



A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held as a **REMOTE MEETING VIA ZOOM** on **THURSDAY, 21 JANUARY 2021** at **6:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

AGENDA

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 3 - 4)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 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. ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY (Pages 5 - 68)

To receive a report from the Economic Development Officer seeking approval of the Economic Growth Strategy.

Executive Councillor: R Fuller.

Contact Officer: P Gibbons - (07562) 435361

4. CONSULTATION BY NATIONAL AIR TRAFFIC SERVICE - LUTON AIRPORT FLIGHT PATH CHANGES (Pages 69 - 76)

To receive a report from the Operational Manager (People) outlining the current consultation exercise being undertaken by the National Air Traffic Service (NATS) in respect of proposed changes to the incoming flightpaths to Luton Airport and the associated holding zone.

Executive Councillor: K Prentice.

Contact Officer: F Flett - (01480) 388377

13 day of January 2021



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.

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

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the [District Council's website](#), together with a link to the Broadcast of the meeting.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held as a Remote Meeting via Zoom on Thursday, 10 December 2020.

PRESENT: Councillor J Neish – Vice-Chairman in the Chair.

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

APOLOGY: An Apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor R Fuller.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor J Palmer.

43 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19th November 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

44 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

45 WASTE MINIMISATION STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report prepared by the Operations Manager for Waste and Recycling (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking approval of a new Waste Minimisation Strategy and Waste Minimisation Action Plan for the District Council.

In introducing the report, the Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment outlined the background to the development of the Strategy which had been prepared to respond to the main challenges being faced by the Council's Waste and Recycling Collection service and to set out the principles for the development of the service over the next three years.

Cabinet's attention was drawn to the vision and objectives of the Strategy which were set out within the report, together with details of the improvements in performance and value for money which had been secured by the service in recent years. Huntingdonshire was a growing area and the Executive Councillor reiterated that the waste service must grow or adapt to absorb this growth.

In reviewing the comments which had been made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships) at their meeting on 3rd December 2020, the Cabinet received an update on the current status of the Council's contracts for recycling and waste disposal and the Executive Councillor also indicated that public awareness raising and education would form a key part of the action plan. The Cabinet were pleased to note that the Panel had commended the positive

and proactive attitude of the Strategy in progressing the waste minimisation aims and objectives of the Council.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Council's new Waste Minimisation Strategy and Waste Minimisation Action Plan be approved.

46 BUCKDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXAMINATION OUTCOME AND PROGRESSION TO REFERENDUM

With the aid of a report by the Service Manager Growth (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet gave consideration to a report seeking agreement to act upon the Examiner's report into the Buckden Neighbourhood Plan and to progress the Plan to a referendum on whether or not it should be brought into force as part of the statutory development plan.

In introducing the report, the Deputy Executive Leader and the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning outlined the background to the receipt of the Examiners report which had been received on 23rd October 2020. The Examiner had recommended that with appropriate modifications the Neighbourhood Plan would meet the basic conditions against which it is required to be tested and so should progress to referendum. The modifications and recommendations had been discussed and agreed with representatives of Buckden Parish Council.

The Cabinet were advised that in the usual circumstances following the decision of the Cabinet to act upon the Examiners report, the Neighbourhood Plan would now proceed to a referendum within 56 days. However the Covid-19 health emergency had resulted in several amendments to the normal process and given that all elections and referendums had been postponed until 6th May 2021, it was proposed that the referendum for the Buckden Neighbourhood Plan be held on this date. Buckden Parish Council had had indicated their support for this approach.

Whereupon and having noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) had supported the recommendations within the report, it was

RESOLVED

that the District Council should act upon the Examiner's report to accept the recommended modifications and progress the neighbourhood plan to referendum.

Chairman

Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Economic Growth Strategy

Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 21st January 2021

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Housing, Planning and Economic Development – Councillor Ryan Fuller

Report by: Economic Development Officer (Paul Gibbons)

Ward(s) affected: All Wards in Huntingdonshire

Executive Summary:

The Economic Growth Strategy is designed to place a fresh and current context around the local economy. The Strategy re-focusses and resets the agenda giving purpose over the next five years. This new agenda will help support recovery and enable growth in our local economy once again. The Strategy centres around a number of key principles; building on and recognising our strengths and the key factors which will enable recovery and economic growth once again.

Given the effects of Coronavirus, businesses are depleted of resources, resilience, and cash reserves. Economic Development, with the help of stakeholders and partners have the intellectual resource to help give direction and to signpost across many complex fields to enable our economy to recover. There will be cross cutting themes that will stimulate economic growth for all businesses as well as specialist & niche activity that will help Huntingdonshire grow in specific and pre-determined areas which link into this Strategy.

Some shorter-term projects have started but some workstreams / themes such as Inward Investment or Skills will be longer term objectives and more complex to deliver.

As and when adopted by the Council, it will be important to share once again our Strategy with key stakeholders such as the Combined Authority to align with any potential and future workstreams. Our wider network and links will be key to ensuring we achieve some of the bigger ambitions and objectives in this Strategy. It is also important to understand two significant factors. Given the shock that the labour market has experienced, and how businesses have faced a global pandemic, many businesses will also be exposed to a new trading relationship with the European Union. Doing nothing or a passive approach, while faced with such turbulence would be a high risk option and would be damaging to the businesses and residents of Huntingdonshire.

We seek approval from Cabinet to be able to implement this strategy over the next five years for the benefit of our local economy.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

To approve the content of the Economic Growth Strategy and the actions within the first 12 months with the principle of an annual review of the Strategy implementation, upon each anniversary.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Is to set out the Council's economic agenda over the next five years. Initially as a set of actions that will determine workstreams for the next 12-18 months but with a review each anniversary for the next five years.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The previous economic growth paper (2013-23) was set during more settled economic times and relied upon organic growth occurring. Since then, the high street has suffered a decline in footfall, Coronavirus has proved disruptive and highly challenging to businesses and we are about to enter a new trading arrangement with our largest trading partner, the European Union.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

- 3.1 Initially a detailed document was produced that set out the evidence and thinking behind the proposals. However, it was felt that the vision and objectives needed to be captured more succinctly.
- 3.2 A higher-level Economic Growth Strategy has therefore been developed which is supported by a more detailed Economic Growth Plan containing the detail.
- 3.3 It was felt important to also set out the objectives for the next twelve months to make the link to the Council's Corporate Plan and service plans.
- 3.4 The Council could just produce one document, however, given the range of uses it was felt producing both a Strategy and Plan at this time was the best option.
- 3.5 In addition there is always a do nothing option, however, the Council agreed in July 2020 to refresh the strategies and plans framework and given the increased focus on Economic Development it is important to bring this document forward at this stage.
- 3.6 Over the last eight months, Economic Development have reviewed a large volume of analysis and listened to commentary and advice from a wide range of organisations including the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), MAKE UK, Chambers Of Commerce, The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and the Institute of Directors (IOD).
- 3.7 We have also read reports commissioned by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority.
- 3.8 We have considered further analysis by large corporates such as Grant Thornton and McKinsey & Company.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 4.1 The Panel discussed the Economic Growth Strategy at its meeting on 6th January 2021.
- 4.2 The Panel has discussed the importance to businesses of having available the highest speed digital connectivity. Members have been advised that this will be covered by the forthcoming Digital Strategy. It is suggested that this fact might be cross-referenced in the Economic Growth Strategy to ensure that the conditions to enable technological industries to locate to the District are promoted.
- 4.3 Following comments from a Member, the Panel has received assurances that the Strategy will be reviewed and typographical amendments made where required before it is published.
- 4.4 The Panel thought it would be useful if the actions contained in the Strategy could be clearly prioritised.
- 4.5 Members understood that the Strategy focuses on the largest industries within the District but queried whether it also should contain provisions relating to emerging industries and the gig economy.
- 4.6 The Panel endorsed the positive coverage in the Strategy of the provision of construction skills and apprenticeship schemes.

5. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 5.1 If we do not have a focused approach during recovery or do not adopt this strategy then we risk a much longer recovery period with less influence which would be damaging for both our businesses and our residents. The themes in this Strategy have been adopted from national economic themes, pertinent to the UK economy. The strategy proposes to apply the themes locally whilst taking a bespoke Huntingdonshire approach with our business sectors and to align our skills activities to our local economy.

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 Once adopted by the Council, this Strategy has a full timetable noted in the actions log (in the appendix) which will take up a minimum of 12-18 months to implement. Given the changing nature of the economic landscape there are likely to be emerging opportunities across the themes, the sectors and skills which will need reviewing annually to ensure this strategy remains fit for purpose until 2025.

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

- 7.1 There is a one-year action plan linked from this Economic Growth Strategy which will link into objectives set into the existing Corporate

Plan. This will be reviewed when the new corporate plan is refreshed in Autumn 2021.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Two rounds of consultation have been undertaken with national and local organisations including the: CBI, MAKE UK, The Cambridgeshire Chambers Of Commerce, The FSB, The IOD, The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Urban & Civic. Improvements to the strategy have been made at each step based upon the constructive feedback received.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The only legal implications that have been identified relate to investment in schemes that may arise from this Strategy. In supporting the local economy and businesses the Council has to be aware of any potential State Aid issues which will be considered on a case by case basis.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Whilst the key co-ordination link for the Strategy will be the Economic Development team, the delivery of actions will necessitate a holistic organisation wide approach and 'think business' mindset across related services that impact on economic success factors, for example:

- Environmental Health
- Licensing
- Planning and
- Revenues

Given the discretion permitted by government on the usage of additional support grant (a one-off sum of £3.5M) that resource will be a useful pump-primer to enable earlier instigation of some key actions. Particularly business support activities.

The skill will be in securing ways in which the sums can be used creatively to perhaps develop revolving funds that enable a longer term set of actions to be achieved.

Working with key partners such as the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority will be important to help champion investment opportunities within the District and leverage external funding. Similarly, the use of the Council's future capital programme, property assets and Corporate Investment Strategy portfolio will be an important tool to influence the nature of premises across the district.

11. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The long-term effects of unemployment are known to leave scarring. And it is unknown what the effect is on mental health conditions would be if

the economy struggled to recover in good time or were to contract further if a 'do nothing' approach was adopted.

12. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There will be emerging programmes from Government encouraging a green jobs recovery designed to help the UK achieve it's net zero target by 2050. Jobs growth is emerging as a central focus to support economic recovery.

13. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 13.1 An endorsement from Cabinet would give full confidence to implementation of the Economic Growth Strategy. Setting out the priorities for Huntingdonshire and the use of Council resources and support grant funding aims to help our local economy recovery faster and experience growth once again and to build back better, in line with the UK Government's ambitions.

14. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 & 2 – Statistics from economic growth plan
Appendix 3 - Metrics
Appendix 4 – Actions Log
Appendix 5 – Network Linkages
Appendix 6 – References, Important papers, Recommended Reading
Appendix 7 – Alignment with Place Strategy 2050

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[CPIER](#) report

[Local Industrial strategy](#)

[Economic strategy for the east of england](#)

[New Anglia LEP economic recovery strategy](#)

[West Midlands Combined Authority Economic Recovery Strategy](#)

[Oxford Cambridge Arc Economic Prospectus](#)

[https://www.accenture.com/gb-en/about/inclusion-diversity/culture-equality-](https://www.accenture.com/gb-en/about/inclusion-diversity/culture-equality-research?c=acn_gb_cultureequalitygoogle_11160830&n=psgs_0320&gclid=EAlaIQobChMIxqq6oc6L6glVxsDICh3ESAQvEAAYAiAAEgJjgfD_BwE&utm_campaign=1935307_East%20regional%20email%2003.07&utm_medium=email&utm_source=loD%20Regions%20and%20branches&dm_i=3R54,15HAJ,6KDXB5,42S83,1)

[research?c=acn_gb_cultureequalitygoogle_11160830&n=psgs_0320&gclid=EAlaIQobChMIxqq6oc6L6glVxsDICh3ESAQvEAAYAiAAEgJjgfD_BwE&utm_campaign=1935307_East%20regional%20email%2003.07&utm_medium=email&utm_source=loD%20Regions%20and%20branches&dm_i=3R54,15HAJ,6KDXB5,42S83,1](https://www.accenture.com/gb-en/about/inclusion-diversity/culture-equality-research?c=acn_gb_cultureequalitygoogle_11160830&n=psgs_0320&gclid=EAlaIQobChMIxqq6oc6L6glVxsDICh3ESAQvEAAYAiAAEgJjgfD_BwE&utm_campaign=1935307_East%20regional%20email%2003.07&utm_medium=email&utm_source=loD%20Regions%20and%20branches&dm_i=3R54,15HAJ,6KDXB5,42S83,1)

Market Town Reports (Prospectus for growth)

- [St Ives report](#)
- [Huntingdon report -](#)
- [Ramsey report](#)
- [St Neots Masterplan Report](#)

Commercial Property Commentary

Retail - <https://www.bsm.uk.com/blog/our-post-pandemic-high-street-an-initial-view-and-concern-for-q2/>

Office - <https://www.bsm.uk.com/blog/wfh-and-office-occupation/>

Industrial - <https://www.bsm.uk.com/blog/the-a14-funnel-effect/>

Community impact assessment

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE

Economic Growth Plan 2020-2025



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What is the Economic Growth Plan?

The economic growth plan is a paper that sits behind Huntingdonshire District Council's Economic Growth Strategy 2020-25. The plan is designed to intentionally rationalise and expand on the principles set out in the main strategy paper. The development of this plan has enabled our thinking in each section of the document. There are a series of actions which will be necessary to help realise our future economic ambitions.

As a result, you can see a list of these actions, set out **(in bold)**, throughout this plan which will be initiated or delivered in the twelve months following the approval of the Economic growth strategy by the Council's leadership.

Positioning

Huntingdonshire is situated at the centre of the three sub economies in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The proximity to the internationally renowned innovation hub, academic and economic powerhouse of Cambridge is also a distinct advantage. The southern fringe sits on the area dedicated to the development of the CAM-OX-ARC, a cross-government initiative that supports planning for the future of the five counties including Cambridgeshire up until 2050.

The district lies on a key north-south, east-west axis of physical infrastructure, including the A1(M), the newly refurbished and realigned A14, the M11 and the East Coast Mainline, with a regular 50 minute direct rail service to London Kings Cross from several of our stations.

Our district possesses world class design, research & development and a manufacturing base supporting over 12,300 jobs – over 20% of its workforce. According to the Centre for business research at the Judge Business School, the value of the Huntingdonshire economy in 2018-19 was more than £10 Billion. We have over 7,000 businesses situated within our district with the average business employing slightly under 10 employees. 24 businesses are classed as large businesses which naturally means the vast majority, sit within the small to medium business size.

The Local Plan objectives to 2036 set out in 2019 stated our ambition to build an additional 20,100 houses and create 14,400 new jobs. It is to be seen if the effects of Coronavirus will inhibit either of these long-term ambitions, however, our aspiration is still to meet these objectives.

This document aims to set out our strategy to enable local businesses to progress their growth plans and achieve their job creation ambitions. Our strategy aligns with our place and planning ambitions for Huntingdonshire and we intend to work effectively with local stakeholders such as the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Cambridge Ahead and the Greater Cambridge Partnership.

Nurturing Skills & Talent Pipelines for local businesses will be a key strand of work, we aim to work with specialists in the skills arena, such as the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Talent Hub, EDGE and Cambridgeshire Skills.

We thank our stakeholders for their contributions to this document and for helping shape the content and the approach that this document takes.

Improving Inward Investment

Businesses like certainty and predictability, they do not like the instability or the unknown. Most businesses want to thrive and grow where they are situated. However, if future growth can be better served in another location or geography, then a business may look to re-locate. In both cases, it is sensible to help create conditions within a local eco system that will encourage business growth.

Pre-pandemic the Huntingdonshire economy was valued by the Centre for Research at the Judge Business School at approximately £10 Billion p.a. It has been a strong and growing economy since the financial crash of 2008 and as such, there is every reason to be optimistic about our chances of recovery and future growth following Coronavirus and during the next five years.

Being aware of all the likely factors that may affect the eco-system of the Huntingdonshire economy will enable us to create a useful environment for businesses to recover, grow and thrive once again.

Partners

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority's growth company are on the cusp of deciding their preferred supplier to drive Inward investment activity throughout Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. This contract is far bigger than the pilot which was awarded last year.

Our Economic Development (ED) team will work hard to establish a positive working relationship with the winning contractor. (ACTION 1)

Sectors

Economic Development will spend the first 12 months of this strategy building a sectoral framework (ACTION 2), starting with Advanced Manufacturing and then working through each

sizable business sector, to create an offering which will compliment and strengthen the value offered by the growth company's contract. Our goal is to ensure our district stands out positively and offers unique selling points beyond what would normally be expected by businesses, both in situ and those considering relocation.

Each sectoral strategy will take a bespoke approach. **The Council will seek to exploit funding opportunities, knowledge transfer and relevant business programmes from academic institutions, respected industry bodies and all tiers of Government to ensure that the conditions for growth are in place for the Huntingdonshire Economy (ACTION 3).** Each sectoral offer will be packaged, communicated, and made visible to the business community. This approach will be used to support our inward investment activities.

The Economic Development Team will use intelligence gathering and data analysis to inform our decision making for the benefit of our local businesses. This will include utilising business database software to track business movements and capitalise on any beneficial trends. (ACTION 4)

Sites

There are several important and strategic commercial sites in our district which are significant strengths for attracting businesses who wish to re-locate or scale up.

There are sites where development is already under way and there will be other sites of interest where planning permission has not been granted. Because the district already possesses sites of scale, any strategic development sites not referenced in our local plan, will only be considered for development, in accordance with planning policy, and only

if this can demonstrate significant long term economics for the district.

The next five years will be very important for the Enterprise Zone at Alconbury Weald and the growing development at Wintringham Park. **The Council will work with all Master developers in our district to ensure the commercial space offer, matches the expectation of businesses (ACTION 5).**

Huntingdonshire District Council and Economic Development will be interested to understand the results of study, commissioned by Urban & Civic and undertaken by Quod which will be completed by the Spring of 2021. We understand that this study will inform Urban & Civic of the post COVID direction of the Enterprise Zone at Alconbury Weald. Given the tax benefits of being tenanted at UK enterprise zones ceases in March 2021, we look to engage with the compelling vision recognising the impacts of COVID-19 for Alconbury Weald and how Urban & Civic plan to raise the profile of Alconbury for inward investment purposes.

In the wake of Coronavirus the requirements of business are changing and we should be

aware, informed and ready. We have learned since the pandemic, that while London is our country's economic powerhouse, our capital has an Achilles heel due to the reliance on public transport and the rail networks that enable commuters to travel in. Should London based companies be looking to relocate into the proximity of Huntingdonshire, we must be ready to accommodate any such enquiries. Mary Portas commented recently that the effects on the high street of Coronavirus may mean that we may have less retail on our high streets as a result but we also understand that some Stella brands which historically have been associated with London, will look to branch out to other areas, as a reaction to COVID.

It remains to be seen exactly how all businesses will react in the wake of Coronavirus but we must be alive to any changing nature of demand for commercial sites within our district. It will be important for Economic Development and Planning colleagues to work collaboratively, to create commercial space offerings that aligns with the demands of businesses in a post COVID, recovery world.

Strategic Themes - Conditions for growth

Digital Connectivity

Without the correct infrastructure, the economy cannot grow. A significant benefit of Huntingdonshire is the excellent road and rail infrastructure and further developments will follow in the shape of the A428 upgrade and East West Rail.

The technological acceleration in digital cannot be ignored or denied. If the infrastructure for an effective economy were described as the seat upon a three-legged stool, road and rail would be two of the legs underpinning the stool but only to a point. Digital infrastructure is the third leg of the stool enabling and underpinning the whole of the economy.

5G and full fibre must be the aspiration for our towns, and we must do all we can in semi-rural and rural settings to ensure that our rural business and homeworkers are not left behind.

As an organisation, Huntingdonshire District Council will endeavour to explore avenues with stakeholders such as Connecting Cambridgeshire, the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority and commercial providers to ensure all funding streams, partnerships and business opportunities are fully exploited for the benefit of our local economy.

One such scheme which is currently available is the [Gigabit Voucher scheme](#) which helps rural homes, and small and medium sized enterprises use vouchers worth £1500 -£3,500 to help obtain faster and more reliable broadband connectivity. **The Council will work to enable further enhancements to full fibre and broadband schemes for businesses and home workers within our district and look at ways of bringing communities together**

to provide the numbers required to be of commercial interest. (ACTION 6)

Transport Links

Road

One of the undoubtable strengths of Huntingdonshire is the road and rail connectivity with strong and fast links to London, The Midlands, The North, The Ports and more locally to Cambridge and Peterborough.

The completion of the new A14, ahead of schedule has the potential to power further economic growth. More goods being imported and exported to and from our district due to consistent flowing traffic, shorter journey times improving commercial and personal productivity.

The old A14, now known as the new A1307 will provide opportunities for further growth. which also opens up access across the district. This road, which is now underutilised can support more local traffic, which will help serve business parks in St Ives, Godmanchester and Huntingdon.

The early completion of the A14 development has been a welcome fillip for our district. The next major Highways England project in the district, the A428 extension from Caxton Gibbet to the Black Cat roundabout (due to complete by 2026), sits in part of the development area of what will hopefully be another major advantage for Huntingdonshire – the CAM-OX-ARC.

The next stage of the A141 and St Ives study was also considered at the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority,

Cambridgeshire County Council and Huntingdonshire District Council in September 2020. This provides the potential for longer term capacity improvements. If public transport is more of a risk post-pandemic, then the importance shifts to a capable road network to take any heavy lifting necessary to support a local economy as well as improved and connectivity by walking and cycling. These are the simple but effective characteristics which we think will help our district respond well economically to the pandemic.

Rail

Rail connectivity has always been a historical strength and the district is fortunate to possess two commuter stations at Huntingdon and St Neots. Before coronavirus both stations carried a combined total in excess of 3 Million Passengers according to the figures from 2018/19. The current difficulties following COVID are impacting passenger numbers, highlighted in the earlier commentary about London and how COVID has changed patterns of working.

Nevertheless, Huntingdonshire has much to look forward to, the announcement earlier in 2020 on the East-West rail link route, entwined with the CAM-OX-ARC project which will certainly benefit St Neots. Any major strengthening of national road and rail infrastructure happening in Huntingdonshire, can only have a positive, long term effect on our district.

Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM)

The Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM) is one of the flagship policies of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority. During the lifetime of this strategy document, the CAM (which is referenced on page 32 of the [Huntingdon Prospectus for growth report](#)) should see the first tranche of development. The work on the CAM, will eventually create a comprehensive metro system for Cambridgeshire enabling greater connectivity from Cambridge to the Market

towns. Assuming public transport numbers can recover, the benefits of the first economic gains provided by the CAM and long term should come forward with this ambitious infrastructure project helping to realise Huntingdonshire's future economic potential.

The Council's Transport commitment

The Council will work hard to influence the timing and routing of new infrastructure, particularly the A428 Dualling and East West Rail to ensure that it enables accessible local movement and facilitates sustainable growth (whilst also seeking to maximise opportunities with the Combined Authority to improve the local connectivity between towns and villages, particularly cycling choices).

Environment and affordable housing

Environment

We know that one of the great challenges of ours and future generations is the environmental health of our planet. It is one issue throughout coronavirus which has been brought into sharp focus. Businesses and employees have recognised the value of their working environment and the ability to balance work and local access to the countryside/ market town offer in Huntingdonshire remains very attractive.

National lockdowns across the globe temporary reduced emissions from many heavily polluting industrial nations, resulting in less freight movements by air, road, rail and sea. The Aerospace industry has suffered greatly commercially, but the silver lining has been the huge reduction in carbon emissions. Of course, in our day to day lives, many people have travelled less by car during lockdown, particularly true of the large swathes of people now working from home. An international team of scientists [estimated the global reduction to be approximately 17% globally which equates to 17 million tonnes of carbon dioxide](#). These

factors explain why sustainability is a key priority for UK businesses as we aim to achieve the [Government's carbon neutral target by 2050](#).

[The UK Government's ten point plan for a green industrial revolution](#) outlines the programmes and workstreams that will help the UK achieve this target which will aim to create 250,000 jobs. And the [Green jobs taskforce](#) goes even further, outlining plans to create an ambitious two million green jobs by 2030.

While we await further details of these ambitious policies to understand how the impacts will be felt locally, there are several existing programmes and organisations who can assist local businesses.

Economic Development will house current information and actively signpost our local businesses to programmes and organisations (ACTION 7) such as:

[UEA Low Carbon Fund](#)

[BEECP](#)

We will need to be alive to further developments as activity in this area gathers pace, whether it be further programmes for business or more structured and active activity around the “Circular Economy” as noted in the Combined Authorities’ recovery strategy. Horizon scanning and aligning with the Government’s “green recovery” ambitions will be good for sustainability, employment and the local economy.

One of the key drivers to our future economy and recovery will be the supply of housing but as part of a green recovery. Proposals made at a National Level by the Confederation of British Industry ask the Government to bring forward the £3.8bn social housing decarbonising fund which was part of the Conservative manifesto. This will by proxy, enable local jobs to be created through local authorities and social housing providers which has been captured in the government’s [ten point plan. & Green jobs taskforce](#)

Affordable Housing

As a result of the pandemic and according to the Department for Work and Pensions*, like many authorities we have seen Universal Credit and Job Seekers Allowance claims in Huntingdon increase substantially. These figures are likely to place more pressure on the need for affordable housing in our district.

The Combined Authority has identified that following the 2008 crash the economic recovery of businesses took until approximately 2012, unemployment claims did not come down significantly until several years after that.

Job Seekers Allowance numbers have also seen a large increase** and may see a further increase once again when the Job retention scheme ends. MAKE UK’s own [manufacturing monitor](#) states that 53% of their members may make redundancies in the next 6 months. This would equate to 250 of Huntingdonshire’s manufacturing businesses making redundancies.

Up until July 2020, Huntingdonshire’s workforce was heavily reliant on the Government’s furlough scheme, in August this reduced substantially, giving future concern to unemployment numbers and a potential rise in homelessness numbers. One factor that DWP point out which may delay this expected rise, is the annual, seasonal recruitment activity carried out by the retail sector in preparation for Christmas.

We know that the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority is looking to support those attempting home ownership through initiatives like [100K homes](#). Stakeholders across local government and social housing providers such as [Chorus Homes](#) must work together, leveraging policies, funding and programmes from local and central government across many disciplines to ensure our residents are supported and thus feel able to contribute economically once again.

The Council is working to deliver more affordable housing and looking at bringing forward a several sites that are in Council

ownership for development. The aspiration for more people to live, shop and work locally will be dependent on affordability of housing as well as the provision of affordable housing. On the former the Council is also well placed with * [average house prices](#) matching the UK average house price value as of August 2020. Also, there are strong links between this Strategy and the Housing Strategy to 2025 which was agreed by the Council in September 2020.

Land and buildings as part of “good” growth

As a local authority, Huntingdonshire District Council has a natural responsibility to ensure we develop our district in a responsible manner.

Our district has many locational features that are attractive to developers both from a commercial and residential perspective. We have a number of high-profile and strategic locations across our district which have the potential to unlock significant economic growth across the district. They include:

- Alconbury weald
- Wintringham
- CAM-Ox-Arc development corridor / A428 development
- A1307 spatial corridor from Huntingdon to Cambridge

There is a desire and ambition to further regenerate our town centres through the master plans for growth including longer-term development plans for Huntingdonshire District Council owned land in both St Ives & Huntingdon.

We will have to ask the unavoidable question of how businesses will view office and commercial space in the wake of the pandemic. Will the lack of resilience in places like London due the high reliance on public transport be beneficial to places such as Huntingdonshire which has renewed and improved connectivity for car drivers following the A14 upgrade? Will the evolving nature of the high street provide

opportunity for better and more experience lead retail but perhaps less retail overall which is the view of [Mary Portas](#).

It would certainly be prudent for stakeholders to continually gather intelligence or commission studies to create the evidence for planners to make decisions fit for a post COVID world. In Huntingdonshire it would make sense to understand if growth is being inhibited or if opportunity could be further realised by understanding the commercial property needs of sectors such as Advanced Manufacturing or Agri tech. There will be a need for greater digital skills and may also be an increased need for people with advanced digital skills to work within production and manufacturing environments as recognised by MAKE UK and the CBI amongst others.

Incubator spaces and buildings

The Huntingdonshire economy was one full of dynamism pre-COVID. According to the Judge Business School, the number of knowledge intensive (KI) businesses has increased 17% since 2012 and revenue from this sector has jumped by 32% over the same period.

According to the Judge Business School, these are the sizes of the KI sector’s in some of our neighbouring districts:

Area	Businesses	Turnover (£)
Peterborough	576	£4.1 bn
Huntingdonshire	940	£1.4 bn
East Cambridgeshire	357	£0.467 bn
Fenland	199	£.0162 bn

Given the growth of our Knowledge Intensive sector in recent years, the overall size of our economy (£10bn) and average size of business in Huntingdonshire - which is less than 10 employees across all businesses it would make sense to create more environments where small and dynamic businesses can start, scale and grow.

Spaces should facilitate a rounded offer with a business toolbox to help businesses through their formative stages which will ultimately help accelerate growth and achieve success. Economic Development can help research the component parts needed to ensure any future projects will succeed and fuel growth for the district.

Given our natural agglomeration of knowledge intensive and advanced manufacturers in the district, it would make sense for Huntingdonshire to explore the possibility of further incubator and maker spaces, utilising established networks and consultancies which link into academia, to give our future KI businesses the very best foundations for growth.

Over the next few years, we will match this ambition by creating an environment which will become a natural choice for progressive and dynamic businesses from the KI sectors to thrive. (ACTION 8)

Branding & Promotion

It will be important to continually learn more about our economy demonstrated by the recent study conducted by Cambridge Ahead to understand more about our Huntingdonshire businesses and how the Cambridge economy interacts with the Hunts economy.

Understanding more about our economy, our businesses, our sectors, our infrastructure, our advantages, and our strengths allows us to formulate our story, which in turn forms part of our promotional activity to further enhance our brand.

The Council will produce a promotional document, which businesses and residents will recognise, which will in turn attract and create growth for businesses and housing. (ACTION 9)

Within 12 months, a new website will be developed by Economic Development to help reflect this strategy and our future ambitions, as well as serving the day to day needs of our businesses. (ACTION 10)

We will reference case studies from businesses and residents that tell “the story of our district” and we will develop a unique brand which will be attractive to future businesses and residents. Economic development will back up the branding with economic metrics and an annual report. This will tell our own story of how we will develop wider knowledge networks and a sectoral strategy for each agglomeration. This activity will create our own core offers and this narrative will be used in a supporting role. Places are nothing without their people and it is the “human” story of our district that will create the desired impact.

Business Support Targeting

There are around 8,000 businesses in Huntingdonshire, each at their own place on their own individual journey, many still getting to grips with the current challenges. Some of these challenges created by Coronavirus and for those who trade internationally, there may be even greater challenges looming in the next 6 months.

It is of course imperative that our Economic Development department and other colleagues who support businesses in Huntingdonshire work efficiently to support these businesses.

During the Pandemic – Economic Development were continually engaged on a daily basis with the big 5 business organisations, the British Chambers Of Commerce, the Institute of Directors, MAKE UK, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Confederation of British Industry collecting information and themes at a high level that would be relevant to businesses in Huntingdonshire. On a local level we engaged with local representatives of the above organisations including the Combined Authority’s Growth Hub Service. Nurturing and maintain these relationships are key to our future intelligence gathering activity and support to local businesses. The wider network across the Combined Authority and away from the growth hub should be nurtured, both horizontally and vertically.

We set up a COVID-19 business hub, sent tens of thousands of timely emails to our businesses informing them of when and how they could use the vital support of schemes such as the Job Retention Scheme and Business support grant scheme – the latter paying out over £31M. We also established efficient methods of messaging to businesses, an example of which being the capital grant scheme funded by the Combined Authority (CA) which by timely communications, helped secure an additional £1.6 million of funding for Huntingdonshire businesses, helping guarantee hundreds of local jobs at a much needed time.

Acquiring and sending the right information at the right time, will be central to how we inform our local businesses.

We will attempt to segment our sectors and businesses in more detail so that we can communicate much more effectively with local businesses. But Economic Development may need specialist marketing support to ultimately achieve this objective.

Deciphering how national and local issues and programmes affect our businesses in

Huntingdonshire will be a key factor for when our approach is proactive or if applicable, more passive.

We have a limited resource and so we must work efficiently yet effectively.

Economic development will work using various channels and means to gather and push our information while nurturing and developing stakeholder networks (ACTION 11).

In the 12 months following this strategy the Council will develop a Business Engagement Strategy, firstly for our biggest businesses who have a natural and vested interest for our economy to do well. This group of 24 businesses will be serviced by a cross section of council officers at a technical and senior level, as well as politicians. The end objective will be more effective two-way communication. (ACTION 12)

Where possible, all business interactions across the council will be tracked within a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool to help evidence and support our professional approach to businesses within Huntingdonshire.

Fuelling Economic Growth

Given the make-up of our local businesses, it would make sense to play to our strengths to help our businesses recover and to enable them to be well placed, to achieve future economic growth.

Over 25% of the Huntingdonshire economy is embedded within the local manufacturing base. To enable these and all our businesses to increase their turnover and profit, they all will need to be more productive. We have identified both digital and innovation as the key themes to removing any glass ceilings which currently inhibit our levels of productivity.

- Digital + Innovation = Productivity gains

Digital as a Theme

Huntingdonshire District Council will champion and support all business activity which supports digitisation for all Huntingdonshire businesses. From the digital infrastructure of 5G and full fibre, to programmes that promote innovation and funding and specialist support. Global consultancy McKinsey & Co observe that [Huge growth economies such as China are digitizing as a result of COVID-19](#) on both a business to consumer (B2C) and business to business (B2B) basis.

Economic development will support our businesses. Whether they be traditional manufacturers looking to experiment with digital innovation for the first time on a [shoestring](#), or one of our many small businesses looking to use local grants from the [Combined Authority](#) to help offer further opportunity.

As an authority we will horizon scan for information or interventions to further enhance the digital and online offering which may assist local businesses. Our high streets are likely to offer a stronger retail offering as a result of the development of their [online offering](#), designed to complement the physical, high street experience led retail.

As a result of digital advancements, there will need to be an infrastructure which is fit for purpose. There will need to be people with appropriate digital skills and a pipeline of talent from schools and colleges to fill the digital and technology jobs of the future. There will be companies ready to supply the market and employ people with higher digital skills and looking to develop their businesses in geographies that provide opportunity to support growth.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and more specifically Huntingdonshire can be that place but there needs to be appropriate political support from the Treasury, Department for Business, Enterprise and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Combined Authority if we are to take the lead of China which according to the [world bank](#) will suffer the second lowest contraction in gross domestic product (GDP) growth in their economy, in the world in relation to the effect of COVID.

Innovation as a theme

The Coronavirus pandemic brought out the best, in some of our brilliant businesspeople and the businesses they run.

The CBI commissioned a survey of their members to understand how businesses reacted to the pandemic – the results were as follows:

- 28% were described as Hibernators - They chose to halt operations or had to pause due to Government guidance. There was an appetite to innovate amongst this group but a question mark against their ability or desire to fund any potential innovation.
- 32% were Survivors - they had the same business but sadly demand had gone.
- 21% were Pivoters - a group we heard a lot about during the pandemic, they changed

their services or channel with a clear appetite to innovate their offer. There would have still been a question mark over the ability to fund. Would they have pivoted further with more available funds?

- A minority of businesses were the Thrivers, 7% of these businesses did very well during Coronavirus.
- 12% - said that nothing had changed, and their business was standing still which clearly, was still a healthy place to be, given the scale of disruption for many less fortunate businesses.

Given these findings, we can see that during Coronavirus, almost 50% of affected businesses had an appetite to innovate their offer which would have been between 3,000 and 4,000 businesses in Huntingdonshire. But there were clear barriers.

Therefore it is imperative that Economic development amplify the theme of innovation, working with stakeholders such as [Innovate UK](#) and offering a birds eye view to local businesses about [current innovation funds](#).

Local stakeholders will help flush out businesses that champion innovation to help us build further understanding to this crucial ingredient to local economic growth.

Within 12 months, dedicated web content will be produced on this theme and housed within the newly created website (see earlier ACTION 10).

Utilising networks to encourage knowledge exchange

Some of the best innovation and business progression occurs from leveraging networks. Whether this, be by means of business networking or more structured knowledge exchange programmes.

There are a great number of resources and means in which local businesses can acquire more knowledge and Huntingdonshire District Council through the Economic Development Team will help establish a number of online and offline resources where businesses can find the best environment and networks for their needs.

Whether bringing business people together from sectors such as Agri-tech, digital or manufacturing or based on themes such as innovation or supply chain resilience as we did earlier this year, we will leverage the very best knowledge at our disposal to include, Academia, public and private sector and business groups where appropriate. We will be flexible in approach utilising online and offline techniques focusing on a qualitative outcome for Huntingdonshire businesses.

There are current examples within our local area such as the St Neots Manufacturing Club who encourage knowledge transfer by bringing the towns manufacturing businesses together. Such organisations can create a combined voice which can helpfully describe the sector's needs, especially when talking about key themes such as digitisation and skills.

Within 12 months, each sectoral framework created on our website, will list appropriate networks which businesses may wish to engage with (ACTION 13).

A Skills Strategy to Maximise Human Capital Potential

A Partnership Approach to Adult re-training & skills support

The Combined Authority’s economic recovery strategy (which provides a regional perspective) notes that taking a “business as usual approach” may not be the best strategy for organisations moving forward. Sadly, as a result of Coronavirus, the jobs that many were used to and performed, in some cases, for many years, do not exist in the same numbers any longer due to the financial hardship and tough decisions businesses have had to make.

Huntingdonshire District Council’s Coronavirus Business Impact Survey commissioned in May 2020 uncovered many of the themes we had heard nationally but provided a local perspective. Younger people, and people in roles such as Customer Services, Sales and Administration were at greater threat of redundancy. We have also highlighted earlier in this strategy, MAKE UK’s own [manufacturing monitor](#) stating that 53% of their members would make redundancies in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. This would equate to 250 of Huntingdonshire’s manufacturing businesses.

So the problem is twofold – how do we support people that have previously held positions where they relied on their people skills, or their administration or their technical / manufacturing skills to find future employment?

But crucially how do we understand what are “coveted” skills that employer’s value and are now looking for?

Huntingdonshire District Council and the Economic Development Team are clearly

not skills providers so we must work with a spectrum of third parties and stakeholders to ensure our local economy has a pipeline of talent that aligns with what business need now and into the future.

What we can do is to help create the evidence base by speaking to local businesses as part of our engagement to understand what skills they value now and which skills will fuel future growth. **In the 12 months following this paper, we will work with Key Employers to understand the Skills & Training needs in each Sector. We will consider an annual skills survey as part of our annual report to help understand if the skills needs of our businesses are being met by the various further education (FE) and higher education (HE) & Adults skills providers. (ACTION 14)**

This evidence can be used to hold providers to account and to put forward the needs of Huntingdonshire businesses in a more meaningful way.

We will promote to all of our businesses, programmes which we know are landing well with employers such as the Government’s plan to [help employ an apprentice](#). And newer schemes such as [Kickstart](#) (ACTION 15)

We must horizon scan for Government initiatives such as the [green jobs taskforce](#) which will not only look to develop longer term higher skilled jobs but also help contribute to hitting the the [Government’s carbon neutral target by 2050](#).

We will work closely with all third-party skills providers in the FE/HE and Adult skills arena to help bring businesses and skills providers closer together. We will also work closely with the Combined Authority’s STAR HUB, Talent Portal and Growth hub to actively promote the

interventions that will work for our businesses and the local economy. (ACTION 16)

We would encourage the Combined Authority to ask Cambridgeshire skills to explore how they may develop the skills pathways work beyond the health & health care sector to align with other sectors within our economy and in line with the needs of businesses.

We will work with institutions such as ARU across their various programmes to ensure high calibre placements are accessible for local businesses. (ACTION 17). This will be the start of a long term relationship and we will need to develop many internal relationships with Anglia Ruskin University prior to the [University of Peterborough coming online in 2022](#)

We should challenge the Framework under which EDGE operates, to understand if more activity can be produced in more areas and again, aligned with more Huntingdonshire business sectors. With the S106 money coming to an end in 2021, we will help EDGE's partners understand and re-imagine how the brand may be useful and be fit for purpose. But the fundamental question of funding will need to be answered. And most likely by Huntingdonshire District Council and Urban & Civic with the support of other partners.

There is a gap in skills and business activities in Huntingdonshire primary and secondary schools. This will include consideration of programmes such as the [Peter Jones Foundation](#) as a way to establish a presence in local schools? We are also very aware that community networks and capacity to support each other has been enhanced in the past twelve months. This has been factored into the Council's wider recovery work, particularly registered organisations and community groups that are helping people get back into work and looking at equipping them with new skills.

An ambition in this strategy, should be not only take an approach for the benefit of our businesses of today but to nurture the skills and talent currently in our communities for

the benefit of the businesses of tomorrow. This is an ambitious step, but we must find a way during the next five years, to further capture the dynamism of the Huntingdonshire economy and inspire people to want to stay and contribute to our local growth.

Next Generation a 2025 Vision

Part of this Strategy is to help level up our local economy by providing exciting opportunities for our future generations.

To establish an effective presence in the following settings to support and inspire future generations:

- Primary schools
- Secondary Schools
- Sixth Form
- FE
- HE – Inc New University Of Peterborough
- Adult Education

Organisations such as Form the Future develop careers and skills programmes but use volunteers from business to actively engage local school children. This can be empowering for all parties.

Indeed, the research carried out by RAND Europe on behalf of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and the Greater Cambridge Partnership highlighted the importance of career guidance in schools in creating a pipeline of homegrown talent for our local economy. This research particularly identified opportunities in Secondary Schools and FE.

And organisations such as [Speakers for schools](#) can help inspire and raise aspiration in our young people to fire the ambition of Huntingdonshire's next generation of Entrepreneurs, Managers & Employees

In conjunction with local businesses starting with our biggest 24 businesses, **we will**

consider developing a young sector skills strategy. We will be guided by the information we are given by industry but we may wish amongst others to develop skills pathways for some of the following areas which are relevant today:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Digital
 - Tech for good
 - Gaming
- Zero carbon & Green economy
- Construction
- Helping people
 - Health & Care
 - Education

Where we have identified and evidenced clear growth sectors, **we will consider as part of skills provision a future sector model which incorporates the above for delivery in schools. (ACTION 18)**

For example, for digital skills we may wish to see continued development of coding clubs or promote schemes such as [Cyber first](#), or for STEM, develop a maker space for school & after school activities.

This will involve working proactively with the County Council and also schools that have academy status through the academy chains or direct.

Bidding for skills contracts

A consideration for Huntingdonshire District Council might be to bid into appropriate skills programmes or programmes to deliver skills activity in Huntingdonshire which align with the values of this strategy. The Council has already bid to be a gateway for the [Kickstart](#) scheme.

Kickstart is a paid work placement for 16-24 year olds who have been claiming Universal Credit for a six month period. The scheme will run until June 2022. Because Universal credit is a “means tested” benefit, operating this type of scheme would help contribute to the [levelling up ambition](#) of the UK Government as well as getting a better understanding of the skill requirements and provision locally.

Huntingdonshire District Council could actively enter into the skills space by operating a programme or scheme in it’s own right. Whilst this would be a positive and bold step change it is not part of the strategy. Whilst it would raise ambitions and could help support the valuable work that community currently undertake in some of our more difficult to reach communities in areas such as Oxmoor it is felt other agencies are much better placed and our role should be one of influence.

Vibrant Town Centres

One of the standout characteristics of Huntingdonshire is the pleasant and scenic market towns. With riverside locations, a mix of independent and national brands they serve several economies. From the bustling Pre-COVID daytime where residents and workers would use the local shops and services, to the night-time economy where locals enjoy hospitality from the many Pubs, bars and restaurants our district has to offer. While visitor economy is not a huge make-up to our district's Economic DNA, there are good local offers in the form of museums and pleasant places for visitors to experience.

Before the pandemic, our high streets were declining and, in some areas, this was happening at a sharper rate. National studies showed our towns were performing slightly better when compared to other towns in England in terms of the impact of COVID on the economy. The Council has been horizon scanning for opportunities to leverage funding and to make some direct interventions.

In July 2020 Huntingdonshire District Council's submitted a bid into the [future high streets fund](#) for St Neots. The bid is an ambitious plan to improve a number of local places in the town centre which include providing greater access to the riverside location, improving the public realm and visitor experience as well as helping to realise some local regeneration needs. A decision will be made late 2020 / early 2021 and should the bid be successful, there will be a number of programmes scheduled and developed, to bring the bid to life for the benefit of the residents of St Neots. But we must also be realistic - the [future high streets fund](#) can only solve some of the changes that need to be made in our high streets.

Following Coronavirus, footfall levels are down and for some sections of our community who may be vulnerable, such as our BAME communities, the elderly and those instructed to

shield, visiting town centres may not currently be a desirable or realistic activity. Mirroring this, online shopping habits have increased significantly. With 77% of British consumers now doing at least part of their grocery shopping online according to Waitrose. In the same study they concluded that [One in four of us shops online](#) for groceries at least once a week – that's double the amount in 2019, the rapid rise being the result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Given the challenge that local businesses will face in town centre locations, it is important to be aware of the helpful additional role, organisations such as business improvement districts (BID) can play. In light of COVID-19, BIDs have received additional [Government funding](#) and they provide an additional layer to help represent town centre businesses of all persuasions. Before COVID-19 struck, there were plans to create and implement a BID for the benefit of the businesses of St Neots. **The opportunity to create a BID in St Neots will be progressed by Economic Development within the next 12-18 months. (ACTION 19)**

The view of retail and high street experts such as [Mary Portas](#), is that we may have to accept that there will be less retail on our high streets. What will be left standing will be better retail, most likely with some sort of online offering to compliment the traditional physical high street offer which is likely to be more “experience lead” to attract people into town centres.

For Huntingdonshire, in addition to these significant challenges (which may also affect the demand for retail and commercial space in our towns), we must be true to the heritage which gives each town and our district a unique identity.

Visitor experience will be highly important, attractive public realm which will encourage “dwell time” with good access. Cycling and walking options will be important features for towns in the next few years.

Advancing digital infrastructure will be important, including projects which are in the cusp of starting such as installing town centre Wi-Fi. Further considerations should be given to the visitor experience of:

- Local residents visiting their town centre
- Business Visitors
- Leisure visitors
- Visitors to Markets and Special events

What Apps or shopping sites could enhance the experience in our towns to make them even more attractive places to visit whilst supporting our local businesses?

Propositions such as [Shopappy](#) who were mentioned by the CBI could be the answer or potentially further training opportunities for retailers to enable a balance of on line sales direct or sales through global giants like [Amazon](#)?

Utilising other useful cutting edge technologies such as the [LoRaWAN network through stakeholders such as Connecting Cambridgeshire](#) will enable future data collection and analysis, as will developing more footfall data into each town centre, which is currently the case in Huntingdon.

The Council is assembling a Towns Programme which will reflect the significant investment opportunities in each of the four towns and current projects as well as draw on initial capital funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. (ACTION 20)

In addition to the Masterplan work in St Neots, The Combined Authority's Prospectus for growth project, will help St Ives, Huntingdon and Ramsey develop solutions to the issues that matter to each town over the next few years.

There will be plans which place forward real ambition to regenerate our town centres to include a long-term development plan for the bus station areas in both St Ives & Huntingdon.

In addition, some of the themes mentioned in the reports who were commissioned by the Combined Authority but authored by [Metro Dynamics](#) include:

St Ives

- Town connectivity and infrastructure
- Hubs for Innovative Businesses
- Public Realm of the Highest Quality

Huntingdon

- Town Centre Development
- Community development
- Edge of town centre opportunities in Huntingdon
- The development of the Enterprise Zone

Ramsey

- Building on Strengths such as Heritage, the Fen landscape and community spirit
- Tackling Weaknesses such as isolation, connectivity & health

Other Themes Worth Exploration

[The National Organisation of Local Economies](#) has a philosophy of community wealth building built upon five key principles:

- Plural ownership of the economy
- Making financial power work for local places
- Fair employment and just labour markets
- Progressive procurement of goods and services
- Socially productive use of land and property

Some of the themes will not be as relevant as when they were written back in 2018. While the employment market has been severely disrupted as a result of COVID-19. The desire to support our local economy has intensified which will present opportunities.

The Council will look to take a creative and innovative approach where necessary to explore these themes in more detail, to work with town centre representatives and local groups to understand if there are programmes or behaviours that can be encouraged to support Huntingdonshire's market towns to achieve the continued vibrancy, we all aspire to see and experience in the future. (ACTION 21).

Supporting Huntingdonshire's Business Sectors

A Sectoral Framework

The Combined Authority published the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review [CPIER](#) report in 2018 followed by the [Local Industrial Strategy \(LIS\)](#) in 2019 which segments the local economy into sectors which both lead and support the local economy. Because national and local industrial strategies focus on sector development, we must also. In response to the pandemic, the Combined Authority has commissioned two further studies, which helpfully detail the impact of COVID-19 to our districts sectors, to help inform our thinking about recovery.

The CPIER and LIS documents outline the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area possessing three sub-economies with Huntingdonshire spanning across all three. These two reports are certainly significant regional reports, but they do not provide a sufficiently strong narrative for the Huntingdonshire economy

Huntingdonshire District Council commissioned an economic report by EMSI which was delivered in 2018. This report helpfully concluded the growth industries would be in digital and precision engineering. A similar commentary (amongst other growth sectors) is indicated in the [Local Industrial Strategy](#). And we know how many of our high-tech and general manufacturers are in Huntingdonshire thanks to the data delivered annually by the Centre for Research at the Judge Business School. We also have a breakdown of the rest of our businesses by business type and have invested in further business intelligence software.

A recent piece of work by the Centre for Research has provided further insight about

how the Huntingdonshire economy interacts with the Cambridge sub-economy and specifically the North West Corridor. We know that growth from the knowledge intensive sectors is coming but has not yet reached Huntingdonshire to a significant extent. We have significant insight about the makeup of business parks across the sub-economy, their spend on research and development and how upcoming developments such as the CAM-OX-Arc may have influenced the movement of certain businesses. We have learned more about the profile of businesses that may move into Huntingdonshire from this sub-economy and our case study work will enable us to gain further insight and give Huntingdonshire a greater sense of identity. Hence there is clear direction and purpose to our role, in the Economic development of our district.

This continued investment means we are much more certain of our position including which agglomerations form part of the Huntingdonshire economy and where some of our opportunities lie.

Within the next 12 months we will begin to map our businesses of significance. Our largest sectors, our biggest employers, our fastest growing businesses, our fast-growing sectors, our new businesses. (ACTION 22)

We knew pre-COVID that Huntingdonshire was a strong and vibrant semi-rural economy. Our intelligence suggests several natural agglomerations that must be supported and nurtured as part of this economic strategy.

In the next 12 months and for each sector we will design a model which incorporates the following (where appropriate) to help support & stimulate sector growth. And to support inward investment enquiries (ACTION 23).

- Academic programmes
- Specialist networks
- Funded programmes
- National, regional & local funding
- Knowledge bridges - national, regional & local
- Applying UK economic themes locally where appropriate-
 - Innovation
 - Digital strategy
 - Productivity
 - UK Resilience and local supply chain development
 - Net Zero / Green growth & Circular Economy
 - Levelling up the economy - pay / gender / BAME
- Lobby for and support skills pathway development into each sector
- Leadership Programmes
- Experienced mentors and business advisors in each sector

Example – for digital skills we may wish to see continued development of coding clubs, develop a maker space for school & after school activities with partnership from local stakeholders & business.

We will further utilise business databases such as FAME to help understand the business make-up of each sector. To monitor our growth sectors and to help understand future changes at a more micro level (ACTION 24).

Advanced Manufacturing

The priority sector following the development of this strategy for Huntingdonshire must be Advanced Manufacturing. Advanced Manufacturing is referenced in the Local Industrial Strategy, (EMSI as Precision technology) and we know we have a natural agglomeration as demonstrated below. In the most recent data 2018-19 provided by

the Judge Business School this is what we discovered:

Area	Businesses	Turnover (£)	Employment
Peterborough	93	£3.2 bn	7432
Huntingdonshire	155	£0.625 bn	2965
East Cambridgeshire	64	£0.307 bn	1734
Fenland	35	£.0111 bn	499

Already we have started work with Aston University to link local businesses with their Supply Chain Support programme and we hope to work with them in the future to promote their UK Centric programmes.

But we know we can promote more work from other centres of excellence around the UK.

There are multiple stakeholder relationships that should be explored which have been helpfully signposted by Charlotte Horobin of MAKE UK. Many of which bring specialist knowledge which will help our community of Advanced Manufacturers. These include:

High Value Manufacturing Catapults –

[WMG](#) – University of Warwick

[MTC](#) – Manufacturing Technology Centre

[AMRC](#) – Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre

Universities

- Cranfield University- Reputable leadership training, Aerospace Technology Institute
- University of East Anglia – low carbon & productivity
- Essex University- data analytics
- Aston University – Servitization

Other organisations to explore include:

- Millbrook proving ground
- Silverstone Technology Cluster
- Milton Keynes Transport Systems Catapult

Within the next 12 months the Economic Development Team will reach out to each organisation to explore mutually beneficial ways of working, with the aim of helping Huntingdonshire’s manufacturing businesses make progress (ACTION 25).

We have also been in touch with the following organisations who we know will offer value to our manufacturing sector over the next five years.

- IFM & Cambridge University – Engineering (West Cambridge)
- Hethel Engineering – Norfolk, incubator, motorsport / Lotus
- UEA – Centre for Digitisation (manufacturing & engineering)
- NAAME - New Anglia Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering group
- Advanced Manufacturing Programme (Opportunity Peterborough)
- St Neots Manufacturing Club
- CUTEC – Cambridge University Technology & Enterprise Club

The crucial thing is to ensure we help facilitate these networks which support local manufacturing businesses. We will send timely information and programmes where possible so that they have maximum impact. Within 12 months, we will create a dedicated space on our Economic Development website for sector-based businesses to use, so that they can access the information related to all these networks in one place.

Mid & Low-tech Manufacturing

We should be mindful in addition, that many of our manufacturing businesses sit in the general and mid-tech range. They will need help and support after what has been a challenging time and we should help them find their way to our sector based sections of our website so that they can pick and choose which resources they may need to help progress their business.

A good example will be allowing low tech manufacturers to find the digital manufacturing on a [shoestring](#) programme run by the IFM in Cambridge.

And given that low and mid-tech manufacturers outnumber advanced manufacturers by 4:1, it is crucial that these businesses have the same and equal access to our sector areas on our website to aid development and to make progress.

The Economic Development Team will ensure that suitable material is included as part of the new website (SEE ACTION 10).

Digital

You will have read so far in this strategy the many themes which link into the digital sector. We need a strong vision, funding and planning to create the necessary digital infrastructure for the future. We need people with continually evolving and improved digital skills, particularly advanced digital skills to help support productivity growth and businesses have had to transform digitally during lockdown with many facilitating home working for their previously office-based workforce.

Digital as a sector has performed impressively in the last few years. According to the Government, the Digital sector contributed £149 billion to the UK economy in 2018 and the Sector accounts for 7.7 per cent of the UK economy as a whole.

Growth in this sector is nearly six times larger than growth across the rest of the economy. With this all said, it’s important to state that Huntingdonshire should not try to emulate “Cambridge”. Cambridge has an established eco-system, from tech and entrepreneur clubs, angel investor networks and specialist membership organisations such as Cambridge Wireless which serve this community nicely.

However, the recent study from the Centre for Research has suggested that strong, mature, Cambridge based businesses with established networks may naturally gravitate to other

areas, where growth can be facilitated at costs that make businesses sense. This is one of the future opportunities for our district's economy. Understanding how to profile such opportunities will be a key objective for Economic Development.

Huntingdonshire does have a presence of tech, gaming companies and a strong presence of IT and Telecoms businesses within its digital sector which is worth between £500-600 Million per annum. Should Huntingdonshire further enhance our reputation of housing an IT / Telecoms agglomeration supporting businesses of all natures, this would be significant given the size of the local economy as a whole, which across the CPCA area amounted to £57.1 bn in 2018-19.

Our case study work has highlighted further benefits. For example - the value that investor lead businesses can feel when choosing Huntingdonshire. **The Economic Development Team will network in the Cambridge spaces where possible and practical to highlight the value that Huntingdonshire can bring to the “right investor lead offering” while profiling the businesses who may naturally gravitate to the North & West, as part of their own growth journey. (ACTION 26)**

The Economic Development Team will also explore projects such as the Norwich – Cambridge A11 tech corridor to understand the benefits so that we understand if a similar principle could be facilitated north and west of Cambridge. (ACTION 27)

Ultimately, this sector will only flourish in Huntingdonshire if there is a steady stream of companies filled with people with the right skills. Which is why we need to keep a very firm eye on skills development programmes in the next 5 years, looking to key stakeholders such as the CPCA, FE, HE and training providers to be ambitious and to help people of all ages upgrade their digital capability.

Agri-tech

It is clear that the East Of England has a major role to play in the growing, production and movement of food products across the UK and beyond.

The sector is naturally named as one of importance in the [Local Industrial Strategy](#).

7 of the top 25 employers in Huntingdonshire are embedded within Agri and Food production employing an estimated 9000 plus workers in our district. Brands such as Hilton Meats and Hotel Chocolat help raise the Huntingdonshire profile as an attractive place for food production businesses to settle.

We know that our infrastructure is attractive to large scale food producers who look to move high quality, fresh produce around the UK. But we also know that some areas of this sector are susceptible to automation which is starting to become much more commonplace. Whilst great news commercially for the businesses concerned, we must be mindful of the long-term employment prospects when looking at how we expand this sector.

We will look to the sector strategies currently being developed by the Combined Authority and specialist industry insights. Specialist consultancies such as WLP, Networks such as Agri-tech east and funding providers such as Cambridgeshire Acre will be a good place to start for Economic development to develop HDC's sectoral approach for Agri-Tech.

Logistics & Distribution

Huntingdonshire locational connections to London, the Midlands and the North, make it an attractive place for Logistics and Distribution (L&D) businesses to establish themselves. The A14 upgrade and further improvements to the highways in our district can only encourage further interest. The L & D Sector was also recognised as being part of [the top 5 fastest growing sectors within the UK](#) in February 2020 and as a reflection of more recent trends,

our [Online Shopping habits during lockdown and beyond may be hard habits to break](#) as reported by Sky News.

And now with developments such as [Amazon Fresh](#) rivalling the traditional UK supermarket offering, it is clear to understand why this sector will enjoy strong future growth.

As we commented earlier and as a Council, it would be very easy to give a green light to mass distribution centres across the district at a time where this could give a strong boost to business rate receipts. However, a balance must be struck as this is also an industry susceptible to automation. Some of Amazon's distribution centres across the UK are almost entirely automated and we know about the experimentation of Wi-Fi / driverless fleets of HGV's.

There is a clear agglomeration of Logistics and distribution centres in Peterborough and we must be mindful of how we utilise commercial land across the district to ensure we help our residents secure higher skilled jobs which are sustainable as opposed to lower skilled jobs which will be vulnerable to technological advances.

Clearly if they exist, we must embrace good sustainable opportunities that support long-term, good jobs growth within this sector and for the district. The CPCA's recently mooted future fuels and logistics Launchpad will be explored further to understand if this concept can be dovetailed within current strategic sites, such as Alconbury Weald which is well appointed for such a project.

As part of the sectoral development Economic Development will get a greater understanding to inform Huntingdonshire District Council better about industry challenges such as technology advances, data analysis and lowering carbon emissions.

A better understanding may help Huntingdonshire District Council be more aware of how the obvious growth of this sector may better align with the values and future ambitions of the district.

Construction & Utilities

Whilst grouped together for the purposes of this paper, construction and utilities are sectors that react very differently during economic times of growth and contraction.

Construction as an industry is often the first to go into recession and the first to come out, so is often a good indicator of where the economy is headed. During Coronavirus, the Construction industry was one of the first to come out of lockdown, self-setting new guidelines to work to, before the Government offered more formal and structured guidance across many different sectors.

Utilities on the other hand must "keep going" whatever the economic conditions but must be wary of the varied demand for their services. During lockdown, commercial premises would have seen demand for Gas, Electricity and Water lower significantly only for domestic use to hold steady or increase given the time of year that Coronavirus and the subsequent lockdown impacted the UK.

Both sectors combined represent approx. 25% of the value of the Huntingdonshire economy with 15% from Utilities and 10% from Construction.

Utilities

Anglian Water alone turnover approximately £1.35bn which equates to approximately 13.5% of the Huntingdonshire economy. They employ approximately 4,700 employees which equates to over 5% of the Huntingdonshire workforce.

It will be important to understand the challenges of our major employers including Anglian Water. There are mutual vested interests toward the growth of our local economy and encouraging multi stakeholder engagement from the Council. Specialists, senior officers and politicians will ensure key relationships are nurtured as our economy recovers and places itself ready to grow once again. (see earlier ACTION 12)

Construction

The UK Construction industry and local agglomeration of businesses is vital to the performance of the national and local economy. Without a healthy and vibrant construction industry we will not achieve our housing targets or develop commercial properties to meet the future needs of residents and businesses.

The industry as a whole has had a problem for a few years addressing challenges of an [ageing workforce](#) with more workers set to retire than join the industry.

Fortunately we are well served in this locality with the [Construction Industry Training Board Peterborough](#), [EDGE Sharper Skills for Construction](#) based at Alconbury Weald, courses offered by [Cambridge Regional College](#) and plans for a Construction Infrastructure work academy being developed by the Combined Authority.

It is also heartening to see new initiatives such as the [New Re-Training Scheme from the Combined Authority](#) which is offering employer lead training solutions.

We are also well served from a network perspective with the [Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce Construction sector](#) which for many years (pre-COVID) met 15-18 times a year in Peterborough and Alconbury Weald.

It will be the aim of Economic Development to bring together all of these useful developments into one location as part of our own sectoral approach to ensure our Construction businesses are well served, whatever their future training and growth needs may be. (ACTION 28)

And clearly, as Construction cuts across many themes which include: Net Zero carbon, sustainable practices, the green economy, digital infrastructure and the Internet of things to name but a few we will need to ensure these themes are promoted and highlighted to the Huntingdonshire construction industry.

Health & Care & Lifesciences

Health & Care has been a growing industry in our geography and is a broad sector. From our [NHS Hospital at Hinchingsbrooke](#) and our primary care providers to our growing number of care homes across the district who provide comfort to our elderly residents.

Before Coronavirus, we saw a growth in demand in areas such as care homes and in response, there has been some effective development work focusing on career pathways by [Cambridgeshire Skills](#) enabling adults to enter the sector and follow pathways that could eventually lead them into higher skilled work within care or eventually into the NHS.

Of course, the care sector has performed superbly during Coronavirus, carrying out sterling work in extremely difficult circumstances and protecting some of the most vulnerable groups in society. Indeed, Care England have labelled their sector the [second frontline](#).

Life Sciences

Following the initial wave of Coronavirus, the needs of the sector have evolved very quickly. There is a [race for a vaccine](#) with Cambridge based AstraZeneca involved in a high-profile collaboration with Oxford University. Due to social distancing requirements this has placed huge pressure and demand for significantly more lab space. Information which has been confirmed to us from both Inward Investment contacts and [Cambridge Ahead](#)

Given our proximity to Cambridge and how strongly the Life Sciences sector has grown pre & post COVID there may be natural opportunities for more life sciences businesses to find a home in Huntingdonshire and as an Authority we should be permissive and allow this natural growth to take place. The sector is recognised strongly in the recently published [Arc Economic Prospectus](#)

The demands on both of these sectors are likely to evolve greatly throughout the time of this Strategy and it would be wise for Economic Development to seek out key contacts and stakeholders in local NHS settings, the care sector and specialist membership organisations associated with Life Sciences, such as [One Nucleus](#) to understand the key factors affecting each sector in order to provide the correct value where appropriate.

Creative

With a cluster of creative businesses situated in our biggest market town St Neots, it makes sense to recognise both the challenges and opportunities that may await this sector in the future. The Creative industry has been hit significantly by COVID, this has been highlighted in the [Creative industries federation report 2020 – Oxford Economics](#) which states a predicted £74bn loss for the UK.

However, pre-pandemic the Digital marketing and advertising industry had grown for 21 consecutive quarters in the UK and was placed within [the top 5 fastest growing sectors within the UK](#) according to the [open business council](#)

The creative industry is less likely to be significantly impacted by the UK exit from the EU meaning the effects of the pandemic will be temporary but it will depend on the shape and speed of recovery as to how quickly this sector may bounce back. A heartening sign is the sector's recognition in the recently published [Arc Economic Prospectus](#).

Public Sector

Huntingdonshire has a natural population of public sector organisations who employ a great number of people. This will increase again in 2021 when [Cambridgeshire County Council](#) move their Offices from Cambridge to Alconbury Weald saving the public purse a reported £45 Million.

In addition to the County Council, we have [NHS Hospital at Hinchingbrooke](#),

[Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Head Quarters](#) a significant Police station in Huntingdon and [Huntingdonshire District Council](#)

As [Government debt hits £2 trillion as part of the response to Coronavirus](#) it would be naïve to think that these levels of debt will not affect the Public Sector. Especially once the public health and economic landscapes have begun to stabilise.

All the organisations will be looking to reduce the financial risks in the longer term by further diversifying their incomes, independent of Central Government, business rates and current income streams. Organisations such as [This Land](#), the arms-length development company of [Cambridgeshire County Council](#) use a variety of Non-Exec directorships in addition to the skills of it's own people, to bring a wealth of additional expertise for the benefit of the organisation.

There are reported opportunities in areas such the [green economy](#) which would deliver wider social benefits as well as some of the growth sectors already mentioned in this paper, such as life-sciences, digital and advanced manufacturing.

CAM-OX-Arc

According to the regional prospectus drawn between the three LEP's and Universities, the growth of the CAM-OX-Arc will be built upon growth that is:

- Innovative and based future of industries.
- Greener through a transition to net zero carbon emissions.
- Small business based, backing start-ups, scale-ups and unicorns.
- Inclusive, levelling up economic performance and skills.
- Global, open for business and international.

Clearly, as we write this paper, the Arc is in it's infancy. This is a hugely ambitious project with heavyweight support from Government, which

will be developed over the next 30 years.

By the time the next Economic growth strategy is written for the benefit of Huntingdonshire businesses, these themes by then should have been developed further.

The next edition of this strategy should give a prime focus to this project so that there is clear understanding of how the Huntingdonshire economy can capitalise on the opportunity provided by the development of the Arc. You can read the Arc's recently published economic prospectus [here](#).

Understanding Huntingdonshire's Strengths

As part of this paper, we have sought to understand what makes Huntingdonshire special and our strengths. Some places would deem these unique selling points, however, to be unique you need to be the only one. Here are some of strengths that were identified.

Work is progressing on the development of the Place Strategy to 2050 and some of the key themes that have been identified to date have been:-

- The green spaces and local environment
- The accessibility and attractiveness of the market towns
- The road and rail connectivity to the rest of the country
- The variety and number of small businesses

The Place Strategy to 2050 will be published in 2021 and is still at an early stage of development with wider and meaningful public engagement to take place in the Spring. Some further context from the business community is set out below.

Why do businesses choose Huntingdonshire?

As mentioned previously in this paper, most businesses have evolved here because the business owners live locally, we have researched some case studies which highlight the following useful observations.

Pico Technology

Pico are extremely positive about being in St Neots and consider it to be the “jewel in the crown” of the Huntingdonshire district. The combination of maintaining the character of the market town and the convenience of its location, both in its proximity to London and Cambridge and its rail and road transport links, provide a perfect location from which to operate. In addition, the development of the Wintringham site is seen as further evidence that St Neots is a thriving area which has the potential for further growth in the future. St Neots offers Pico the benefits of much lower property costs over Cambridge whilst the rural charms of the town itself supports them in attracting talented people.

Cambridge Software

We were one of the first few companies to select the Lakes Business Park, situated next to the new A1307 and close to St Ives. It was a strategic decision for our business. There were several factors we considered for the decision which included:

- **Cost** - We were a Cambridge based business and without stating the obvious, the costs were not comparable making The Lakes business Park unit an excellent choice when considering our business costs.
- **Location** - As an IT services business, we must travel across Cambridgeshire and beyond. The location is ideal for us gaining quick access to Cambridge, Huntingdon, Peterborough, and the surrounding areas.
- **Infrastructure** - for a business like ours, connectivity is key and fast fibre internet connectivity was available in the building.

- **Premises** – We like the parks approach of building warehouses with large office spaces and the flexibility in using the buildings which will help support our future growth ambitions as a business.

Bio Bean

“Bio-Bean has been located at Alconbury Weald since it’s start-up days. The flexibility, space and excellent road links that the site affords has allowed us to refine and develop our business considerably over the past 4 years and enable bio-bean to become the world’s largest recycler of spent coffee grounds, all from the Alconbury Weald.”

What makes Huntingdonshire special commercially?

Its geographic location is very special, possessing rapid connectivity to London, while also being close to another of the country’s biggest, economic and intellectual assets, Cambridge with its world-renowned University. Cambridge Ahead agree that proximity to such rich national assets create a unique geographic feature with positive economic benefits. The recently refurbished A14 trunk road, plus other proposed major infrastructure improvements along the CAM-OX-Arc ensures that Huntingdonshire is well placed to experience good levels of future growth. We expect further spatial growth because of these developments, particularly around the A1307 and the A428 to St Neots.

What advantages does Huntingdonshire have over other districts or local economies?

We analysed the major characteristics of Huntingdonshire such as the road and rail connectivity to areas such as London, The Midlands and The North. We looked at places with access to both an Enterprise Zone and a major University to understand which other districts around the UK were similar to Huntingdonshire. The results uncovered 12

districts, only two were in close proximity both to London two and another globally renowned University – Oxford which according to Cambridge Ahead, are two special features to the Huntingdonshire economy.

They are:

[South Oxfordshire Council](#)

[Cherwell District Council](#)

We wanted to understand how similar councils might sell “their story” for inward investment purposes as both councils have proximity to a University town and London. Both have good road and rail infrastructure and are close to the county’s [enterprise zones](#). But upon closer inspection, it seems the local [enterprise zone](#) is signposted more effectively via the Oxfordshire LEP. So something for discussion with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Business Board.

The Council will look with the Combined Authority (acting as the LEP) at how the Enterprise Zone can be effectively promoted as part of looking at the promotion of the Huntingdonshire offer. (ACTION 29)

So how can we better tell our story?

Within 18 months of this strategy paper, Huntingdonshire District Council will produce a promotional product which both celebrates our identity and sells our district to businesses who may consider relocation. The importance of the following features will be considered as part of this product and our story. See Action 9.

Economic Growth Plan - Actions log

Improving inward investment

Our Economic Development (ED) team will work hard to establish a positive working relationship with the winning contractor.

(ACTION 1) See page 5.

Economic Development will spend the first 12 months of this strategy building a sectoral framework **(ACTION 2), See page 5.**

The Council will seek to exploit funding opportunities, knowledge transfer and relevant business programmes from academic institutions, respected industry bodies and all tiers of Government to ensure that the conditions for growth are in place for the Huntingdonshire Economy **(ACTION 3).**

See page 5.

The Economic Development Team will use intelligence gathering and data analysis to inform our decision making for the benefit of our local businesses. This will include utilising business database software to track business movements and capitalise on any beneficial trends. **(ACTION 4) See page 5.**

The Council will work with all Master developers in our district to ensure the commercial space offer, matches the expectation of businesses **(ACTION 5). See page 6.**

Strategic themes – conditions for growth

The Council will work to enable further enhancements to full fibre and broadband schemes for businesses and home workers within our district and look at ways of bringing communities together to provide the numbers required to be of commercial interest.

(ACTION 6) See page 7.

Economic Development will house current information and actively signpost our local businesses to programmes and organisations **(ACTION 7) See page 9.**

Over the next few years, we will match this ambition by creating an environment which will become a natural choice for progressive and dynamic businesses from the KI sectors to thrive. **(ACTION 8) See page 11.**

The Council will produce a promotional document, which businesses and residents will recognise, which will in turn attract and create growth for businesses and housing. **(ACTION 9) See page 11.**

Within 12 months, a new website will be developed by Economic Development to help reflect this strategy and our future ambitions, as well as serving the day to day needs of our businesses. **(ACTION 10) See page 11.**

Economic development will work using various channels and means to gather and push our information while nurturing and developing stakeholder networks **(ACTION 11). See page 12.**

In the 12 months following this strategy the Council will develop a Business Engagement Strategy, firstly for our biggest businesses who have a natural and vested interest for our economy to do well. This group of 24 businesses will be serviced by a cross section of council officers at a technical and senior level, as well as politicians. The end objective will be more effective two-way communication. Beyond 12 months we will establish a face to face and digital engagement strategy which will reach the whole of the Business community in Huntingdonshire. **(ACTION 12) See page 12.**

Fuelling Economic growth

Within 12 months, each sectoral framework created on our website, will list appropriate networks which businesses may wish to engage with **(ACTION 13)**. See page 14.

A skills strategy to maximise human capital potential

12 months following this paper, we will work with Key Employers to understand the Skills & Training needs in each Sector. We will consider an annual skills survey as part of our annual report to help understand if the skills needs of our businesses are being met by the various further education (FE) and higher education (HE) & Adults skills providers. **(ACTION 14)** See page 15.

We will promote to all of our businesses, programmes which we know are landing well with employers such as the Government's plan to [help employ an apprentice](#). And newer schemes such as [Kickstart](#). **(ACTION 15)** See page 15.

We will work closely with all third-party skills providers in the FE/HE and Adult skills arena to help bring businesses and skills providers closer together. We will also work closely with the Combined Authority's STAR HUB, Talent Portal and Growth hub to actively promote the interventions that will work for our businesses and the local economy. **(ACTION 16)** See page 16.

We will work with institutions such as ARU across their various programmes to ensure high calibre placements are accessible for local businesses. **(ACTION 17)** See page 16.

we will consider as part of skills provision a future sector model which incorporates the above for delivery in schools. **(ACTION 18)** See page 17.

Vibrant town centres

The opportunity to create a BID in St Neots will be progressed by Economic Development within the next 12-18 months. **(ACTION 19)** See page 18.

The Council is assembling a Towns Programme which will reflect the significant investment opportunities in each of the four towns and current projects as well as draw on initial capital funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. **(ACTION 20)** See page 19.

The Council will look to take a creative and innovative approach where necessary to explore these themes in more detail, to work with town centre representatives and local groups to understand if there are programmes or behaviours that can be encouraged to support Huntingdonshire's market towns to achieve the continued vibrancy, we all aspire to see and experience in the future. **(ACTION 21)** See page 19.

Supporting Huntingdonshire's Business Sectors

Within the next 12 months we will begin to map our businesses of significance. Our largest sectors, our biggest employers, our fastest growing businesses, our fast-growing sectors, our new businesses. **(ACTION 22)** See page 20.

In the next 12 months and for each sector we will design a model which incorporates the following (where appropriate) to help support & stimulate sector growth. And to support inward investment enquiries **(ACTION 23)**. See page 20.

We will further utilise business databases such as FAME to help understand the business make-up of each sector. To monitor our growth sectors and to help understand future changes at a more micro level **(ACTION 24)**. See page 21.

Within the next 12 months the Economic Development Team will reach out to each organisation to explore mutually beneficial ways of working, with the aim of helping Huntingdonshire's manufacturing businesses make progress **(ACTION 25)**. See page 22.

The Economic Development Team will network in the Cambridge spaces where possible and practical to highlight the value that

Huntingdonshire can bring to the “right investor lead offering” while profiling the businesses who may naturally gravitate to the North & West, as part of their own growth journey.

(ACTION 26) See page 23.

The Economic Development Team will also explore projects such as the Norwich – Cambridge A11 tech corridor to understand the benefits so that we understand if a similar principle could be facilitated north and west of Cambridge. **(ACTION 27) See page 23.**

It will be the aim of Economic Development to bring together all of these useful developments into one location as part of our own sectoral

approach to ensure our Construction businesses are well served, whatever their future training and growth needs may be.

(ACTION 28) See page 25.

The Council will look with the Combined Authority (acting as the LEP) at how the Enterprise Zone can be effectively promoted as part of looking at the promotion of the Huntingdonshire offer. **(ACTION 29)**

See page 28.

About this report:

This report has been produced by the Economic Development department at Huntingdonshire District Council with the assistance of members, business representatives and senior officers.

We are particularly grateful for the valuable input to this strategy from the following organisations:

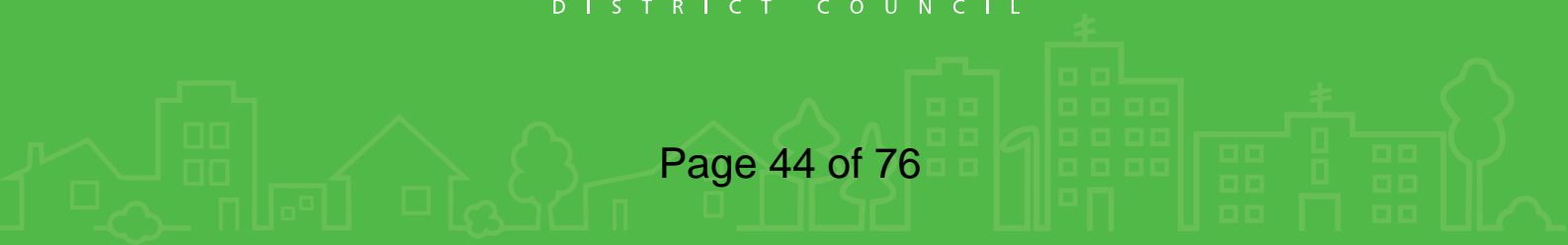
- Cambridge Ahead
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority
- Cambridgeshire Chambers Of Commerce
- FSB
- MAKE UK
- Urban & Civic
- What Next?

Once adopted, work will start immediately to implement this strategy concentrating initially on the actions listed in appendix item (iv) and then working on the wider themes of this report while reviewing and deploying appropriate interventions on an annual basis until 2025.

If you require further details or if you have any questions or suggestions that will help the Council in delivering this strategy for the District please contact:

Tel: 01480 388074

Email: Economic.Development@huntingdonshire.gov.uk



“Ready to Recover”

Economic Growth Strategy For Huntingdonshire District

2020-2025



- Respond to COVID-19 and Brexit
- Re-boot our sectors and skills
- Re-invigorate our economy and return to growth

Huntingdonshire – “Ready To Recover”

2020 will go down in history for the global impacts of the Coronavirus Pandemic, a once in a century event which has devastated lives, communities, jobs and businesses.

Our residents and businesses have been tested to their maximum during this difficult and challenging year. The pandemic has changed so many elements of our lives. It has encouraged people to work and shop more locally and to seek out our attractive open spaces. Our market towns have become preferred shopping destinations compared to cities and a greater sense of community has been fostered as we look out for the vulnerable and elderly in our neighbourhoods.

Our district and residents have shown resilience, naturally accommodating the “new normal”. Our district has also been fortunate, recording lower infection and mortality rates, than many other areas.

Of course, we must acknowledge the loss of loved ones, the lost businesses, the redundancies, and how COVID-19 has discriminated against different groups. Public health and economic outcomes have not been fair or equal.

To compound the immense challenge that businesses have faced, the UK will formalise its exit from the European Union meaning a new trading relationship with Europe will emerge in 2021. There will be further and perhaps difficult challenges that lie ahead, but there will also be future opportunities during the life cycle of this growth strategy. These will help expand our interests, increase international trade and attract more inward investment opportunities.

And so despite the adversity and the challenges that we face, we have every right to be confident and optimistic about what the future may hold for our district.

The anticipated return to a more “normal life” during 2021 will provide a welcome fillip to people’s sense of health and wellbeing as well as a boost to the national and local economy. There will be a huge re-building job to do. Many of our workers will need to develop and learn new skills to offer employers. Our sectors will need strengthening and some like the hospitality and events industry will need even greater support. The task of re-building our economy will be of a bigger scale than after the 2008 financial crisis. However, I am certain that our people and businesses will be equal to the task.

Manufacturing as a sector is a significant driver of GVA across Cambridgeshire, it is the engine of our economy and one of several natural strengths our district possesses. We also have an economy underpinned by a great number of amazing small businesses and at the other end of the scale larger flagship companies and public sector employers.



The pillars of our economy offer natural strengths which will certainly play a full and starring role once again, enabling Huntingdonshire to recover faster and experience growth once again.

Huntingdonshire is “Ready to Recover” and we relish the challenge to recover faster to create economic growth once again, as part of the UK’s pledge to build back better.

Councillor Ryan Fuller - Executive Leader,
Chairman of the Cabinet and Executive Councillor
for Housing and Economic Development

Executive Summary

There are a wide range of factors that contribute to a vibrant and thriving economy and the aim of this Strategy is to set out the priorities and actions for the next five years.

The Local Plan objectives to 2036 set out in 2019 stated our ambition to build an additional 20,100 houses and create 14,400 new jobs. Despite the effects of COVID-19, our aspiration is still to meet these objectives.

The Strategy is accompanied by an Economic Growth Plan which contains further context and detail including our priorities for the next 12 months. Key themes are:-

- **Inward investment**
- **Conditions for growth**
- **Fuelling our economy**
- **Maximising our skills**
- **Vibrant town centres**
- **Supporting our business sectors**

In 2013 Huntingdonshire District Council published an Economic Growth Plan covering the period 2013-2023. The document set out some ambitious plans to “go for growth”, and an economic vision based around a strong and stable economy following the recovery from the financial crash of 2008. It can be argued that this was the right approach at the time. GDP per head grew by 88% between 1998-2018 and Huntingdonshire has much to be proud of. Great opportunities for future growth lie ahead with key developments such as the newly completed A14 and the longer-term proposals for the OxCam Arc.

But the global health crisis sprung by the COVID-19 pandemic has eroded cash reserves and levels of resilience within Huntingdonshire’s businesses. Greater, and potentially more significant challenges will lie ahead as businesses transition to a new trading relationship with the European Union and other markets. The turbulence that businesses have



experienced and will experience, suggests that a new short-term strategy should be adopted to help the businesses in our district recover, ready to grow again.

Our sectors will need greater support to help them re-build or build back better after COVID-19. Strengthening our clusters will help optimize the performance of those businesses here in Huntingdonshire and will help build ecosystems to attract new businesses. We may also need to assist businesses who wish to import and export after January 2021.

One of our biggest challenges will be the skills landscape. Many workers and residents have recently lost their livelihoods. Some will need to seek new skills and training opportunities in order to re-enter the workplace. We will need businesses and education providers to work closer together so that our local population are equipped and ready to add value to the employers in our district.

This Strategy sits alongside other documents as part of the Council’s strategy and planning framework supporting and creating a strong and vibrant local economy.

Huntingdonshire's District Economy

- 1 Alconbury Weald & Stukeley Business Sites
- 2 Abbotsley Area Business Sites
- 3 Eagle Business Park in Yaxley
- 4 Godmanchester Business Sites
- 5 Huntingdon Business Sites
- 6 Kimbolton Area Business Sites
- 7 Lakes Business Park St Ives
- 8 Ramsey Business Sites
- 9 Sawtry Business Sites
- 10 Somersham Business Sites
- 11 St Ives Business Sites
- 12 St Neots Business Sites
- 13 Upwood Business Sites
- 14 Warboys Business Sites
- 15 Yaxley Business Sites



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Sitting within the OxCam Arc - home to 2 million jobs and £111 Billion of Economic Output



An economy worth **£10 Billion*** p.a



Completion of the A14 upgrade in 2020
A £1.5 Billion infrastructure investment further improving connectivity



20% increase of Knowledge Intensive businesses since 2013



86,000 employees - 2nd highest district in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area



An agglomeration of **150 Advanced Manufacturing Businesses**



A manufacturing sector with an economic output of **£2.7 Billion* p.a**



Sizable representation in Construction, Utilities & Wholesale Sectors

Conditions for Growth

Creating the right conditions for sustainable economic growth in the district

A new trading relationship with the EU

Signposting and supporting businesses to access national and local advice, networks, and supply chains



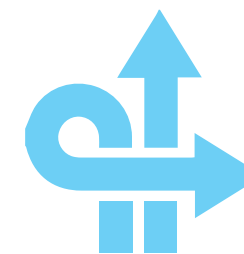
Inward investment

Creating attractive investment opportunities and driving economic growth through partner organisations including the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority



Digital Connectivity

Greater 5G and full fibre investment and expanding rural connectivity to improve productivity



Transport Links by Road and Rail

Maximising the value from the A14 upgrade and improved transport links via the A428, East-West Rail and Cambridge Autonomous Metro

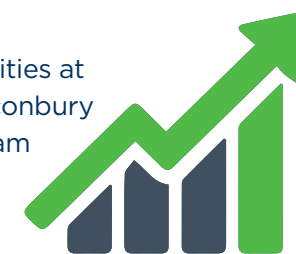


Environment and affordable housing

Delivering a green recovery and continuing to provide attractive places as people spend more time living and working locally

Good growth

Showcasing opportunities at key sites including Alconbury Weald and Wintringham Park for businesses to relocate and grow in the district



Branding and Promotion

At the centre and feeding into the three sub-economies in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough



Business Support

Looking out to the big 5 business organisations and providing a link into 8,000 local businesses

Vibrant Market Towns

Keeping our town centre economies relevant by leveraging technology, data and business funding



Fuelling **Economic Growth**

We need to play to our strengths to help our businesses recover and to enable them to be well placed, to achieve future economic growth.

Over 25% of the Huntingdonshire economy is embedded within the local manufacturing base. To enable these and all our businesses to increase their turnover and profit, they all will need to be more productive. We have identified both digital and innovation as the key themes which currently inhibit our levels of productivity.

Digital

Ensuring there is good provision of digital infrastructure is a priority and this will be achieved through working directly with providers and through other bodies such as Connecting Cambridgeshire.

The Economic Development Team will support our businesses whether they are looking to experiment with digital innovation or access grants to improve productivity.

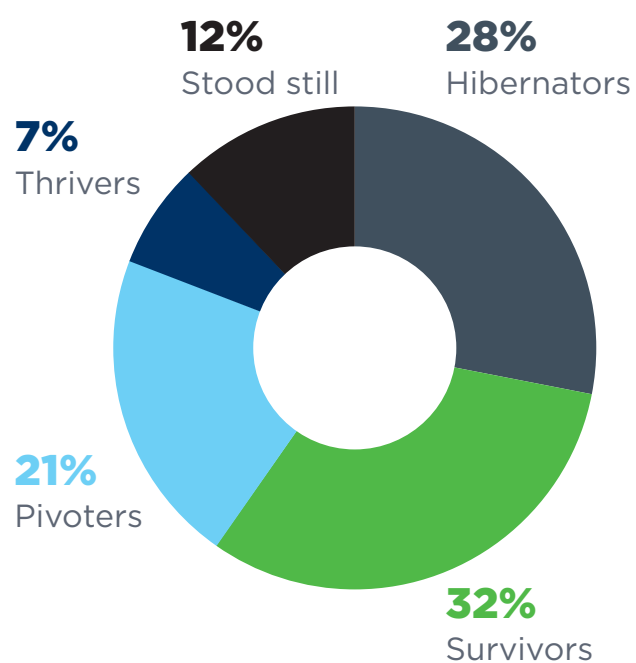
Our high street businesses will continue to improve their online offering, complementing their physical, high street experience led retail.

Digital skills will continue to grow as a core requirement within the workforce and therefore a clear link through to the skills agenda.

Innovation

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought out the best in some of our brilliant business people and the businesses they run.

National business response to COVID_19 (CBI)

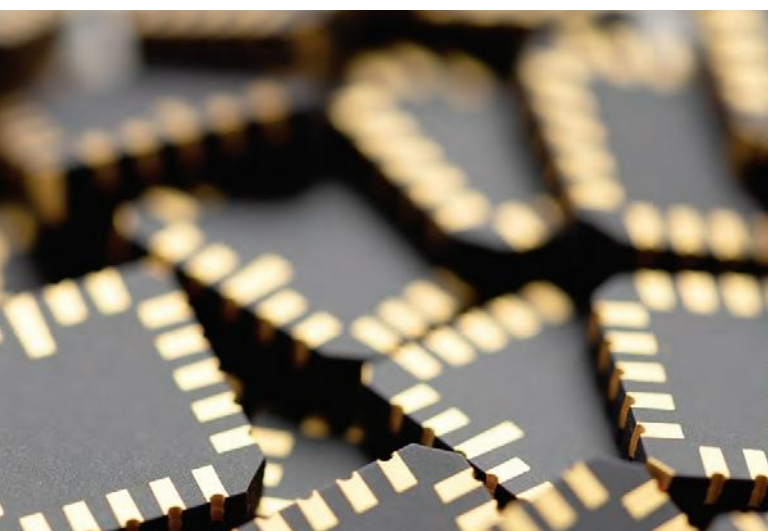


Hibernators had an appetite to innovate but questioned their ability to fund any potential innovation.

Pivoters had changed their service offer and an appetite for further innovation.

Thrivers were doing very well, and so the question is how can they do even better?

Understanding our businesses and particularly our larger businesses and sectors plus working with organisations such as Innovate UK and local business networks will fuel further local growth.



Skills

A Partnership Approach

The Economic Recovery Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough notes that taking a "business as usual approach" may not be the best strategy for organisations moving forward.

Huntingdonshire District Council's COVID-19 Business Impact Survey commissioned in May 2020 identified that younger people, and people in roles such as Customer Services, Sales and Administration were at greater threat of redundancy. During the Summer of 2020, MAKE UK Stated that 53% of their members would make redundancies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic equivalent to 250 of Huntingdonshire's manufacturing businesses.

Supporting people that have previously held positions where they relied on their people skills, or their administration or technical / manufacturing skills to find future employment is vital as well as understanding the "coveted" skills that employers value.

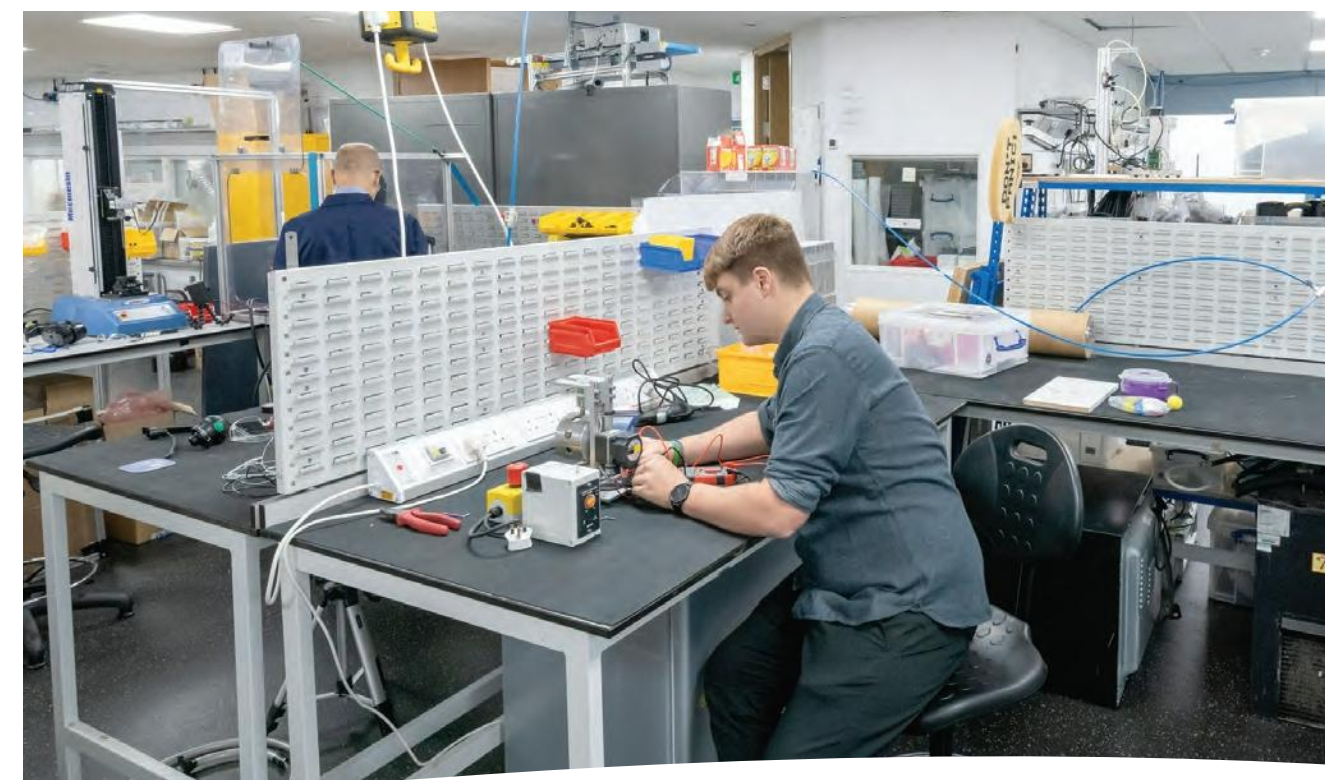
Huntingdonshire District Council must work with a spectrum of third parties to ensure our local economy has a pipeline of talent that aligns with what business need now and into the future.

Government Schemes

We will support local jobs by promoting national programmes which we know employers are finding beneficial, such as apprenticeships and Kickstart for which the Council is a Gateway Provider. We will support small and medium sized enterprises through other initiatives such as the Green Jobs Taskforce.

Third party providers

We will work closely with all third-party skills providers in the FE/HE and Adult skills arena to help bring businesses and skills providers closer together. Local providers include Cambridge and Peterborough regional colleges regional colleges, the Combined Authority's STAR HUB, Talent Portal and Growth Hub, Anglia Ruskin University and and Peterborough University when open.





Over 80% of the businesses in Huntingdonshire are small and medium sized enterprises. The Council recognises that the leaders of those businesses are also going to need additional support as they transition over the coming months, particularly in making difficult choices and supporting their workforce. Wherever possible the Council will be working with third party providers to link up on mentoring and peer to peer support as well as dedicated training for business leaders.

School and community provision

There is a gap in skills and business education in Huntingdonshire primary and secondary schools. Community networks and capacity to support each other has been enhanced in the past year. This has been factored into the Council's wider recovery work, particularly registered organisations and community groups that can help people get back into work, equipping them with new skills.

Pathways

Part of our strategy is to provide exciting opportunities for our future generations and to establish an effective presence in a variety of learning settings and locations. We will look to develop skills pathways in some of the following areas with our largest employers including:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Digital
 - Tech for good
 - Gaming
- Zero carbon & Green economy
- Construction
- Helping people
 - Health & Care
 - Education

Our Town Centres

The Geography of Huntingdonshire is based around four market towns linked to smaller villages. The economic success of our towns is central to the success of the district. A mix of independent and national brands serve these economies.

Before the pandemic, our high streets were declining and, in some areas, this was happening at a sharper rate. National studies showed our towns were performing slightly better when compared to other towns in England in terms of the impact of COVID on the economy. The Council has been horizon scanning for opportunities to leverage funding and to make direct interventions.

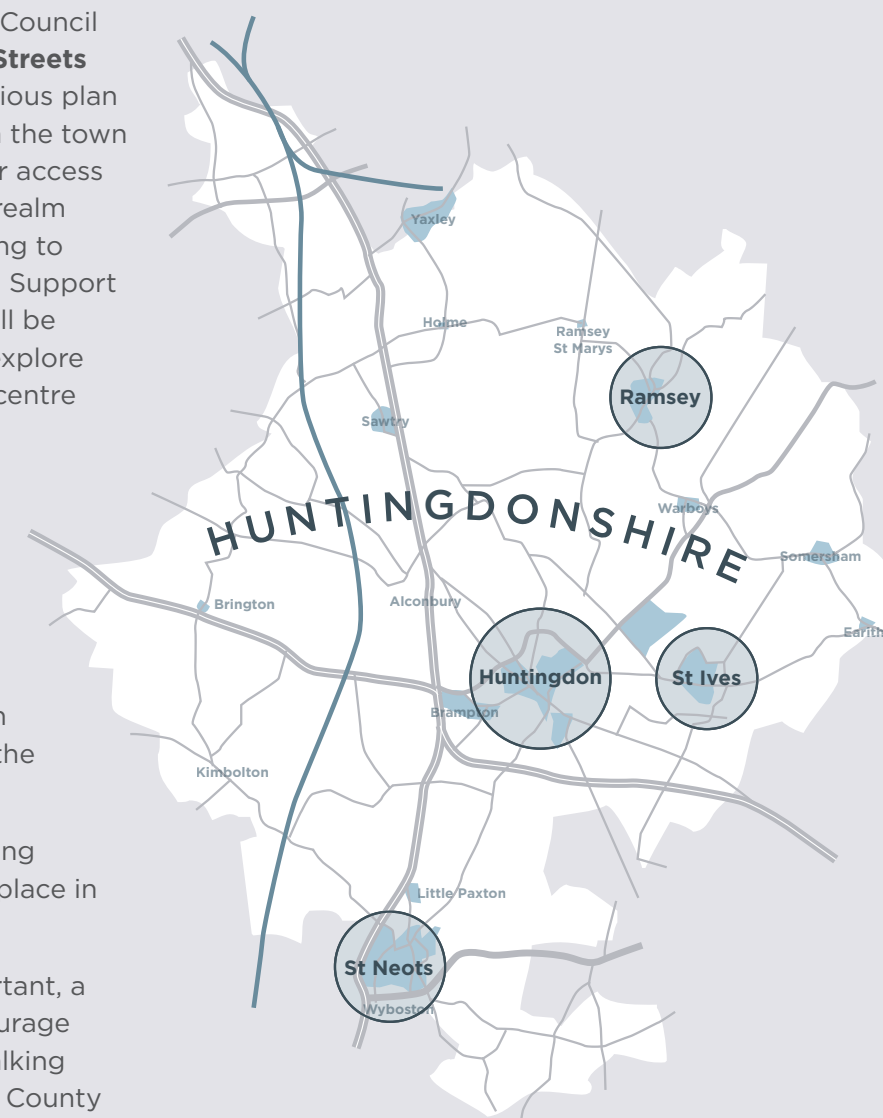
In July 2020 Huntingdonshire District Council submitted a bid into the **Future High Streets Fund** for St Neots. The bid is an ambitious plan to improve a number of local places in the town centre which include providing greater access to the riverside, improving the public realm and visitor experience as well as helping to realise some local regeneration needs. Support packages for the other three towns will be developed by March 2022 which will explore potential uses of space and the town centre offer in the future.

Following COVID-19, footfall levels are down and online shopping habits have increased to double the amount in 2019. Short term interventions on the Opening of the High Street and capital investment of £1.5M by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority will be made by the Council through to March 2022.

A Business Improvement District is being pursued in St Neots, one is already in place in Huntingdon.

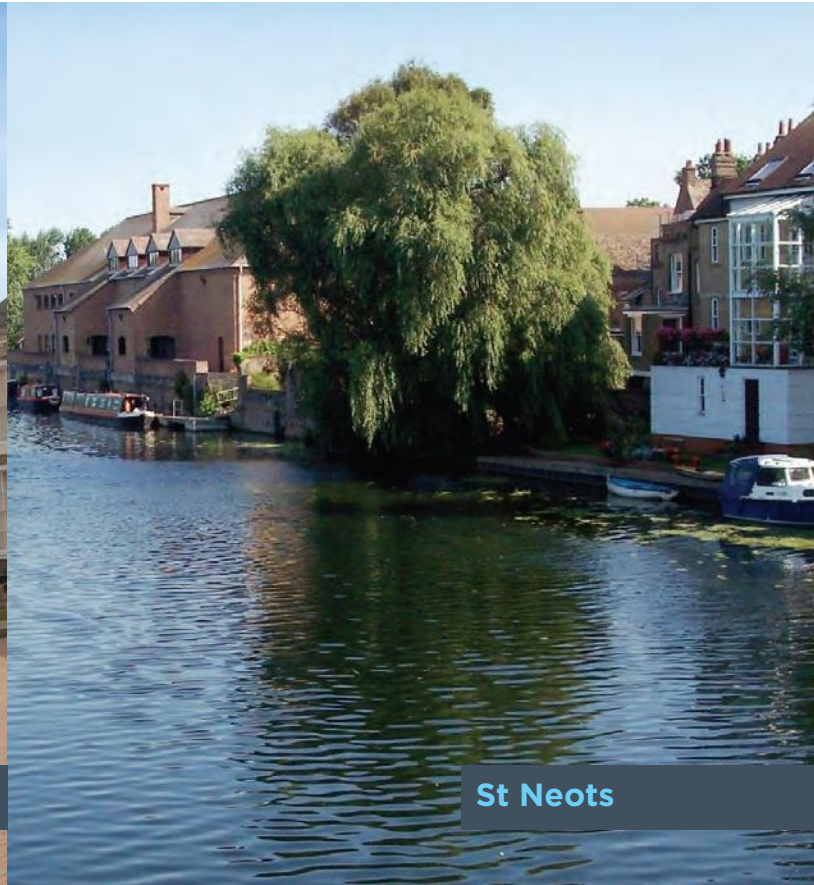
Visitor experience will be highly important, a more attractive public realm will encourage “dwell time”. Improved cycling and walking routes will also be developed with the County Council.

Projects to improve the digital infrastructure are planned, building on the free public WiFi that has been completed in December 2020 in all four towns with support from Connecting Cambridgeshire. Online shopping platforms will also be explored with the town councils and retailers as well as further training opportunities for retailers to enable a viable balance of online and on street sales.





Huntingdon



St Neots



St Ives



Ramsey

Sector Support and Growth

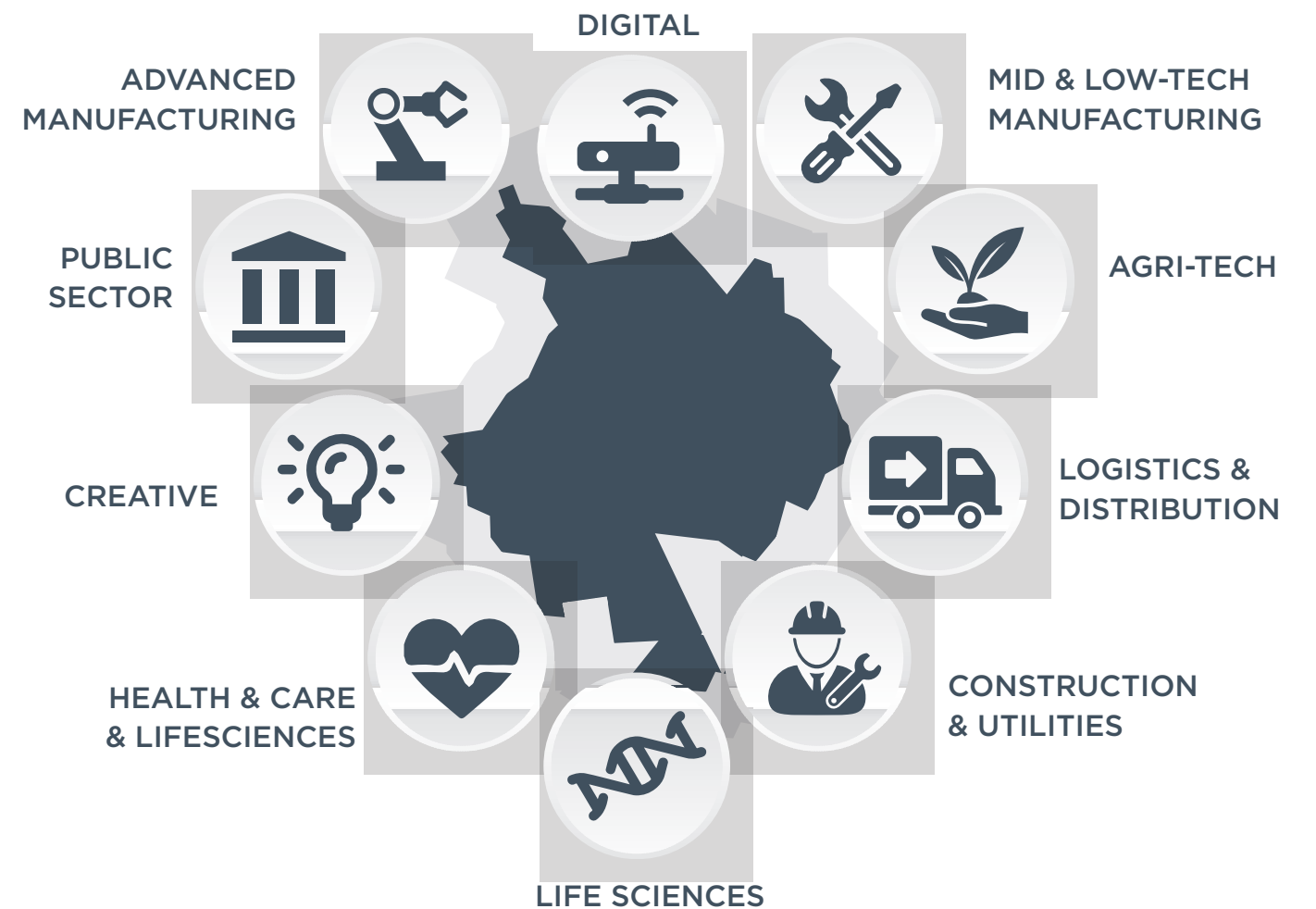
The Combined Authority published the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER) report in 2018 followed by the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS).

The CPIER and LIS documents outline the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area possessing three sub-economies with Huntingdonshire spanning across all three.

An economic report by EMSI in 2018 concluded the growth industries in Huntingdonshire would be in digital and precision engineering. Many high-tech and general manufacturers are in Huntingdonshire based on data from the Centre for Research at the Judge Business School.

Recent work by the Centre for Research

has provided further insight about how the Huntingdonshire economy interacts with the Cambridge sub-economy and specifically the North West Corridor. Growth from the knowledge intensive sectors is coming but has not yet reached Huntingdonshire to a significant extent. However, there is more spend on research and development and upcoming developments such as at the OxCam Arc may influence the movement of certain businesses. Pre-COVID-19 there was also a strong and vibrant semi-rural economy.



Main sector theme highlights of this Strategy



Advanced Manufacturing

This is a high priority sector for Huntingdonshire comprising 150 businesses, employing nearly 3,000 people with £1Bn turnover. Work is already underway with the engineering and university sectors including Aston University's UK resilience supply chain programme and MAKE UK.



Mid & Low-tech Manufacturing

Many of our manufacturing businesses sit in the general and mid-tech range and outnumber the advanced manufacturers 4:1. These businesses will need help and access to support networks including expanding digital systems.



Agri-tech

The East Of England has a major role to play in the growing, production and movement of food products across the UK and beyond. Seven of the top 25 employers in Huntingdonshire are embedded within Agri and Food production employing an estimated 9,000 plus workers in our district.

Our transport infrastructure is particularly attractive to large scale food producers who look to move high quality, fresh produce around the UK. Some areas of this sector are susceptible to automation which is starting to become much more commonplace.



Construction & Utilities

Whilst grouped together here, construction and utilities are sectors that react very differently during economic times of growth and contraction. Construction as an industry is often the first to go into recession and the first to come out, so is often a good indicator of where the economy is headed. Utilities on the other hand must “keep going” whatever the economic conditions but must be wary of the varied demand for their services. According to the Centre for business research at Cambridge University, around 15% of the Huntingdonshire's economic output comes from utilities and 10% from construction.

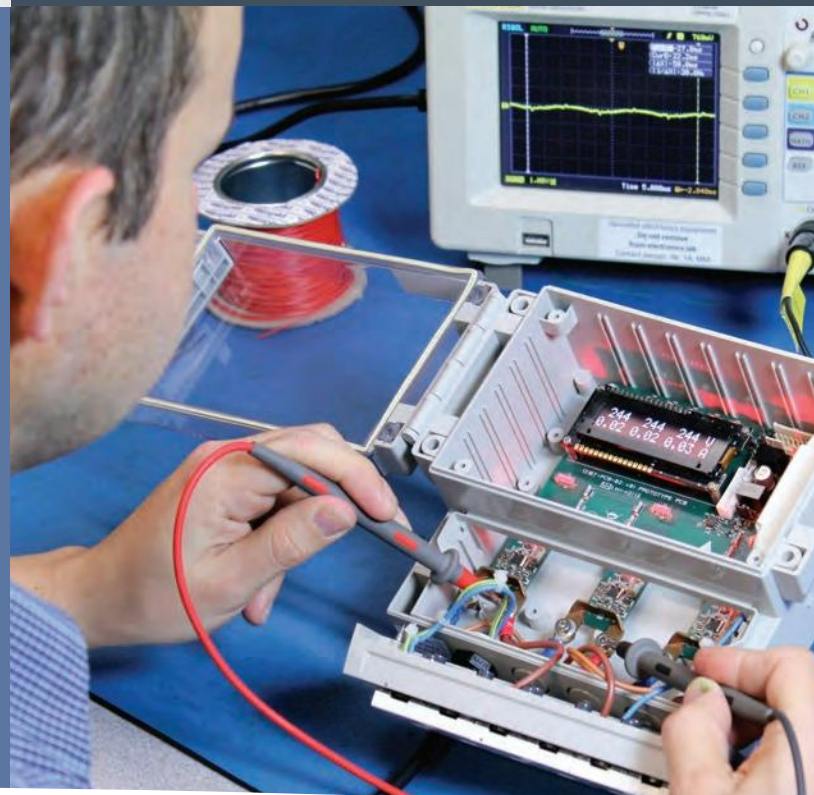
It will be important to understand the challenges for these major employers including addressing the gaps that will be created as a result of an ageing construction workforce.



Digital

Many themes link into the digital sector with national growth in this sector nearly six times larger than growth across the rest of the economy. Huntingdonshire has a mix of tech, gaming companies and a strong presence of IT and Telecoms businesses within its digital sector which is worth between £500-600 Million per annum.

Businesses have also had to transform digitally during lockdown with many facilitating home working for their previously office-based workforce. Businesses will need people with continually evolving and improved digital skills, particularly advanced digital skills to help support productivity and growth.



Logistics & Distribution

Connections to London, the Midlands and the North, make Huntingdonshire an attractive base for Logistics and Distribution (L&D) businesses. The A14 upgrade and further improvements to the highways will encourage further interest. The L&D Sector was recognised as being part of the top 5 fastest growing sectors within the UK in February 2020 with greater online shopping habits seen during lockdown. We must therefore embrace good sustainable opportunities that support long-term, good jobs growth within this sector and for the district.





Life Sciences

Given our proximity to Cambridge and how strongly the Life Sciences sector has grown pre & post COVID there may be natural opportunities for more life sciences businesses to find a home in Huntingdonshire. The Council will look at ways natural growth can take place in a sector that is recognised strongly in the recently published Arc Economic Prospectus



Health & Care

Health & Care is a growing sector in Huntingdonshire that has performed superbly during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Health & Care includes organisations like Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, our primary care providers and residential care and nursing homes. One of our challenges is to promote the variety of jobs in this sector and enhance the skill sets of employees

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Creative

With a cluster of creative businesses situated in our biggest market town St Neots, it makes sense to recognise both the challenges and opportunities that may await this sector in the future. The Creative industry has been hit significantly by COVID-19. Pre-pandemic the Digital marketing and advertising industry had grown for 21 consecutive quarters in the UK and was placed within the top 5 fastest growing sectors.



Public Sector

Huntingdonshire has an established working population of public sector organisations; this will increase again in 2021 when Cambridgeshire County Council move their Offices from Cambridge to Alconbury Weald.



In Summary

This Economic Growth Strategy highlights what makes Huntingdonshire special and what the Council envisages will be important for continued growth and our priorities for the next five years with a link to further background and our detailed plans for the next twelve months.

The economic climate remains very challenging and whilst plans will no doubt change within this overall strategic framework.

Further context and our targets for the next 12 months can be seen in the accompanying Economic Growth Plan. www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/economicgrowthplan

The Council is particularly grateful for the valuable input to the Economic Growth Strategy and accompanying Plan from the following organisations:

- Cambridge Ahead
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority
- Cambridgeshire Chambers Of Commerce
- Federation of Small Businesses
- MAKE UK
- Urban & Civic

If you require further details or if you have any questions or suggestions that will help the Council in delivering this strategy for the District please contact:

Tel: **01480 388074**

Email: Economic.Development@huntingdonshire.gov.uk





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Appendix i) & ii) - Statistics

i) Page 8

*To August 2020 Universal Credit claims in Huntingdon have increased by 253%. An increase in East Anglia of 125% in the 16-24 age bracket and 146% in the 25-49 age group.

** Job Seekers Allowance numbers have increased by 231% between August '19 to August '20

ii) Page 9

* [average house prices for Huntingdonshire are £256,000 as of August 2020](#)

** [UK average house price value as of August 2020.](#)

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iii) Metrics

In this Economic growth strategy, we have touched upon several different themes which are in themselves key and important ingredients to enable a thriving local economy. To compliment the themes we have also looked for appropriate measurements and metrics which will help us understand how the economy will evolve through the effects of Coronavirus, into the recovery phase and throughout the lifetime of this strategy. The ambitions of the recent Community Impact Assessment was to establish what we already know and to identify issues that will future research. These metrics will aim to achieve similar objectives but from an economic viewpoint.

A range of metrics will be revisited each year in a Huntingdonshire Economic Outlook, which will be an annual report produced by Economic Development, the first issue of which, will be published in the Spring of 2021. The pages below relate to the Economic Growth Plan document.

Statement in ED report/subject	Page	Measure
Digital Connectivity	8	Fixed Coverage % of residential premises access to full fibre
Digital Connectivity	8	Fixed Coverage % of commercial premises access to full fibre
Digital Connectivity	8	Residential Unable to access a download speed of 10Mbit/s and an upload speed of 1Mbit/s (Universal Service Obligation minimum)
Digital Connectivity	8	Business Unable to access a download speed of 10Mbit/s and an upload speed of 1Mbit/s (Universal Service Obligation minimum)
Road	8	Percentage of principal classified roads where maintenance should be considered (categorised as red) - Cambridgeshire as a whole
Road	8	Percentage of non - principal classified roads where maintenance should be considered (categorised as red) - Cambridgeshire as a whole
Rail	8	Entries and exist Huntingdon - number
Rail	8	Entries and exist Huntingdon - rank
Rail	8	Entries and exists St Neots - number
Rail	8	Entries and exists St Neots - rank
Environment	8	Carbon Dioxide Emissions industry and commercial total
Environment	8	Carbon Dioxide Emissions grand total
Environment	8	Carbon Dioxide Emissions per capita
Environment	8	Carbon Dioxide Emissions per km2
Environment	8	Carbon Dioxide Emissions industry and commercial total (WSLA)
Environment	8	Carbon Dioxide Emissions grand total (WSLA)
Environment	8	Carbon Dioxide Emissions per capita (WSLA)
Environment	8	Carbon Dioxide Emissions per km2 (WSLA)
Housing	8	Average Price All Properties UK Price Index June2020
Housing	8	Housing Supply - Net Additional dwellings against target
Affordable Housing	9	Claimant Count
Affordable Housing	9	Claimant Count - percentage of the population
Growth metrics	10	GDP chained volume measures 2016 monetary value
Growth metrics	10	GDP chained volume measures per head
Growth metrics	10	GVA balanced chained volume measures by industry
Growth metrics	10	GVA per hour worked
Growth metrics	10	GVA per filled job

Themes to fuel economic growth	13	Number of births of new enterprises 2018
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	Number of deaths of enterprises 2018
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	Count of active enterprises
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	Count of Survival of newly born enterprises - count of 2013 births surviving in 2018
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	% of Survival of newly born enterprises - % of 2013 births surviving in 2018
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	Count of Survival of newly born enterprises - count of 2015 births surviving in 2018
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	% of Survival of newly born enterprises - % of 2015 births surviving in 2018
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	Count of Survival of newly born enterprises - count of 2017 births surviving in 2018
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	% of Survival of newly born enterprises - % of 2017 births surviving in 2018
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	Count of births of employer enterprises
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	Count of deaths of employer enterprises
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	Count of active employer enterprises
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	Count of enterprises Micro (0-9 employees)
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	Count of enterprises Small (10-49 employees)
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	Count of enterprises Medium (50-249 employees)
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	Count of enterprises Large (250+ employees)
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	Count of units Micro (0-9 employees)
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	Count of units Small (10-49 employees)
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	Count of units Medium (50-249 employees)
Themes to fuel economic growth	13	Count of units Large (250+ employees)
Innovation	13	Count of high growth enterprises
Skills	15	Employment 16-64%
Skills	15	Working Age Population 16-64
Skills	15	Employment rate
Skills	15	Unemployment rate
Skills	15	Economic Inactivity rate 16-64
Skills	15	Job Density 16-64
Skills	15	Gross Earnings resident median weekly

Skills	15	Gross Earnings workplace median Weekly
Skills	15	Jobs
Skills	15	Jobs by industry
Skills	15	Percentage of working age population with No qualifications
Skills	15	Percentage of working age population with NVQ4+
Skills	15	Percentage of working age population with NVQ3+
Skills	15	Percentage of working age population with NVQ2+
Skills	15	Percentage of working age population with NVQ1+
Skills	15	Percentage of working age population with Other Qualifications
Skills	15	Percentage of working age population with No qualifications (work)
Skills	15	Percentage of working age population with NVQ4+ (work)
Skills	15	Percentage of working age population with NVQ3+ (work)
Skills	15	Percentage of working age population with NVQ2+ (work)
Skills	15	Percentage of working age population with NVQ1+ (work)
Skills	15	Percentage of working age population with Other Qualifications (work)
Next Generation	16	Life expectancy at birth (Male)
Next Generation	16	Life expectancy at birth (Female)
Next Generation	16	Inequality in Life expectancy at birth (Male)
Next Generation	16	Inequality in Life expectancy at birth (Female)
Supporting Huntingdonshire's Business Sectors	20	Number of employees and percentage of workforce
Supporting Huntingdonshire's Business Sectors	20	Contribution to GVA
Supporting Huntingdonshire's Business Sectors	20	Number of apprenticeships participants by industry
Supporting Huntingdonshire's Business Sectors	20	Number of achievements of apprenticeships by industry
Vibrant Town Centres	18	Footfall - comparisons year on year, ytd and to market towns
Vibrant Town Centres	18	Percentage of properties that are vacant
Supporting Metrics	N/A	Internal Migration Inflow (UK) - Mid 18-19
Supporting Metrics	N/A	Internal Migration Outflow (UK) - Mid 18-19
Supporting Metrics	N/A	Long Term International Migration Inflow - Mid 18-19
Supporting Metrics	N/A	Long Term International Migration Outflow - Mid 18-19
Supporting Metrics	N/A	Number of LSOAs in the least deprived 20% nationally (%)
Supporting Metrics	N/A	Number of LSOAs in the most deprived 20% nationally (%)
Supporting Metrics	N/A	Breakdown of IMD Domains income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and living environment
Supporting Metrics	N/A	Sustainable Growth Index rank
Supporting Metrics	N/A	Prosperity Index rank
Supporting Metrics	N/A	GDHI 2018 at current basic prices
Supporting Metrics	N/A	GDHI 2018 per head at current basic prices

Supporting Metrics	N/A	Quality of life ranking
Supporting Metrics	N/A	NNDR income
Supporting Metrics	N/A	Total relief from business rates

iv) Actions log – The first 12 months of this strategy.

Our Economic Development (ED) team will work hard to establish a positive working relationship with the winning contractor. (Action 1)

Economic Development will spend the first 12 months of this strategy building a sectoral framework (Action 2),

The Council will seek to exploit funding opportunities, knowledge transfer and relevant business programmes from academic institutions, respected industry bodies and all tiers of Government to ensure that the conditions for growth are in place for the Huntingdonshire Economy (Action 3).

The Economic Development Team will use intelligence gathering and data analysis to inform our decision making for the benefit of our local businesses. This will include utilising business database software to track business movements and capitalise on any beneficial trends. (Action 4)

The Council will work with all Master developers in our district to ensure the commercial space offer, matches the expectation of businesses (Action 5).

The Council will work to enable further enhancements to full fibre and broadband schemes for businesses and home workers within our district and look at ways of bringing communities together to provide the numbers required to be of commercial interest. (Action 6)

Economic Development will house current information and actively signpost our local businesses to programmes and organisations (Action 7)

Over the next few years, we will match this ambition by creating an environment which will become a natural choice for progressive and dynamic businesses from the KI sectors to thrive. (Action 8)

The Council will produce a promotional document, which businesses and residents will recognise, which will in turn attract and create growth for businesses and housing. (Action 9)

Within 12 months, a new website will be developed by Economic Development to help reflect this strategy and our future ambitions, as well as serving the day to day needs of our businesses. (Action 10)

Economic development will work using various channels and means to gather and push our information while nurturing and developing stakeholder networks (Action 11).

In the 12 months following this strategy the Council will develop a Business Engagement Strategy, firstly for our biggest businesses who have a natural and vested interest for our economy to do well. This group of 24 businesses will be serviced by a cross section of council officers at a technical and senior level, as well as politicians. The end objective will be more effective two-way communication. Beyond 12 months we will establish a face to face and digital engagement strategy which will reach the whole of the Business community in Huntingdonshire. (Action 12)

Within 12 months, each sectoral framework created on our website, will list appropriate networks which businesses may wish to engage with (Action 13).

12 months following this paper, we will work with Key Employers to understand the Skills & Training needs in each Sector. We will consider an annual skills survey as part of our annual report to help understand if the skills needs of our businesses are being met by the various further education (FE) and higher education (HE) & Adults skills providers. (Action 14)

We will promote to all of our businesses, programmes which we know are landing well with employers such as the Government's plan to [help employ an apprentice](#). And newer schemes such as [Kickstart](#) (Action 15)

We will work closely with all third-party skills providers in the FE/HE and Adult skills arena to help bring businesses and skills providers closer together. We will also work closely with the Combined Authority's STAR HUB, Talent Portal and Growth hub to actively promote the interventions that will work for our businesses and the local economy. (Action 16)

We will work with institutions such as ARU across their various programmes to ensure high calibre placements are accessible for local businesses. (Action 17).

we will consider as part of skills provision a future sector model which incorporates the above for delivery in schools. (Action 18)

The opportunity to create a BID in St Neots will be progressed by Economic Development within the next 12-18 months. (Action 19)

The Council is assembling a Towns Programme which will reflect the significant investment opportunities in each of the four towns and current projects as well as draw on initial capital funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. (Action 20)

The Council will look to take a creative and innovative approach where necessary to explore these themes in more detail, to work with town centre representatives and local groups to understand if there are programmes or behaviours that can be encouraged to support Huntingdonshire's market towns to achieve the continued vibrancy, we all aspire to see and experience in the future. (Action 21)

Within the next 12 months we will begin to map our businesses of significance. Our largest sectors, our biggest employers, our fastest growing businesses, our fast-growing sectors, our new businesses. (Action 22)

In the next 12 months and for each sector we will design a model which incorporates the following (where appropriate) to help support & stimulate sector growth. And to support inward investment enquiries (Action 23).

We will further utilise business databases such as FAME to help understand the business make-up of each sector. To monitor our growth sectors and to help understand future changes at a more micro level (Action 24).

Within the next 12 months the Economic Development Team will reach out to each organisation to explore mutually beneficial ways of working, with the aim of helping Huntingdonshire's manufacturing businesses make progress (Action 25).

The Economic Development Team will network in the Cambridge spaces where possible and practical to highlight the value that Huntingdonshire can bring to the "right investor lead offering" while profiling the businesses who may naturally gravitate to the North & West, as part of their own growth journey. (Action 26)

The Economic Development Team will also explore projects such as the Norwich – Cambridge A11 tech corridor to understand the benefits so that we understand if a similar principle could be facilitated north and west of Cambridge. (Action 27)

It will be the aim of Economic Development to bring together all of these useful developments into one location as part of our own sectoral approach to ensure our Construction businesses are well served, whatever their future training and growth needs may be. (Action 28)

The Council will look with the Combined Authority (acting as the LEP) at how the Enterprise Zone can be effectively promoted as part of looking at the promotion of the Huntingdonshire offer. (Action 29)

v) Network Linkages

This strategy will become a working document and we will need to collaborate with several organisations to ensure that the actions listed are achieved. Here are the stakeholders to date, that we have identified to enable this plan to be successfully implemented. A majority of these are organisations that Economic development already have an established and positive working relationship with. The list is not exhaustive.

Peer Networks (Government)

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
Cambridgeshire County Council
Connecting Cambridgeshire
Local Enterprise Partnership/ Combined Authority Growth Hub
Greater Cambridge Partnership
HDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan
HDC Planning

Business Membership Networks

Cambridge Ahead

MAKE UK (Manufacturing)
Chambers of commerce
Federation of Small Businesses
Confederation of British Industry

Skills Networks

Highways England legacy project

East – West Rail

CPCA Talent Hub

EDGE

Cambridgeshire Skills

Anglia Ruskin University

New University Of Peterborough

Sector Development Networks

Manufacturing

- Aston University – Supply chain programme
- MAKE UK
- IFM & Cambridge University – Engineering (West Cambridge)
- Hethel Engineering – Norfolk, incubator, motorsport / Lotus
- University of East Anglia – Centre for Digitisation (manufacturing & engineering)
- NAAME - New Anglia Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering group
- Advanced Manufacturing Programme (Opportunity Peterborough)
- St Neots Manufacturing Club
- CUTEC – Cambridge University Technology & Enterprise Club

Digital & tech

Tech East

Tech Nation

Connecting Cambridgeshire

Cambridge Wireless

Construction

Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce – Construction Network

Agri tech

Cambridgeshire ACRE

Place Networks

Town councils

Town teams

Huntingdon Business Improvement District

Market Town steering groups

vi) **References, Important Papers, and recommended reading**

[CPIER](#) report

[Local Industrial strategy](#)

[Economic strategy for the East of England](#)
[New Anglia LEP Economic Recovery Strategy](#)

[West Midlands Combined Authority Economic Recovery Strategy](#)

[Oxford Cambridge Arc Economic Prospectus](#)

https://www.accenture.com/gb-en/about/inclusion-diversity/culture-equality-research?c=acn_gb_cultureequalitygoogle_11160830&n=psgs_0320&gclid=EAlaQobChMIxqq6oc6L6gIVxsDCh3ESAQvEAAiAAAEqJjgFD_BwE&utm_campaign=1935307_East%20regional%20email%2003.07&utm_medium=email&utm_source=loD%20Regions%20and%20branches&dm_i=3R54,15HAJ,6KDXB5,42S83,1

Market Town Reports (Prospectus for growth)

- [St Ives report](#)
- [Huntingdon report -](#)
- [Ramsey report](#)
- [St Neots Masterplan Report](#)

Commercial Property Commentary

Retail - <https://www.bsm.uk.com/blog/our-post-pandemic-high-street-an-initial-view-and-concern-for-q2/>

Office - <https://www.bsm.uk.com/blog/wfh-and-office-occupation/>

Industrial - <https://www.bsm.uk.com/blog/the-a14-funnel-effect/>

[HDC Community Impact Assessment](#)

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vii) Alignment with the emerging Place Strategy to 2050:

Physical – Infrastructure / Natural agglomerations, Manufacturers and engineers / Housing growth, Town centre regeneration

Social – Place making, public realm in town centres / higher value jobs (society) / Digital Infrastructure, bringing business and education closer together. Supporting the night-time economy in our towns. Health & Care as a growing sector.

Commercial – Sector strategy, economic metrics, building on strengths, Sectors & Infrastructure. Jobs growth and wealth creation. Skills pipeline, conditions for growth, investment.

Cultural – Prospectus for growth – Cultural groups being part of town teams. Ramsey Abbey, Cromwell Museum. Locational strengths / The Cambridge effect /

Environmental – Net Zero growth, Sustainability, Modern Construction Methods,

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Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Consultation by National Air Traffic Service-
Luton Airport flight path changes

Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 21st January 2021

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Leisure and Regulatory
Services – Councillor K Prentice

Report by: Operational Manager (People) – Finlay Flett

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

This paper outlines the content of an ongoing consultation exercise being undertaken by the National Air Traffic Service (NATS) regarding changes to Luton Airport's approach flight paths and associated holding zone and offers the opportunity for Cabinet to consider and comment on it.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is recommended:-

1. To consider the report and determine whether a formal response from the Council to the NATS consultation exercise is appropriate; and
2. If considered appropriate, to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Leisure and Regulatory Services, to make a formal response to the consultation on behalf of the Council.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This paper outlines the current consultation exercise which the National Air Traffic Service (NATS) are carrying out in respect of proposed changes to the incoming flightpaths to Luton Airport and the associated holding zone.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In October 2020, NATS launched a consultation exercise which is scheduled to run until early February 2021. This exercise consults on proposals to alter inbound flight paths and to create a new dedicated holding zone for Luton air traffic.
- 2.2 These changes are planned in order to provide clear separation of the air traffic for Luton and Stansted airports, which currently overlap. The changes also create a dedicated holding zone for Luton's air traffic, replacing the current holding zones, which Luton traffic shares with Stansted traffic.
- 2.3 NATS have published a detailed consultation paper on these proposals, which can be found at https://consultations.airspacechange.co.uk/london-luton-airport/ad6_luton_arrivals/user_uploads/lla-arrivals-consultation-document-screenview-1-3.0.pdf. In addition, an abridged version of the consultation document has been prepared which includes all the key elements but abridges the technical detail, which can be found at https://consultations.airspacechange.co.uk/london-luton-airport/ad6_luton_arrivals/supporting_documents/LLA%20Arrivals%20ABRIDGED%20Consultaton%20Document%20Issue%201.0.pdf. NATS have also created an exhibition-style web site which gives detail on the proposals and also offers the opportunity to register for webinars where the public can hear more about the proposals and ask questions of NATS staff. The exhibition website is located at https://consultations.airspacechange.co.uk/london-luton-airport/ad6_luton_arrivals/.
- 2.4 The main proposals relate to a re-routing of inbound flights as a result of the separation of the Luton and Stansted traffic and the associated creation of new dedicated airspace. The new airspace is to the south of Huntingdonshire, with aircraft starting their final descent to the south of St Neots. As such, this element of the proposals does not have a significant local impact. However, the proposals envisage the creation of a new holding pattern, to be used in the event of unscheduled congestion resulting in a "back-up" of approaching air traffic. This proposed holding zone would be in a loop pattern around the line of the A1 road, broadly from St Neots to Alconbury. A map showing a summary of these proposals, extracted from the NATS documents, is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.5 Details of the proposals and the associated consultation have been provided to all the Town and Parish Councils in the District, so individual representations can be made. A number have indicated that they plan to

do so and some have provided comments or copied their consultation responses to HDC. The comments fall into three main areas, namely whether the proposed changes are justified by predicted air traffic levels, the potential for noise nuisance from the proposed holding zone and the potential for increased pollution from aircraft using the new holding zone.

- 2.6 NATS have stated that the primary objective of the proposals is to separate the traffic for Luton and Stansted. This has necessitated the creation of new holding zones, as the current holding zones overlap traffic from the two airports and are also overflowed by the inbound flight paths. The consultation document states that, although the current arrangement is safe, it provides no scope for any additional flight capacity and the combination of this factor plus the desire to increase safety by separating air traffic and preventing flight overlapping means that change is necessary and the “do nothing” option is not considered sustainable.
- 2.7 The rationale for selecting the proposed location of the holding zone is not included in the current information, being a consistent feature of all inbound traffic options. However, this issue was covered by the NATS team at a consultation webinar attended by HDC Officers and Members. It was stated that this location was the only available air space which did not conflict with air space allocated to existing north-south flight paths, east-west flight paths, the descent routes to the airport and the airspace to the north which is used by the RAF bases in the region.
- 2.8 The noise issue is determined by a combination of the number of flights and the noise generated by individual aircraft. Data on these issues is included in the NATS consultation document. This indicated that peak hourly traffic averages at 12-13 arrivals per hour, with peak hours being 0700-0800, 12.00-14.00 and 17.00-19.00. The busiest single hour of 2019 saw 24 arrivals. This would appear to support the assertion that, with traffic flowing normally, use of the holding zone would not be expected to be high. The minimum flying height in the holding zone will be 8,000 feet and aircraft would be held at different heights at 1,000 foot increments above this, to a maximum of 14,000 feet, if additional holding were to be required. Data from the Civil Aviation Authority indicates that the most commonly used aircraft at Luton would generate approx. 55dB noise at 7,000-8,000 feet and noise from aircraft at altitudes any higher than this would not be discernible from background noise. To contextualise this, 50dB is noted as the equivalent of a “quiet office” and 60dB a “busy general office”.
- 2.9 The NATS consultation document quotes guidance which states “Where practicable, it is desirable that airspace routes below 7,000ft should seek to avoid flying over Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); All changes below 7,000ft should take into account local circumstances in the development of the airspace design; Consultation with environmental stakeholders will usually only be necessary where the proposed changes concern controlled airspace below an altitude of 7,000 feet Changes at or above 7,000 feet will usually not have a noticeable impact”.

- 2.10 NATS accept that the actual impact of the proposed holding zone will only be measurable once it is in operation. However, they have also stated that, in simulations, the improved traffic flow generated by the new flight paths and the separation of the traffic from Stansted led to minimal use of the holding area.
- 2.11 Potential pollution is discussed in the consultation but the combination of altitude, more modern aircraft and the fact that no additional capacity is discussed at this point leads to an indication that this is not considered to be a significant concern with these plans.
- 2.12 Comments have been forwarded to the Council by several Town and Parish Councils, as well as by several private individuals. It is understood that most of these comments have been made directly to NATS. The majority have raised objections.
- 2.13 The NATS consultation exercise for views via a survey with 10 specific questions. Questions 1-7 are specifically about the decent/approach flightpaths. Questions 8 and 9 are technical questions regarding airspace classification. Question 10 allows comments on any other issues to be put forward.
- 2.14 As most of the questions relate to the descending flightpaths to the Luton runway, issues which potentially impact on Huntingdonshire residents are not directly covered. However, there is the opportunity to provide “free text” input in Question 10, should it be considered appropriate for the Council to comment. As noted, the main potential areas for comment would be the overall need for change, the positioning of the holding zone and the potential impact of aircraft noise and pollution from the use of the holding zone.

3. COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships) considered this issue, aided by a presentation from the NATS consultation team, at its meeting on 7th January 2021. The Panel made the following comments for consideration by Cabinet:-
- 1) The Panel wants to place on record its dissatisfaction that data has not been provided to demonstrate the impact of the holding area in alternative location options against the published criteria. It is assumed that for the methodology to be sound, alternatives will have been appraised, including the “do nothing” option. The data for these should be published and consulted on. For these reasons, the Panel recommend that the proposals be not implemented.
 - 2) The Panel expressed disappointment that there had not been more transparency around the need for the proposals, with little consideration of alternative options, for positioning of the proposed holding zone and asked that NATS supply more information on this.

- 3) The Panel expressed disappointment on the presented data on noise levels associated with aircraft flying at different altitudes, particularly in relation to rural areas with relatively low background noise levels.
- 4) The Panel raised the issue of potential additional pollution and were informed that the impact on local air quality would not be impacted by aircraft at the proposed altitudes.
- 5) The Panel asked whether, if the holding zone remains positioned as proposed, that the Cabinet can state in the consultation response whether it would be possible to raise the minimum flying height within the holding zone to 9000ft to reduce the potential for noise from planes within the holding zone to cause nuisance at ground level. The reasoning for this is the documentation states that noise from a plane at 8000ft would be approximately 55db and the ambient background noise within parts of the countryside would be 29db, therefore meaning the noise from the plane could be intrusive upon residents living in rural areas of the District.
- 6) The Panel understands that the Civil Aviation Authority has stated a consultation of this nature should last a minimum of 12 weeks and that this particular consultation is 15 weeks long. However due to the importance of the change, the complexity of the documentation and the fact that the people being consulted with will probably not have the expertise to comprehend the documentation quickly, 15 weeks for a consultation of this nature seems quite rushed. Members asked Cabinet to emphasise in their response that more time is required to understand the implications of what is proposed.
- 7) Members would like Cabinet to ask NATS for greater transparency on how often the holding zone would be used, particularly at night, as different statements were given by NATS representatives at the meeting on the frequency of use. In addition, NATS stated that they are expecting flight numbers to increase following the pandemic, but did not give a forecast to how this would affect the number of planes using the holding zone.
- 8) Members questioned how independent the conclusions and findings are, particularly the more technical points and whether they could be trusted. The Panel would like Cabinet to ask whether independent findings and conclusions could be provided, particularly on why the holding zone is required to be located where proposed.
- 9) It was clear to the Panel that the military was not fully consulted on the proposals and Members would like Cabinet to ask NATS if they could consult with the military on whether they require all of the air space allocated to them and if the holding zone could not be located over a more rural area of the county but within current military airspace.

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

- 4.1 The Council has a corporate objective to “make Huntingdonshire a better place to live, to improve health and well-being and support people to be the best they can be”. The issues raised in this consultation have the potential to impact on this.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report is for information and comment, so has no immediate legal implications.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report has no immediate resource implications .

7. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

1. Map of affected areas.
2. Consultation questions.

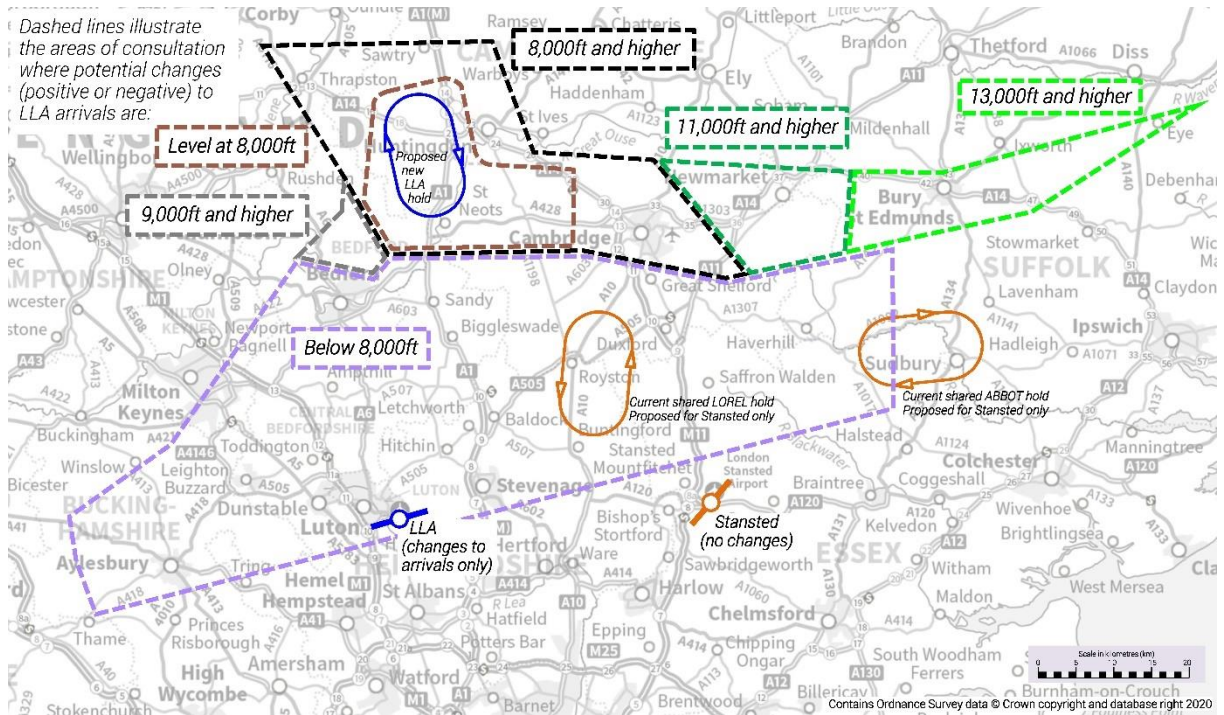
8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Consultation responses copied to the Council by interested parties, including the Town and Parish Councils.

CONTACT OFFICER

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Luton Airport Consultation- map of affected areas



Map extracted from NATS consultation documentation

Luton Airport Consultation- specific consultation questions

1. To what extent do you agree that Option 1 is an acceptable solution for Runway 07 (easterly)?
2. To what extent to you agree that Option 1 is an acceptable solution for Runway 25 (westerly)?
3. To what extent do you agree that Option 2 is an acceptable solution for Runway 07 (easterly)?
4. To what extent do you agree that Option 2 is an acceptable solution for Runway 25 (westerly)?
5. Do you prefer Option 1 or Option 2?
6. If Option 2 is progressed, how frequently would you like to alternate between the routes, from the hold to the runway in use, to provide a degree of respite?
7. If Option 2 is progressed, at what time of day would you like to change between the two routes from the hold to the runway in use?
8. Technical Question (no requirement to respond). What classification of airspace would you like the high level additional controlled airspace to the north of Luton to be?
9. Technical Question (no requirement to respond). To what extent would your flight operations be impacted by the proposed Class D airspace, which is required to contain the RNAV1 Transition to Runway 07 north of Leighton Buzzard (PBN Route 2)?
10. If you have any other comments you would like to make, please provide them here:

The NATS detailed consultation paper can be found at https://consultations.airspacechange.co.uk/london-luton-airport/ad6_luton_arrivals/user_uploads/lla-arrivals-consultation-document-screenview-1-3.0.pdf.

The abridged version of the consultation document can be found at https://consultations.airspacechange.co.uk/london-luton-airport/ad6_luton_arrivals/supporting_documents/LLA%20Arrivals%20ABRIDGED%20Consultaton%20Document%20Issue%201.0.pdf .

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