removing bird droppings. You are welcome to exercise your Common Law right to remove the nuisance associated with encroaching trees.
Animals inhabiting trees are causing a problem	We do not prune or remove trees to stop or reduce incidents of perceived pests; wild animals.	You are welcome to exercise your Common Law right to remove the nuisance associated with encroaching trees.
Insects	We do not prune or remove trees to stop or reduce incidents of perceived pests such as bees, wasps.	In such incidences it would be advised that you keep your distance from such insects and to contact the Local Authorities Pest Control service to assess the situation
Children/people climbing trees	We do not prune or remove trees to stop or reduce incidents of children / people climbing trees.	Some trees may attract children or members of public to climb them, based on their structural formation. We cannot practically manage or prevent a person from climbing a tree. We advise you to contact your local community Police Officer if you believe it is a risk or anti-social behavior
Utility Provider Works	Trees; Power lines: Only utility companies have the authority to work on trees near power lines.	The Council does not carry out any tree work near powerline based on statutory laws & legislation. We advise you contact UKPower Networks.

Trip hazard – footpaths	Huntingdonshire District Council have the responsibility of few footpath within the district	If you are concerned about a tree that might be causing a trip hazard to a footpath you can report to County Council Highways.
Suckers from tree roots	We do not prune or remove trees to stop or reduce the nuisance of sucker growth on private land.	You have the right to exercise your Common Law Rights to abate the nuisance associated tree roots and tree suckers.

Note: Extenuating circumstances

We have no general policy to remove trees bearing poisonous fruit / foliage (such as yew trees), however where it is claimed or known that unsupervised young children or livestock are likely to be exposed to poisonous berries or foliage and thorn species, such cases will be investigated and appropriate action considered. If you would like to report a concern over a tree with poisonous parts or thorns that unsupervised young children are exposed to please uses the Councils contact details.

Appendix 3. Tree Related Claims Management.

Subsidence & Property Damage

We consider our trees as an environmental asset that enhance the landscape. However, from time to time our trees may be identified as contributing to building damage. We understand the distress subsidence may cause to the property owners and ensure we follow a detailed route of investigation in these cases. Due to the legal implications of these types of investigations, the speed of progression in us looking into cases can fluctuate.

Council trees and subsidence claims.

If you believe that your property is being damaged because of tree related subsidence you should firstly contact your building insurer for advice.

Where a claim is made against a Council owned tree, the Council will reasonably expect an appropriate level of evidence to be provided to demonstrate that the tree in question is an influencing cause in the subsidence. In the case of a protected trees (one subject to a Tree preservation Order in a Conservation Area, this evidence is mandatory. As a guide this information is likely to comprise the following:

- Engineers assessment of damage to building
- Plan and profile of foundations
- Full details of all areas of damage attributed to the subsidence including a location plan of building in relation to trees both on and adjacent to the property.
- Soil analysis. Including proof of desiccation and details of liquid and plastic limits taken from both a trial pit and control pit
- Tree root identification from beneath foundation level
- Monitoring results (preferably for 12 months or more), including level monitoring
- Details of any drainage report carried out for the property
- Details of previous underpinning or relevant building works to the property

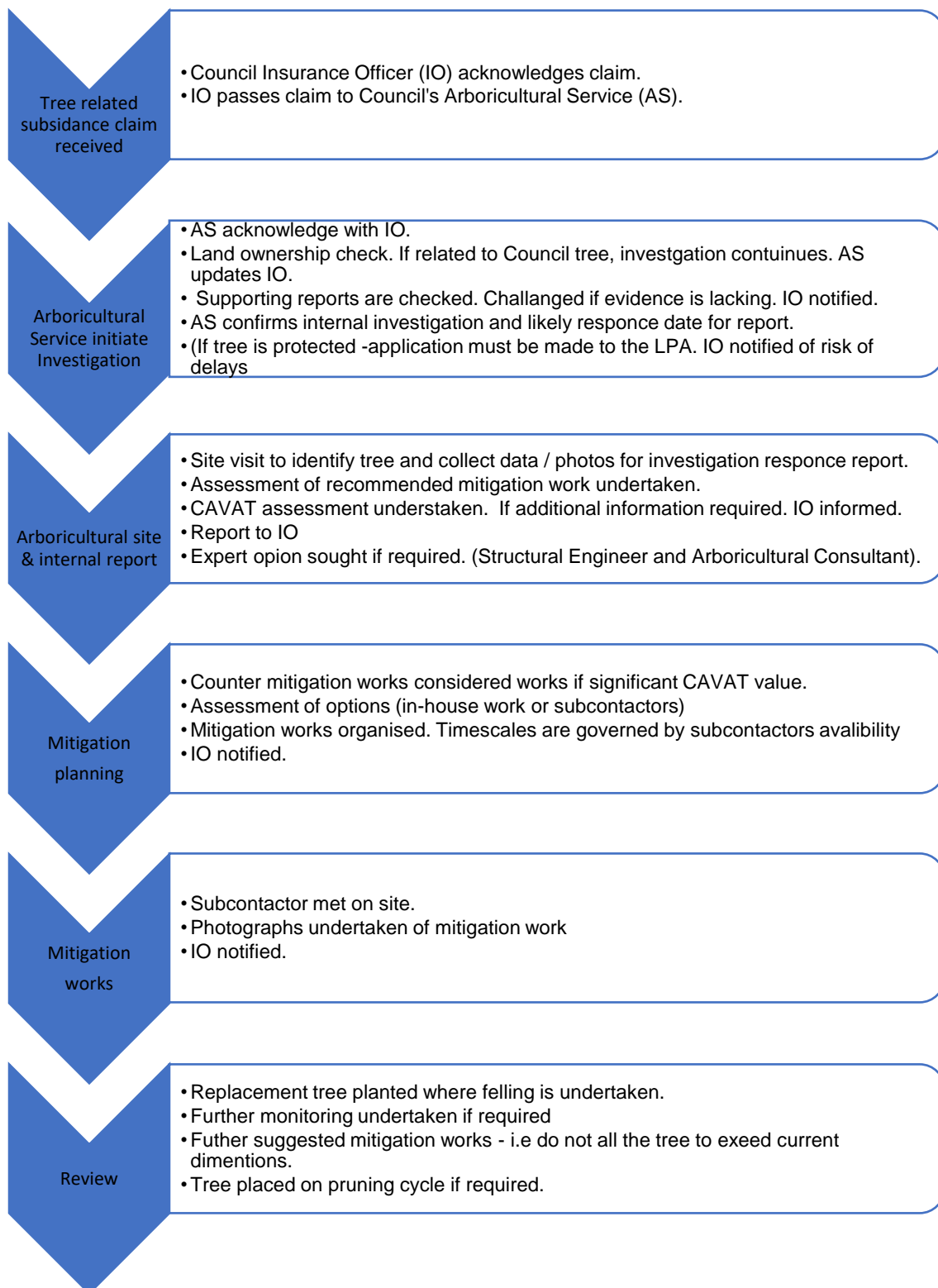
The exact level of information required will be determined by the monetary value of the tree (Tables A and B). Without the information specified it is unlikely that the Council will be able to take an informed view on any proposed works or an appropriate solution.

Protected trees owned and managed by the Council.

Where the implicated trees or vegetation are subject to a Tree Preservation Order, permission will be required from the Local Planning Authority before works can be undertaken. All applications based on building movement will need to be supported by the information set out in the standard application form.

Assessing subsidence and property damage Claims.

Where the Council receives a claim of building damage from an owned or managed tree, we will undertake the following investigations:



Information levels.

When investigating a subsidence case, the level of information required is based on the value of the tree. On this basis, the lowest value trees implicated in damage require less supporting evidence than higher value trees. We measure the value of trees based on the CAVAT system and the current values set by the London Tree Officer Association (LTOA) shown below. The level of information required is shown in Table A.

Current values bands. May 2020	•Low - less than £7672
	•Medium - from £7672 to £24,858
	•High - greater than £24,858

Low Value Trees
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report on damage to building. 2. Plan & profile of foundations. 3. Plan of site showing location of building in relation to all trees and significant vegetation in vicinity of site. 4. Trial pit cross section to underside of foundation depth plus borehole through base of trial pit to a minimum depth of 3m (explanation to be provided if borehole unable to reach 3m depth). Borehole log to be provided. 5. Root ID from beneath underside of foundation.
Medium Value Trees:
<p>All of the above plus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Soil moisture content readings at 0.5m centres, starting at the underside of the foundation, down to 3m depth of B/H. 2. Liquid limit test results at underside of foundation and approx 2m depth 3. Plastic limit test results at underside of foundation and approx. 2m depth. 4. Soil plasticity calculated from LL – PL. 5. Control borehole to 3m depth with log, with same tests as above, if it is possible to locate such a borehole on the site and remote from the influence of any vegetation. If impossible then explanation needed. 6. Oedometer or suction test results at underside of foundation & 1.0m centres down depth of 3m borehole ONLY when there is NO control borehole. If there is a control borehole then other tests listed are sufficient. 7. Shear vane test results at 0.5m centres, starting at the underside of the foundation, down to 3m depth of borehole(s). 8. CCTV & hydraulic testing to drains (excluding Water Board owned) located within 3m distance of area of subsidence damage. If unable to water test due to no access/blind entries/etc then give reason. 9. Crack monitoring is required on a maximum of 2 month frequency and is to be set up ideally at time of first visit by building insurer representative or within 7 days of 1st visit. Send all available readings with Submission of Evidence.
High Value Trees:
<p>All of the above EXCEPT crack width monitoring, plus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 15. Control borehole (if possible) & point of subsidence borehole, each to 5m depth (not 3m as for medium value). 2. 16. Level monitoring commencing at outset of claim for a relevant period (max. 12 months) using a deep datum (if possible) to 8m depth, otherwise use deep manhole. 3. 17. Particle Size Distribution Analysis to BS 1377 Part 2 test 9.0 on a single soil sample taken from a 1m zone below the underside of foundation (Only if drains are present within 3m of the site of damage).

Table A. Tree value bands and associated information levels.

Considering building damage and subsidence cases.

Tree subsidence claims can cause complication and distress to those involved, However, it also requires significant resources and Council Officer time.

Recently, the Council has seen an increase of tree related subsidence claims. This has highlighted that there is an ever-increasing risk of subsidence claims related to Council trees which inevitably will cause a financial issue if not effectively managed.

In response to this, the Council will endeavour to investigate and adopted a subsidence tree risk management programme which aims to develop a tree survey program which identifies Council trees that may pose a subsidence risk.

From this, a programme of tree maintenance will form base on the survey and risk categorisation to for future management that will contribute to reduced claims and financial impact. Although measures are being made to manage tree related subsidence claims, unfortunately there will always be a unforeseeable element with such cases due to outside uncontrollable factors. This is a reactive approach with the aim bring a balance with managing subsidence cases.

Table B sets out the key actions the Council will take in relation to reducing claims against it for damage to property alleged to have been caused by trees owned by the Council.

Actions the Council will take	Notes
1. Challenge unwarranted claims based on poorly investigated or inaccurate evidence.	Where claimants' submissions fall below the Council's standard for supporting evidence, deficiencies will be brought to the attention of the insurers and loss adjusters and challenged.
2. Adopt specific evidence requirements for trees of value and apply them to existing claims.	Generally as the value of the tree increases, the requirement for detailed information will increase. Placing a value on the tree at an early stage in the process is a key element in deciding the Council's response to a claim.
3. Instigate a tree removal and replacement regime where building movement is known to be an issue.	The Council will endeavour to allocate sufficient resources to enable a survey of its tree stock to be carried out and analysis to be carried out of tree locations, species and the incidence of claims.
4. Reject claims where the evidence provided indicates another cause for movement. The claimant will be informed of the Council's decision.	The tree claim report pro-forma will provide the mechanism to make a decision.

Direct tree damage to property

Trees can cause direct damage to buildings and structures through direct contact with their roots, branches and stem. Large established buildings, such as houses, aren't normally affected; it's the smaller structures, such as walls, patios, sheds and garages, which are most at risk.

The damage would normally be caused by the annual increase in the girth of the root, branch or stem; as it increases in diameter it lifts or pushes the structure. The concrete foundations of most modern buildings are able to withstand such incremental growth, or to prevent root access altogether.

What to do if you notice damage to your property

You must first contact your insurers, who may ask for a report from a qualified structural engineer. If there are trees in the vicinity, it would be a good idea to contact an arboricultural consultant to carry out an assessment.

Once the Council has received the notice of claim, an assessment will be undertaken in accordance to claim processes. In all circumstances, the Council's insurance office will send a claim form to the claimant as part of the procedure of investigation. Once acknowledged, communication is only to be between claimant or representative of claimant and Councils insurers.

Subsidence, building damage and trees. Frequently asked questions.

What is subsidence?

It is ground or foundation movement that normally results in the cracking of external and/or internal property walls.

Can trees cause subsidence?

Yes. When tree roots enter a shrinkable, clay soil, they can take up enough moisture to cause the clay to dry and shrink. As a result, any foundation built upon the clay may move or subside.

Can trees cause subsidence on any soil?

Normally it would be shrinkable clay soils.

What should I do if I suspect a tree is causing subsidence damage?

Trees close to buildings and other built structures can increase the risk of subsidence when roots extract moisture from shrinkable clay soils beneath foundation level. If you suspect that trees (council owned or on neighbouring private land) are causing subsidence to your property, then it is important that you contact your home insurance provider. Your insurance company will look into your concerns and may want to investigate the damage as part of a claim. If they believe that a council or neighbour's tree is implicated in the damage, they will contact the respective tree owners on your behalf.

If I suspect tree-related subsidence what should I do?

You should report it immediately to your building insurer. They may undertake investigations and produce evidence that either identify that a tree is contributing to the subsidence.

What is the situation if the tree causing subsidence is protected?

The Council has a dual responsibility: to protect trees in the interests of public amenity, but also to try and ensure that no individual suffers undue loss, distress or damage resulting from this.

What information will the Council require to support a subsidence-related, tree work application on a tree covered by a Preservation Order?

The key information the Council will normally require to decide the most appropriate course of action is taking into account:

- the age of the property and any extensions
- the ownership of the tree(s)
- the nature of the problem
- details of any historical defect monitoring
- type and depth of existing foundations
- details of soil type and composition to a depth of approximately 3m
- evidence of tree root presence below foundation level
- evidence that any roots found belong to the suspected trees
- measurement of subsoil shrinkage potential at and below foundation level

- a plan showing accurate locations of relevant site features including buildings, drains and trees on, or adjacent to, the site
- a plan showing the borehole sampling locations

How can I obtain this evidence?

Your home insurer would usually arrange this but if not you should employ a suitably qualified and experienced building surveyor or a structural engineer who will carry them out for you.

What is 'soil heave'?

Heave can only occur where subsidence has occurred before it: the shrunken clay, in re-wetting, returns to its original volume, thus causing uplift to any foundation set upon it. If a tree has not been the cause of clay shrinkage, its removal cannot cause heave - any surplus water will simply drain away.

Appendix 4 - Glossary of Terms.

Ancient Trees – Trees significantly older, and often larger in girth, than the general tree population providing a rich variety of habitats for wildlife.

Ancient Semi Natural Woodlands – Woodland thought to have been in existence since at least 1600 and designated on the Natural England register of ancient woodlands.

Arboriculture - The cultivation, management, and study of trees for purposes other than timber production. The science of arboriculture studies how trees grow and respond to cultural practices and to their environment.

Biosecurity - Procedures or measures designed to protect the population against harmful biological or biochemical substances.

Canopy Cover – The area of ground occupied (covered) by the overall branch spread of trees normally expressed as a percentage of the total land area.

Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees (CAVAT) – A method developed by the London Tree Officers Association (LTOA) in 2008 to allow a consistent allocation of monetary value to trees.

Conservation Area - An area of notable environmental or historical interest or importance which is protected by law against undesirable changes.

Detailed tree inspection – An inspection of a tree which involves a physical examination of its parts using specialised equipment. Normally to gather data of the tree's condition to determine a management plan.

Felling – To cut down a tree.

High Water Demand Trees – Trees that take up large amounts of water from the soil in comparison to other species with a lesser capacity to extract water.

Lopping - Refers to the removal of large side branches and the making of vertical cuts. Often used to describe crude, heavy-handed or inappropriate pruning.

Natural Regeneration – Young self-sown trees derived from naturally distributed seed produced by nearby trees.

Particulate Pollution - Pollution of an environment that consists of particles suspended in some medium. There are three primary forms: atmospheric particulate matter, marine debris, and space debris. Some particles are released directly from a specific source, while others form in chemical reactions in the atmosphere. Particulate pollution can be derived from either natural sources or anthropogenic processes.

Plantations on ancient woodland sites - Ancient woods that have been felled and replanted with non-native species.

Pocket Woodland – Small woodlands that are not connected to another significant tree population.

Pollarding – A traditional and historical management technique often used in deer parks and wood pasture which involves reducing the tree to a height of around 3 to 4 m on a cyclical basis to provide firewood and small poles; the regrowth is then safe from browsing livestock and deer. Today, pollarding is often used to control the crown spread of trees. Cyclically reduction to a low framework of branches is a form of pollarding. Some species are particularly tolerant of this treatment such as lime, London plane and willow.

Priority habitat – A habitat identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Post 2010 Biodiversity Framework.

UK Post 2010 Biodiversity Framework. Developed in response to two main drivers: the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD's) Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020

Semi Mature Trees – Trees in the first third of their life cycle and growing strongly.

SUDS – Acronym for Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes which allow for natural drainage of water runoff from roofs and hard surfaces into the ground, rather than directing runoff into the sewerage and main drainage systems.

Shelterbelts – Treed areas that envelop housing estates and open spaces, forming screens or acting as sound barriers from roads or industrial estates.

Specimen Trees - Largely free standing, Council owned trees in streets or public open spaces.

Structured Soils – Specially formed soils that can be compacted but still allow root growth and water percolation. Normal structural soils have a high percentage of sand and gravels.

Topping - The practice of removing whole tops of trees or large branches and/or trunks from the tops of trees, leaving stubs or lateral branches that are too small to assume the role of a terminal leader.

Tree Stocks – The total of a particular population of trees.

Tree Belt – Narrow belt of trees typically 15 to 20 m often planted for screening and shelter.

Tree Preservation Order - Designated under the Town and Country Planning Act. A TPO is made by a local planning authority (usually a local council) to protect specific trees or a particular area, group or woodland from deliberate damage and destruction if those trees are important for the amenity of the area.

Urban Forest – All trees and woody vegetation which grow within an urban area regardless of ownership.

Uprooting – To pull out by or as if by the roots, to remove violently or tear away from a native place or environment.

Veteran Trees – Traditionally, trees with the same characteristics as given for ancient trees. However, more recently, the term has been expanded to include trees of any age that have features that support wildlife such as splits, cracks, holes and dead wood.

VTA – Visual Tree Assessment, a recognised method of surveying trees based on visual observation and minimal physical examination of parts of a tree.

Ward - Electoral districts at a sub-national level represented by one or more Councillors.

Huntingdonshire Tree Action Plan

Part of the Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020 – 2030



Background.

The Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020-2030 sets the Council's approach to arboricultural administration over the next 10 years with the aim of managing our districts trees in a sustainable way to ensure that their benefits are experienced by current and future generations. To fulfil this vision, we have set 7 key objectives:

- I. To promote sustainable management of the Council's trees through effective use of our resources.
- II. To maximise the environmental, economic and health benefits of trees across the district;
- III. To fulfil the Council's duty of care in respect of the management of its tree stock;
- IV. To create a legacy of tree planting across the district;
- V. To promote community engagement in all aspects of tree planting and management, realising the maximum benefits they can provide;
- VI. Make efficient and strategic use of the Council's regulatory powers for the protection of trees of current and future value.

The work required to fulfil these objectives not only involves the management of trees owned by the Council, but also those which are privately owned or are managed by a third-party organisation.

This Action Plan sets out our approach to fulfilling these objectives. It also highlights the key projects we aim to complete over the life of the strategy and sets out our priorities for our day to day arboricultural management. The objectives listed are categorised to indicate their priority. This priority system is based on the following:

Green	Long term projects which will either evolve over the course of the Action Plan or form part of our core day to day operations
Amber	Tasks that have already commenced or are less time and resource sensitive than those categorised as "red".
Red	Projects that require immediate attention and additional resources



Key Aim 1: To promote sustainable management of the Council's trees through effective use of our resources

Objective	Expected outcomes	Likely resources required	Reason	Target Timescale
1. Developing a tree population that is healthy, varied in age and diverse in species.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A healthy and diverse tree population where risk is managed to be "As Low as Reasonably Practicable" 2. Creation of a traceable record of management operations of Council trees. 	<p>Officer time (Operations and Tree Surgery Staff)</p> <p>Arboricultural Sub-contractors</p>	<p>To meet the Council's legal duty of care and maximise the environmental, social and community and economic benefits to of trees in Huntingdonshire</p> <p>To allow for savings & budget forecasting</p>	On-going over the duration of the Action Plan.
2. To ensure sufficient data and resources are in place to enable the efficient and sustainable management of the districts tree population.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborative projects initiating investigations to address key issues with Huntingdonshire's tree population. 2. Working towards a progressive movement increasing the canopy cover 	<p>Joint Officers time</p> <p>Engaging with other authorities and partner organisations</p>	<p>To secure the future management of trees within the district.</p> <p>To ensure sufficient funding is in place to allow tree management issues to be addressed as and when they arise (pest and disease outbreaks for example)</p>	Currently in progress – view to be completed mid 2022
3. Ensure essential tree maintenance is met through proactive maintenance planning.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continued development of using Council approved Tree Surgery companies & Arboricultural Consultants 2. Adoption of a priority system of maintenance programs for the Councils trees reflected in the Tree Strategy 	Officer time (Operations) and in-house tree surgery staff	<p>To allow a value for money service that efficiently delivers services to be developed.</p> <p>To allow thorough management of the Councils tree stock and meet our duty of care.</p>	Currently in progress – view to be completed early 2022
4. Develop the current tree surveying & evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encompassing all trees under HDC ownership to be captured / recorded, creating a user-friendly data base of all trees that can be used to assess, develop, budget setting & forecasting, tree planting. 	<p>External asset software providers (HDC currently use Ezytreev as an asset management system for recording & survey its trees)</p> <p>Officers time and collaboration with service area which manage trees.</p>	<p>To allow a value for money service that efficiently delivers services to be developed Legal duty of care.</p> <p>To ensure a robust and traceable system of management is in place for all Council owned trees.</p> <p>To allow for accurate resource allocation.</p>	Undertake project scoping exercise by end financial year 2021

<p>2. Staff training & development</p>	<p>1. Creation of an internal training and development programme for Council staff involved with managing arboricultural matters across all services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with external professional training bodies, recognised national organisations (The Woodland Trust and Ancient Tree Forum etc) and Cambridgeshire Tree Officers Group. • Officers time across service areas. 	<p>To inspire staff involved with tree management, increase staff retention and invest in people.</p> <p>To meet the Councils duty of care, ensure accountability of decision making.</p> <p>Growth of collaborative working across services.</p>	<p>Training programme in place by end 2021</p>
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Key Aim 2: To maximise the environmental, economic and health benefits of trees across the district.

Objectives	Expected outcomes	Resource required	Reason	Target Timescale
1. Promote excellence in arboriculture	1. The Council continues to demonstrate working in accordance with industry best practice. 2. Adoption of new methods for working as per industry changes.	Officers time Training & development of staff involved with managing trees within the district	To ensure HDC are demonstrating best practice in Council trees are managed to the best possible standards. To increase tree retention through all age categories; young through to veteran To maximise the ecological and environmental benefits of our trees.	On-going over the duration of the Action Plan
2. Tree retention & evaluation	Evidencing the importance of tree retention and investment	Officers time External organisations; Woodland Trust / LTOG / Ancient Tree Forum?? Evaluation software systems Arboricultural consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & wellbeing • Social & community • Environmental & ecology • Carbon footprint?? • Monetary value of HDC tree population?? 	Undertake project scoping exercise by 2024
3. Developing a monetary value of Council trees.	1. Development of a monetary evaluation report of HDC trees within towns.	Officer time and training External arboricultural consultancy to investigate option for evaluation. Possible funding for development / adoption of Monetary Software System. For example – CAVAT itree	To support tree related building subsidence investigations and tree management decisions Demonstrate the true value of trees within urban areas and provide data to contribute towards the Councils environmental commitments. To allow for allocation of resources and highlight areas for resource investment. To demonstrate the economic value of trees in market towns	Undertake project scoping exercise by 2024

<p>4. Develop and promote tree biosecurity policy that reflects future environmental challenges</p>	<p>1. Development and adoption of HDC Biosecurity Strategy which promotes the creation of a sustainable tree stock and the protection of our existing trees and woodlands.</p> <p>2. Biosecurity policies and actions put in place to ensure we protect our tree stock across all services that interact with trees.</p>	<p>Collaboration of officers to set out scope for a strategy (Operations, Countryside Services, Planning and those involved in landscape management).</p> <p>Possible resources required to implement any changes to working practices as a result of the strategy.</p>	<p>Protecting our current and future tree stock from pests and disease.</p> <p>Management of a sustainable tree population.</p> <p>The creation of a cross departmental strategy will assist with all those involved with arboricultural management in ensuring our everyday activities do not result in outbreaks and we are able to act appropriately if an outbreak occurs.</p>	<p>Undertake project scoping exercise by end 2021.</p>
<p>5. Engage with Tree Warden Groups and Parish / Town Councils on industry changes.</p>	<p>1.Provision of information surrounding current industry issues where necessary to the local Tree Wardens Network and Parish/Town Councils.</p>	<p>Officer time (Operations and Development Management)</p> <p>Officer collaboration with Cambridgeshire Tree Officers Group</p>	<p>Tree Warden Groups and Parish / Town Council specialised members are an important part of managing local tree populations across the district.</p> <p>Promoting engagement with these groups is important as changes in the industry occur</p>	<p>Ongoing engagement over the life of the strategy.</p>

Key Aim 3: To fulfil the Council's duty of care in respect of the management of its tree stock

Objectives	Expected outcomes	Resource required	Reason	Target Timescale
1. Develop the Council's current tree surveying system	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A review of current asset management systems which will evaluate the benefits and drawback of current tree surveying systems. 2. Investment in new equipment, with the view to create a tree data base that can be accessed by all members of Council staff that have a level of responsibility with survey Council trees 3. To seek modern computer hardware and software that is more user friendly than the current systems 	<p>Officers time</p> <p>3C ICT</p> <p>External asset management software company</p> <p>Staff training & development</p>	<p>To ensure the Council is utilising current tree surveying software and all Council trees are captured under one tree management system</p> <p>To maintain maintenance and survey details and create a systematic tree surveying system that is robust</p>	<p>Undertake project scoping exercise by end 2021.</p>
4. Investigate and develop HDC "Trees in relation to buildings Subsidence" policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of a robust policy that contains all essential guidelines on managing subsidence cases. 2. Creation of guidance for residents on how the Council deal with building movement around trees. 3. Developing a tree subsidence risk project (Councils trees) which promoted proactive prevention mitigation works. 	<p>Officers time (Operations, Development, 3C Legal)</p> <p>Staff Training & development</p> <p>Neighbouring authority collaborative opportunities</p> <p>Possible use of Consultants in high profile cases.</p>	<p>To reduce claims related to buildings subsidence linked to Council trees and reduce insurance premiums</p> <p>To allow for efficient use of existing staff resources.</p>	<p>Undertake project scoping by end 2021 and report options by end 1st Q 2022.</p>
4. Investigate and develop a tree risk	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adoption of a TRMS. 	<p>Officers time</p>	<p>To fulfil the Councils duty of care and measure and reduce risk</p>	

management system (TRMS)	2. Creation of an accessible and tree risk report or data base.	Arboricultural consultant's appointment where required to develop strategy External asset management software company Staff training & development	To guide resources on delivering an annual tree maintenance program. To create a value for money service Reduce insurance claims	Undertake project scoping by end 2021 and report options by end 1st Q 2022.
5. Encompass all trees owned or managed by HDC under one central management regime.	1. Creation and adoption of one central management regimen for all service areas with a responsibility of tree management.	Councils departments that have trees on their sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countryside • Estates • One Leisure • Any other Officers time	To effectively manage the Councils duty of care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	Ongoing project with the view to be completed by 2025
6. Update the Public tree maintenance requests system	1. Develop a clear concise guidance document that is available for; public / Council officers / customer services. Contains information on how HDC maintains its trees and processes involved	Officer Time	Improve public relations and allow effective management and allocation of resources. Public information.	On-going over the duration of the Action Plan

Key Aim 4: To create a legacy of tree planting across the district

Objectives	Expected outcomes	Resources required	Reason	Target Timescale
1. Continued development of the tree planting program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation of the annual tree planting program Increase of canopy cover within the district 	<p>Officers time and engagement with voluntary groups</p> <p>Collaboration with Woodland Trust / charity organisations</p> <p>Tree planting & young tree maintenance equipment</p> <p>Resources to fund increased tree purchases.</p>	<p>To maximise the environmental, social and community benefits of trees.</p> <p>Increase tree canopy cover and create a sustainable tree population.</p>	On-going over the duration of the Action Plan
2. Celebratory tree planting programme – revamp memorial tree program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current planting scheme and propose changes Promote planting programme 	<p>Officers time</p> <p>Internal services investigation</p> <p>Press & Comms</p>	<p>To maximise the environmental, social and community benefits of trees.</p> <p>Increase tree canopy cover and plant trees for the future</p>	On-going over the duration of the Action Plan
3. Increase urban canopy cover relative to available planting space and aim to increase overall urban tree canopy cover to a minimum of 20% by 2030.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning of a canopy cover assessment. Identification of appropriate canopy cover levels for land typographies across the district. Creation of a programme to increase / maintain tree canopy cover across key area 	<p>External Arboricultural Consultant to undertake canopy cover assessment.</p> <p>Review by HDC Departments to develop recommendations of assessment into actions.</p>	<p>Canopy cover is an effective method of assessing the benefits a tree population can bring to an area.</p> <p>A canopy cover of 20% minimum in urban areas is considered to be nationally required to maximise the benefits gained from trees</p>	<p>Canopy Cover Assessment complete by mid-2021.</p> <p>Canopy cover action plan complete by mid-2022.</p>

<p>4. Take part in and support national tree planting events.</p>	<p>1. Participation in planting events in line with Tree Week and other national initiatives.</p>	<p>Arboricultural Officers in Operations / Development. Support of Countryside Services Promotion by elected members.</p>	<p>To publicise and promote the benefits of tree planting to community groups and individuals' residents and businesses across Huntingdonshire.</p>	<p>Annual participation in national tree week and other events when possible.</p>
<p>5. Understand and improve establishment rates of new trees on development sites.</p>	<p>1. Monitoring of tree establishment rates planted as part of landscape schemes.</p>	<p>Officer input to review the potential to monitor tree establishment rates. Resources required to implement or support any monitoring function. Possible involvement with outside voluntary organisations and/or Parish/Town Councils.</p>	<p>New green infrastructure is a key part of site development and has the potential to significantly contribute to the districts tree population. However, information on establishment rates for new planting is not currently known.</p>	<p>Undertake project scoping by end 2021 and report options by end 1st Q 2022.</p>

Key Aim 5: To promote community engagement in all aspects of tree planting and management, realising the maximum benefits they can provide

Objectives	Expected outcomes	Resource required	Reason	Target Timescale
1. Promote voluntary working parties (young trees in your area – ownership) and promote education events.	1. Development of collaborative community tree planting projects	Officers time and collaborative working across service areas.	Community engagement projects enhance community ownership and promote health & wellbeing. To maximise the benefits of trees.	As and when opportunities arise.
2. Engage with national tree planting events	As above	Officers time and collaborative working across service areas.	As above	Follow annual organised events and national planting / management schemes. As and when opportunities arise.

Key Aim 6: Make efficient and strategic use of the Council's regulatory powers for the protection of trees of current and future value

Objectives	Expected outcomes	Resources required	Reason	Target Timescale
1. Implement a rolling review programme for all existing Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completion of a review of existing TPOs over the life of the strategy. 2. A rolling review programme implemented for all existing and future TPOs. 	<p>Officer time to provide funding options for the project.</p> <p>Financial implications expected to include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appointment of additional Officer. OR 2. Outsourcing to a consultancy to undertake the review. 	<p>Good practice under the scope of the Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 2012.</p> <p>HDC administers approx. 900 TPOs with 20% being made before 1970. These dated orders are resource intensive to administer, difficult to interpret by the public and reflect land uses that are no longer present.</p>	Project plan to set by April 2022 and resourcing options presented.
2. To digitise the Councils data in relation to Tree Preservation Orders.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Digitised TPO files for existing and historic orders. 	<p>Officer time to manage the project (Customer Services, Development Management, Transformation and ICT)</p> <p>Appointment of document management service to digitise existing TPO data</p>	<p>Improved access to TPO information to officers, regardless of working location.</p> <p>To preserve important information contained in deteriorating files.</p>	Scanning and digitising information by end 2021 (Current funding bid dependant)
3. Utilise the Council's website as a source of information in relation to protected trees.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Electronic copies of all existing TPOs available on the HDC website. 2. Improved GIS mapping for public inspection of TPOd trees, including address search and key information. 	<p>Officer time to manage the project (Customer Services, Development Management, Transformation and ICT)</p> <p>Appointment of document management service to digitise existing TPO data</p>	<p>Improved customer experience when trying to ascertain information</p> <p>To decrease costs of providing TPO documents</p>	Options for project scope and resourcing developed and presented by mid-2021

<p>4. To keep methods for assessment of protected trees and applications for works under review in line with emerging industry best practice.</p>	<p>1. Updated working and assessment methods when required</p>	<p>Officer review on a rolling basis. No additional project or resources required.</p>	<p>To ensure the Council are working to current industry best practice and can provide information based on current arboricultural thinking.</p>	<p>Reviews undertaken in line with industry changes and publication of new guidance.</p>
<p>5. Review standard conditions used for tree works applications.</p>	<p>1. Review of all tree related conditions used for tree works applications.</p>	<p>Officer time (Development Management and Planning Enforcement)</p>	<p>The enforceability of conditions used in relation to tree works applications is essential to allow certain aspects (such as replanting) to be managed.</p>	<p>Review complete by end 2021.</p>

Key Aim 7: To recognise, promote and protect important tree populations within Huntingdonshire

Objectives	Expected outcomes	Resource required	Reason	Target Timescale
1. Locate important tree species populations and ancient / vet trees in HDC Ownership.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project to locate and map Ancient and Veteran trees in HDC ownership. 2. Development of a veteran and ancient tree management plan. 3. Develop / promote education and training in management techniques and practices among services who interact with ancient and veteran 	Assessment of resourcing options required with consideration to the use of external consultants to undertake work or resourcing internally.	These tree groups are nationally rare and make up less than 5% of the national tree population. A location study and management plan for these trees is needed to ensure their protection and enhancement.	Options for project resourcing developed and presented by 2026
2. Promote the recording of ancient and veteran trees on the National Ancient Tree Inventory.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recording of ancient and veteran trees across the district and population of the National Tree Inventory website data. 	Assessment of resourcing options required with the potential to engage with Parish Tree Wardens.	As above	Options for project resourcing developed and presented by 2026
3. Locate and record orchards in the ownership / management of HDC.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Locate and evaluate all Orchards on HDC managed land. 2. Development of Action Plan for Orchard Site. 3. Review of site which may be suitable for new orchard planting. 	Assessment of resourcing options required with consideration to the use of external consultants to undertake work or resourcing internally.	Orchards are a key landscape characteristic of Huntingdonshire, have significant historic and cultural importance as well as being ecologically diverse. Protection and enhancement of our Orchard is an important part of our tree management	Options for project resourcing developed and presented by 2026

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK JOINT GROUP held as a Remote Meeting via Zoom on Friday, 16 October 2020

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs M L Beuttell, Mrs A Costello, R J West and Mrs S R Wilson.

APOLOGY: An Apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor T D Sanderson.

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

that Councillor R J West be elected Chairman of the Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Group for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

Councillor R J West in the Chair.

In his introductory remarks, the Chairman welcomed the news that a 99 year lease had been obtained for the Country Park and that 3 of Huntingdonshire's parks and open spaces had been awarded the Green Flag Award 2020, including Hinchingsbrooke.

2 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2020 were approved as a correct record.

3 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

4 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

that Councillor Mrs M L Beuttell be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Group for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

5 MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP

To note the Membership of the Group for 2020/21 as follows:

(a) Cambridgeshire County Council

Councillor Ms A Costello.

(b) Huntingdonshire District Council

Councillors Mrs M L Beuttell, T D Sanderson, R J West and Mrs S R Wilson.

6 SENIOR RANGER'S REPORT

The Group received and noted the contents of the Senior Ranger's report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) and a PowerPoint presentation on park activities for the period March to September 2020. In doing so, comment was made as follows:

Staffing and Volunteers

Members were informed of the impact of COVID-19 upon both staff and volunteers. Volunteer work parties had come to a halt which had resulted in increased work upon staff. Given the measures put in place, some work, such as chainsaw work, could not be undertaken as the site initially operated with one member of staff available at a time.

In addition to the work parties all other volunteering activities had also ceased owing to the pandemic. Members were however encouraged to note that, with the exception of the SEN group, all volunteer roles had now restarted and had been welcomed back via a phased approach. Members were assured that risk assessments and safe working practices were being thoroughly reviewed to ensure compliance with COVID-19 guidance in respect of both the voluntary workforce and external organisations that were hiring rooms at the Countryside Centre.

In response to a question raised by the Chairman, it was hoped that there would be an increase in volunteers as a result of the pandemic. The Senior Ranger confirmed that new volunteers had already signed up and started their roles at the Park. The Group concurred that the Country Park remained a vital asset to Huntingdonshire and that focus should remain on keeping the Park busy and thriving despite these challenging times.

Park Management

Despite the pandemic, the Group were encouraged to note the range of work undertaken at the site over the busy summer months which included keeping up with increased litter and antisocial behaviour, maintenance of meadow grassland areas and mown pathways, installation of the first layer of the new path along Top Ride at Bob's Wood, completion of tree safety works, repairing potholes around the Main Lake path and completing a "spring clean" tidy up and reorganisation of the yard and workshops.

With the assistance of the volunteer work parties new posts and rail fences had been installed in the extended yard area, the seasonal wildflower meadow had been cut and park signage and furniture had been refurbished and repaired.

Pursuant to Minute No. 19/11, Mrs S R Wilson requested an update on how the Park was progressing towards the production and sale of biofuel to the public.

The Senior Ranger informed that this project had dropped off as a priority owing to the pandemic but that investigations would be made in the near future.

Community Groups

Many of the Park's Community Groups had now resumed their activities with suitable safety procedures. Particular mention was made of the Huntingdon Canoe Club and the Huntingdonshire Bee Keeper's Association. The former had restarted activities in line with British Canoeing Guidance and whilst the latter remained closed, refurbishment works to the viewing gallery had been completed.

Satellite Sites

The Group were encouraged to note the range of maintenance works being undertaken at Views Common, Stukeley Meadows and Spring Common. Discussions have been ongoing with the District Council's Tree Officer about conserving some veteran and rare species of oak trees at the Views Common site.

Countryside Centre

Attention was drawn to occupancy levels and the number of bookings taken at the Countryside Centre between March - September 2020 compared with the previous financial years. Owing to COVID-19, the Centre remained closed to the public until 20th July 2020 where it reopened for one booking a day using both rooms to allow for social distancing. Given the move towards remote meetings, room bookings have significantly reduced. Despite this, the Centre has provisionally managed to secure a new weekly booking and was starting to receive new enquiries for room hire from new businesses and organisations who had not previously used the facility.

In terms of staffing, a member of staff employed within the Countryside Centre had left in July 2020. The role has not been replaced and the Countryside Manager was currently managing bookings with the ability to negotiate timings and charges.

Cafe

It was reported that the café closed on 16th March 2020 and reopened to provide a "grab and go" service on 23rd May 2020 operating with one member of staff and shorter opening hours. Members were encouraged to note the positive outcomes which had been achieved which included near to zero on food wastage, higher overall profit at 68% and low staffing costs. Options for a quality gift sales point in the café was currently being considered in the short to medium term. It was noted that to aid the winter months, outdoor heaters would be purchased for use in the area outside the café and that consideration would also be given to providing some sheltered cover in this area too.

The Countryside Manager reported that COVID had presented an opportunity for the Country Park to review its investment programme. Plans were now beginning to create a restaurant type facility. In the short term, the existing café would be developed to include a gift shop alongside the current "grab and go" service. In

the longer term, the need for both would be reviewed once the building works are completed.

Events, Activities and Promotions

Despite having to cancel a number of regular events, the Country Park had managed to successfully hold a number of cinema events and a Boogie Night event over the summer months generating a total of £7,626 in income. These presented an opportunity to trial an outdoor bar, which had proved a success and was now also being considered as part of the future long-term plans for the Park.

It was reported that planning for this year's Santa's Grotto via Zoom calls was currently underway. A decision was yet to be made about presents being delivered to participants as part of the event and it was confirmed that a charge would be levied upon those wishing to visit Santa. The Group commended the Countryside Manager and her staff for the creative and innovative ideas that were being pursued at the Park.

Car Parking

Councillor Mrs M L Beuttell informed the Group that car parking charges had been reintroduced back at the Country Park and encouraged all to download and use the MI Permit App which provided some scope for local advertisements and discounts. Following a suggestion made by a Member to introduce signage informing users that income generated from car parking fees were utilised by the Country Park, Councillor Mrs M L Beuttell undertook to review this suggestion and confirm when exactly this change would be implemented by the District Council. The Countryside Manager confirmed that this was likely to be from April 2021.

Financial Position

Members attention was drawn to the financial position of the Park at the end of 2019/20 financial year where overspends were reported on Hinchingsbrooke Country Park and Management attributed to the reduction in income from S106 projects coming to the end of their life. Members were however encouraged to note that an underspend of £20,000 had been achieved at the Countryside Centre owing to the generation of income from events including New Year's Eve and the Christmas Grotto and the hire of rooms. Additionally, it was reported that the café had overspent by £35,000 which was largely due to the number of casual café assistants employed over the financial year.

For 2020/21 financial year, there would be an expected overspend across all Countryside Services owing to the coronavirus pandemic. It was expected that the use of the café and Countryside Centre would not reach pre-COVID levels during the remainder of this year.

Following questions, the Countryside Manager confirmed that all avenues for generating additional income were being explored, including the possibility of repeating the outdoor cinema events whilst being mindful of competition from other local service providers.

Any Other Business

The Countryside Manager drew the Group's attention to car parking issues at Christie Drive. Councillor Mrs M L Beuttell undertook to give some thought to the matter with the Countryside Manager outside of the meeting. The Group were encouraged to submit their thoughts to Councillor Mrs M L Beuttell directly. In response to a question which had been raised, it was confirmed that increased car parking at the site had been included as part of the long-term development plans for the Park.

7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Group would be held on 12th March 2021 at 10:00am.

Chairman

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