

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in the **CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **TUESDAY, 21 MARCH 2023** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

## **AGENDA**

### **APOLOGIES**

#### **1. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 10)**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 7th February 2023.

**Contact Officer: H Peacey - (01480) 388007**

#### **2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

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

**Contact Officer: Democratic Services - (01480) 388169**

#### **3. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME MARCH 2023 (Pages 11 - 36)**

To receive a report setting out the purpose and content of the proposed replacement Local Development Scheme relating to the preparation of the Local Plan update.

Executive Councillor: T Sanderson.

**Contact Officer: C Bond - (01480) 387104**

#### **4. DRAFT SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY METHODOLOGY 2023 (Pages 37 - 138)**

To receive a report seeking approval of the contents of the draft version of the Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023 and its approval for publication for public engagement for a period of six weeks.

Executive Councillor: T Sanderson.

**Contact Officer: F Schulz - (01480) 388432**

**5. CALL FOR SITES (Pages 139 - 172)**

To receive a report seeking approval of the contents of the Call for Sites form and its approval for public engagement for a period of ten weeks.

Executive Councillor: T Sanderson.

**Contact Officer: C Bond - (01480) 387104**

**6. DRAFT LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY (Pages 173 - 236)**

To seek approval of the content of the draft Land Availability Assessment Methodology and its approval for public engagement for a period of six weeks.

Executive Councillor: T Sanderson.

**Contact Officer: N Elworthy - (01480) 388433**

**7. LOCAL PLANS ADVISORY GROUP (LPAG) TERMS OF REFERENCE (Pages 237 - 242)**

To approve the Terms of Reference for the Local Plans Advisory Group (formerly known as Development Plans Policy Advisory Group).

Executive Councillor: T Sanderson.

**Contact Officer: C Kerr - (01480) 388430**

**8. HUNTINGDONSHIRE PLACE STRATEGY (Pages 243 - 340)**

To seek endorsement of the shared Place Strategy for Huntingdonshire.

Executive Councillor: S Conboy.

**Contact Officer: P Gibbons - (01480) 388074**

**9. CORPORATE PLAN 2023-2028 (Pages 341 - 366)**

To update Members on the development of a new Corporate Plan for 2023-2028.

Executive Councillor: S Conboy.

**Contact Officer: D Buckridge - (01480) 388065**

**10. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND UPDATE (Pages 367 - 378)**

To receive an update on the proposed activities to be delivered through the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme in Huntingdonshire.

Executive Councillor: S Wakeford.

**Contact Officer: P Scott - (01480) 388486**

**11. MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME - SPRING UPDATE (Pages 379 - 392)**

To receive an update on the Market Towns Programme.

Executive Councillor: S Wakeford.

**Contact Officer: P Scott - (01480) 388486**

**12. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

To resolve:-

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

**13. ST NEOTS MARKET TOWN PROGRAMME (OLD FALCON INN & MARKET SQUARE) (Pages 393 - 404)**

To receive an update on the St Neots Market Town Programme (Old Falcon Inn & Market Square).

Executive Councillor: S Wakeford.

**Contact Officer: P Scott - (01480) 388486**

13 day of March 2023

***Oliver Morley***

Head of Paid Service

**Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests.**

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

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**Please contact Habbiba Peacey, Democratic Services Officer, Tel No: (01480) 388007 / e-mail: [Habbiba.Peacey@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto: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.

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

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#### **Emergency Procedure**

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## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 7 February 2023

PRESENT: Councillor S J Conboy – Chair.

Councillors L Davenport-Ray, S W Ferguson,  
B A Mickelburgh, B M Pitt, T D Sanderson and S Wakeford.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors M A Hassall and S L Taylor.

### 71 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24th January 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 72 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

### 73 FINAL 2023/24 REVENUE BUDGET & MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (2024/25 TO 2027/28); INCLUDING THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

With the aid of a report prepared by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were provided with detail of the Final Budget 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Strategy (2024/25 to 2027/28) which included details of the Capital Programme.

In introducing the report, the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources reported that the budget of £24.3m for 2023/24 would seek to maintain a breakeven position with net expenditure of £24.1m and a Medium Term Financial Strategy budget requirement of £21.5m by 2027/28. Cabinet Members were acquainted with detail around how the budget for 2023/24 would be achieved which was attributed to the need to not set a baseline for National Non-Domestic Rates, improved income levels from the Government which included the New Homes Bonus and net internal funding expected to be around £6.5m. It was however report that in terms of expenditure, an increase of £9.7m was expected in 2023/24 owing to factors such as inflation, temporary accommodation costs and rising energy costs.

Moving on to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources reported upon the uncertainties which existed and advised that the projections made were based on the best accounting assumptions. Future funding challenges related to an expected reduction in the New Homes Bonus, implications of Fair Funding, re-baselining of business rates reducing National Non Domestic Rates income and the ongoing issues pertaining to the localisation of Business Rates.

The Executive Councillor for Planning provided a detailed account of the comments which had been raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth) where it was reported that a healthy debate had taken place. Arising from which, a question was raised by the Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy and Housing querying the comments which had been made by the Panel regarding expected staff salaries and the maintenance of current staffing levels, to which the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources responded that whilst a 2% assumption had been made in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, this would not constrain the Council and to be mindful that the medium term future was difficult to predict at the present time.

Having commended Officers, Service Managers and staff for their efforts in producing a budget that would breakeven in 2023/24, particularly when comparing Huntingdonshire's position to that of other authorities, and for their efforts with the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme, it was

RESOLVED

that the Council be recommended to approve the overall Final Budget 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28 (as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report now submitted, which includes the Revenue Budget at Section 2 and the Capital Programme at Section 3).

#### **74 2023/24 TREASURY MANAGEMENT, CAPITAL AND INVESTMENT STRATEGIES**

A report by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) providing strategic guidance on how the Council conducts its Treasury Management, Capital and Investment activity.

By way of background, the Financial and Treasury Accountant reminded the Cabinet of the requirement for Council to approve the various strategies and statements under the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Treasury Management in the Public Services. He then went on to draw attention to the inclusion of a Liability Benchmark within the Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24 (Appendix 1 of the report now submitted refers) which compares the Council's existing loans against its future need for loan debt. Reference was also made to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations, to which the Council was currently seeking advice from its Treasury Advisors on the use of a points based scoring system for future investment opportunities. Finally, comment was made on approved counterparties, where it was noted that some of the limits in Table 3 of the Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24 had been reduced in response to uncertainties within the current financial landscape over the next few years.

Following an explanation from the Executive Councillor for Planning on the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth) and in welcoming the information that was forthcoming on ESG considerations, it was

RESOLVED

that Council be recommended to approve:

- a) the Treasury Management Strategy (as attached as Appendix 1 of the report now submitted);
- b) the Capital Strategy (as attached as Appendix 2 of the report now submitted);
- c) the Investment Strategy (as attached as Appendix 3 of the report now submitted);
- d) the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement (as attached as Appendix 4 of the report now submitted); and
- e) the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy (as attached as Appendix 5 of the report now submitted).

## **75 BUSINESS RATES DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY**

A report by the Council Tax and Business Rates Manager was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) setting out the different types of relief available to local businesses that can be awarded under specific qualifying criteria as outlined in the Business Rates Discretionary Rate Relief Policy.

During the course of introductions, the Executive Councillor for Customer Services set out the challenges faced by local businesses in the current economic climate with high rents and business rates, both of which were outside of the control of the Council. The Business Rates Discretionary Rate Relief Policy enabled the Council an opportunity to provide some level of subsidy to qualifying businesses, however he did go on to highlight that this would be at the expense of taxpayers and that careful consideration had been given to the qualifying criteria in order to ensure the right balance was struck for Huntingdonshire in terms of fairness and consistency.

Following a brief discussion on the challenges faced by small and medium enterprises (SME's), in particular, those located in rural areas and having had their attention drawn to the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities & Partnerships), the Cabinet

RESOLVED

to approve the Business Rates Discretionary Rate Relief Policy effective from 1st April 2023.

## **76 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23 QUARTER 3**

With the aid of a report prepared by the Business Intelligence & Performance Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were presented with an update on the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2022/23 and project delivery.

The Executive Councillor for Customer Services summarised the progress made in delivering the Key Actions for 2022/23 over the reporting period where it was noted that the action relating to consultation and engagement on the Climate Strategy had moved from amber to a green RAG status. Additionally it was reported that the action relating to social housing and the delivery of affordable homes remains amber owing to delays with planning design issues at a site located in Warboys. Referring to the Corporate Indicators, the Executive Councillor for Customer Services provided an explanation on those relating to the time taken to process Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims, supply chain and skill shortages which were affecting the delivery of affordable homes, the lower than expected number of food safety inspections undertaken, the positive results which had been achieved in respect of homelessness preventions, the countywide problem which existed around reused/recycled/composted household waste rates and the low uptake of the “Good to Go” scheme. Finally, the Cabinet received details on the status of corporate projects. The only one identified as being significantly behind schedule related to the Revenue and Benefits Service e-billing project which had been pushed back owing to the prioritisation of the Energy Bill Rebates scheme. The Government had also announced another similar scheme which would delay the project further.

Having acknowledged the appointment of a Project Manager and Project Support Officer to support biodiversity within the Council’s Parks and Open Spaces and in celebrating the successes achieved to improve the percentage of planning applications processed on target when compared to the previous quarter, the Executive Councillor for Customer Services went on to report the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth). In noting that a report on the Market Towns Programme would be submitted to the Cabinet at its March 2023 meeting, it was

#### RESOLVED

that Cabinet note the progress made against the Key Actions and Corporate Indicators in the Corporate Plan and current projects, as summarised in Appendix A and detailed in Appendices B and C of the report now submitted.

### **77 FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23 QUARTER 3**

A report by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) presenting details of the Council’s projected financial performance for 2022/23.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources drew the Cabinet’s attention to a minor typographical error in paragraph 3.1 of the report where it was noted that the revenue budget was forecasting an “overspend” not “underspend” of £0.055m. In noting that the trends were similar to that reported in Quarter 2, increased costs had arisen as a result of gas and electricity costs, increased staffing costs in Leisure and Health and temporary accommodation costs. The impact of increased interest rates had resulted in extra costs of £950,000 per annum and it was reported that an agreement for the People for Places Loan was currently awaited which would further impact upon the Council’s financial position. The forecast outturn at the end of Quarter 3 was projected to be £21.569m with the capital forecast expected to be £10.421m against a budget of



£41.899m reflecting an underspend of £31.478m. The latter was attributed to the rephasing of some projects, which included the Huntingdon Redevelopment, Future High Street Funds and Market Towns Programme and Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Redevelopment Scheme.

In respect of the Market Towns Programme, the Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy and Housing reported that whilst spending had not occurred yet, the Officer Team were working hard to get the scheme up and running.

Having been acquainted with the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth) which had been delivered by the Executive Councillor for Planning and in noting the recent announcement made about the all staff one-off payment, the Executive Leader reported upon the overwhelmingly positive comments she had received from staff following the announcement of the award. Cabinet Members concurred that the timing of the award worked well in light of the current economic climate and cost of living crisis. Whereupon, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- a) to consider and comment on the revenue financial performance to the end of December 2022, as detailed in Appendix 1 and summarised in paragraph 3.2 of the report now submitted; and
- b) to also consider and comment on the capital financial performance at the end of December 2022, as detailed in Appendix 1 and summarised in paragraph 3.3 and the prudential indicators as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report now submitted.

## **78 REVIEW OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARDS**

Consideration was given to a report by the Democratic Services Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) summarising the background, justification, process, conclusions and recommendations arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Study on the Council's scheme of appointments to outside bodies and Internal Drainage Boards.

The Managing Director reminded the Cabinet of the background to the study which reviewed representatives appointed to outside bodies, which included the Internal Drainage Boards. The recommendations proposed sought to provide clarity and consistency in the current process.

Having welcomed the report and its findings, in particular, the implementation of a reporting process that would enable appointed representatives to feedback on the organisations/bodies to which they were appointed to and in noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth), the Cabinet placed on record their thanks to the Task and Finish Group and Officers for their work commenting that the recommendations proposed would strengthen and provide more robustness in the current process. Whereupon, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) to implement a proper reporting process;

- (b) to identify the relevant Officers to take ownership of the relationship between the Council, Councillor and Organisation or Board;
- (c) to establish regular communication between Officers and nominated Councillors to ensure consistency and clarity;
- (d) to develop a job description to establish clarity and consistency for appointed Councillors;
- (e) to set clear expectations for Members and ensure they are able to fulfil the duties of the role when appointed;
- (f) to review the list of organisations and boards appointed to; and
- (g) to ensure that appointments are non-political and are made taking Ward and specialist expertise into account.

**79 MANAGING DIRECTOR AND CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PLACE)**

Further to Minute No. 22/70, the Executive Leader announced that tonight's meeting was the last to be attended by the Managing Director and Corporate Director (Place). On behalf of the Cabinet, the Executive Leader extended personal thanks to both Officers for their dedication, time, hard work and support and wished them well for the future.

Chair

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

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Title/Subject Matter:** Local Development Scheme March 2023  
**Meeting/Date:** Cabinet – 21st March 2023  
**Executive Portfolio:** Executive Councillor for Planning  
**Report by:** Chief Planning Officer  
**Ward(s) affected:** All Wards

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### **Executive Summary:**

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the scope of work for future development plan preparation. As agreed at the meeting of Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023 a replacement LDS has been written to support preparation of an updated Local Plan.

The LDS details the components of the current development plan. It summarises the plan-making process and provides an indicative timetable for preparing the Local Plan update. The primary purpose of the LDS is to make local communities and stakeholders aware of the phases of engagement opportunities that will be offered during preparation of the Local Plan. The LDS also illustrates the range of evidence base and supporting documents required and identifies the resources and risks involved.

The requirement to produce an LDS is set out in section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

### **Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet is

### **RECOMMENDED**

- To approve the contents of the Local Development Scheme March 2023 and bring it into immediate effect following this meeting and its call-in period.

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a short, high level project plan that sets out what development plans the Council is going to prepare the area covered and the timetable for producing them. This report sets out the purpose and content of the proposed replacement LDS relating to preparation of the Local Plan update. It seeks agreement to the content of the LDS and for it to be brought into effect immediately.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The requirement to produce a Local Development Scheme (LDS) is set out in Regulation 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The Council's adherence to the LDS is one of the legal compliance checks applied to Local Plans at examination in public.
- 2.2 The last LDS was approved in December 2017. This was used for the examination in public of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036. It has not been updated in the interim as no development plan documents were being produced.

## **3. ANALYSIS**

- 3.1 The replacement LDS is being brought forward now in response to the decision at the meeting of Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023 to commence an update to the Local Plan and preparation of a replacement LDS to support that work. Attached to this report as Appendix 1 is the proposed replacement LDS.
- 3.2 The LDS is a procedural document. Its main purpose is to provide a clear statement of the scope of any proposed development plan documents, in this instance just the proposed updated Local Plan, and the geographical extent that will be covered which is the whole district. It is a statutory requirement to produce an LDS.
- 3.3 It includes a high level project plan setting out the different stages of preparation of the Local Plan update. This helps to ensure that local communities, businesses, developers, interested organisations and infrastructure providers know when their primary opportunities for engagement will be. The minimum requirement is to provide a 3 year plan, however, a longer term indicative project plan is set out to provide a complete picture of the timeframe anticipated to complete the Local Plan update.
- 3.4 The LDS also provides information on the risks that may be faced during preparation of the Local Plan update and indicates mitigation actions that may be taken to help minimise the risks occurring and their impact. The LDS also provides a tool for budget management purposes. It indicates the nature of accompanying evidence that may be required to support the Local Plan through its required examination in public. In addition, the indicative timetable shows when the major expenditure of the examination is anticipated to be required.

- 3.5 The government published proposed reforms to national planning policy on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2022 for consultation until 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023. These included proposals to change the local plan-making system with the intention of producing plans more quickly. The reformed system is currently expected to be introduced in late 2024. This is proposed to introduce a requirement for preparation of a local plan update to commence within 5 years of adoption and to adopt that new plan within 30 months. Transition arrangements are proposed for those currently preparing a new plan which has reached an advanced stage by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025; following that plans will need to be prepared under the new plan-making system.
- 3.6 There is already a requirement to monitor progress of plan preparation against the timetable set out in the LDS and to update the LDS accordingly if the anticipated programme is not being met. It is acknowledged that the LDS will need to be revised to reflect new plan-making procedures when they are introduced. However, the lengthier timetable allowed for in the attached version of the LDS will facilitate extensive earlier engagement to ensure that local communities and organisations can effectively shape the content of the updated Local Plan prior to new national requirements being introduced.

#### **4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

- 4.1 The Panel discussed the Local Development Scheme at its meeting on 1st March 2023.
- 4.2 Councillor Gardener enquired what communication parishes could expect with regards to the scheme. The Panel heard that the Council was obliged to publish the details on the website but are planning to email local parishes to notify of its publication. It was further advised that local members could help this communication by informing parishes at any upcoming meetings.
- 4.3 Following further questions from Councillors Gardener and Wells, the Panel heard that in regards to Neighbourhood Plans, the newest plan takes precedence if there is any conflict between the strategic policies. Therefore any Neighbourhood Plans in development should continue as normal. Neighbourhood Plans that then have conflicting policies with the new Local Plan could be updated after the publication of the new Local Plan.
- 4.4 Councillor Gleadow enquired if sufficient staff and resources were available to the team to undertake the work, the Panel heard that this would be carefully monitored but the team were confident that current levels were sufficient.
- 4.5 Councillor Wells enquired whether drought conditions were considered as part of the Water Cycle Study. The Panel were advised that this study would look at all elements of water management alongside climate change predictions and be considered together. The Panel further heard that

neighbouring districts would also be taken into account in case of any implications for Huntingdonshire.

- 4.6 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for the Cabinet to make a decision on the recommendations.

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

- 5.1 Subject to approval, the replacement LDS will be published on the Council's website. Town and parish councils and other stakeholders will be notified by email with a link to the document.

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

- 6.1 The production of an LDS aligns with the objective 'improving housing provision' as set out in the Corporate Plan 2022/23, a key action of which is:

"Commence an update of the Local Plan. This should ensure that local planning policies include a focus on sustainability of new developments, achieving the right mix of housing sizes, types and tenures to meet the needs of residents, the quality of the built environment, creating healthy spaces and communities, public transport and digital connectivity."

- 6.2 It also aligns with the objective 'strengthening our communities' through the key action of:

"Support community planning by providing advice to Towns and Parish Councils seeking to develop or update Neighbourhood Plans".

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Council is required to publish an LDS must be reviewed at least once every five years under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The LDS must be publicised and kept up to date. Planning Practice Guidance states that an LDS is expected to be reviewed annually.

## **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from the LDS beyond it highlighting to communities when opportunities are likely to arise to engage in preparation of the updated Local Plan. However, the Local Plan update will be accompanied by an equalities impact assessment to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

## **9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 9.1 The Local Development Scheme is an essential supporting element of starting work on preparation of an updated Local Plan. It provides clarity on the scope, extent and timetable for preparation of the plan highlighting engagement opportunities to those interested in participating in its production.

## **10. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

Appendix 1 – Local Development Scheme March 2023

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- [HDC Cabinet - Tuesday, 24th January 2023](#)
- [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#)
- [National Planning Practice Guidance](#)

### **CONTACT OFFICER**

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## Local Development Scheme March 2023



## Contact Details

The Council have prepared this document so that it is compliant with the website accessibility requirements where possible. If you need further accessibility adjustments to any sections of this document or if you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version please contact the Planning Policy Team on the contact details set out below and we will try to meet your needs.

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Further copies of this document can be obtained from:

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It can also be viewed on our website at [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

The Development Plans Team can be contacted on 01480 388424 or by email at [local.plan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:local.plan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1** Huntingdonshire District Council (the Council) is required to prepare a Local Development Scheme (LDS) under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The LDS explains the development plan documents that the Council intends to bring forward and the timetable for producing them. These will guide planning application and growth decisions. It highlights opportunities for residents, organisations and other stakeholders to contribute to their preparation.
- 1.2** This document replaces the last LDS approved in December 2017 which was written to support preparation of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.
- 1.3** The LDS is required to set out a three year timetable of work on development plan preparation. As complete preparation of a new Local Plan is expected to take longer than this due to the level of engagement and nature of the processes involved, an indicative timetable is set out for the whole process from start to completion. It includes 'milestones' to inform people about opportunities to get involved with the plan making process. The Council will try to prepare documents efficiently to keep to the timetable set out. However, plan preparation is responsive to the volume and nature of responses received during engagement phases and the level and complexity of supporting evidence needed. If monitoring of actual progress against the timetable set out in this document indicates that the timetable needs to be amended to ensure full engagement and completion of all legally required procedures the Annual Monitoring Report will explain how the LDS needs to be changed. Changes may also be required in response to alterations to national planning legislation or policy.
- 1.4** The LDS does not give timescales for the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans as they are prepared by Town and Parish Councils and community volunteers who determine the timetable for production and public engagement. The Council offers support to those preparing Neighbourhood Plans and arranges the formal stages of examination and approval once

the local community is ready. Once approved the Neighbourhood Plans will become part of the Development Plan and be used to help decide planning applications within their individual area.

- 1.5** The LDS is published on the Council's website at (tbc once webpage created). The Annual Monitoring Report will measure plan making activity and progress against the LDS to keep people informed and will highlight any altered circumstances that lead to the need to update the LDS.
- 1.6** Paragraph 33 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that policies in local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and should then be updated as necessary. Reviews should be completed no later than five years from the adoption date of a plan and should consider changing circumstances affecting the area, or any relevant changes in national policy. Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 was adopted on 15th May 2019 so a review should be completed by May 2024 followed by preparation of a replacement Local Plan as appropriate.

## 2 Current Development Plan

### 2 Current Development Plan

**2.1** The current statutory Development Plan comprises several documents which are all used to determine planning applications within Huntingdonshire. Local communities have been involved in the preparation of all of these and they have been independently scrutinised either by the Planning Inspectorate for Local Plans, or independent examiners in the case of Neighbourhood Plans. The statutory Development Plan for Huntingdonshire currently comprises:

- Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (adopted May 2019) - this details the planning strategies for development throughout the district. It includes strategic and non-strategic policies to address the district's priorities for the development and use of land and includes site allocations of land for development (also known as proposals). It was prepared to be in general conformity with government guidance of the time, in particular the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (adopted July 2021) - this details policies and allocations to ensure a steady supply of minerals for construction to support growth and supports the provision of modern waste management facilities to serve the whole of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- All made Neighbourhood Plans which are community-led plans for guiding future development and growth of a single parish or group of parishes as listed below:
  - Buckden (May 2021)
  - Bury (May 2021)
  - Godmanchester (December 2017)
  - Grafham and Ellington (February 2022)
  - Houghton and Wyton (March 2018)
  - Huntingdon (October 2019)
  - St Neots (February 2016)

**2.2** Other Neighbourhood Plans are at varying stages of preparation and subject to successful votes in referenda will become part of the statutory Development Plan during the lifetime of this LDS. Additional Neighbourhood Areas may also be designated and plans brought forward which similarly may become part of the statutory Development Plan. Updates are provided on the [Neighbourhood Planning](#) page of the Council's website. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan but there may be variance in the policy approach taken beyond this. In the event of this, precedence is given to the policies within the most recently adopted plan. Neighbourhood plans are also required to have regard to any emerging Development Plan documents that are relevant which will become more significant as their preparation advances depending on the level of support or objection to any individual policies or proposals.

**2.3** The Policies Map illustrates how and where the policies and proposals in the Development Plan apply. It will be updated as elements of the statutory Development Plan change, for instance when a new Neighbourhood Plan is made. An interactive version of this can be seen at: [Policies Map and User Guidance](#).

**2.4** Development Plan Documents may be supported by Supplementary Planning Documents giving more detailed information and guidance to support the delivery of specific Local Plan policies.

### 3 Plan-making process

- 3.1** The process of preparing and adopting development plans is set out in the Town and Country ([Local Planning](#)) (England) Regulations 2012 which came into force on 6 April 2012. These Regulations prescribe the form and content of a Local Plan and Policies Map and set out procedural arrangements for preparing Local Plans. They encourage extensive early public engagement in the preparation of Local Plans. Producing a Local Plan is an iterative process which can involve several major rounds of public engagement coupled with ongoing discussions with delivery partners, infrastructure providers and other key stakeholders. The scale and nature of community involvement will vary according to the stage of document production. Public participation will be guided by the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.
- 3.2** The Localism Act 2011 introduced the 'Duty to Cooperate' through which a Council preparing a Local Plan must engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with neighbouring councils and specified public bodies such as the Environment Agency, Highways England and Clinical Commissioning Groups to address strategic planning matters that are driven by larger than local issues that are likely to have an impact beyond the district boundary. The National Planning Policy Framework requires local authorities to prepare one or more statements of common ground, documenting the strategic cross-boundary matters that may affect the planning of the area and how these issues and their potential impacts are being thought about and responded to. Statements of Common Ground will be prepared with all neighbouring authorities and other duty to cooperate bodies.
- 3.3** Table 1 below shows the key stages of Local Plan preparation and key elements involved during each.

**Table 1 Key Stages of Local Plan preparation**

Key Stages of Local Plan preparation	Involves	Regulations
Preparation of the Local Plan	Identification of the scope and subjects to be covered, exploration of issues and options for the development strategy, potential site allocations and policies and preparation of relevant evidence.  This may involve several iterative engagement phases.	Regulation 18
Publication of the Local Plan (pre-submission)	Formal consultation on the final draft Local Plan in preparation for its independent examination in public	Regulations 19 and 20
Submission	Sending the final draft Local Plan, all comments received during the publication stage and all the supporting evidence and documents to the Planning Inspectorate as representatives of the Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities.	Regulation 22
Examination in public	Consideration by an Independent Planning Inspector of all written comments submitted on the draft Local Plan and exploration of issues through public hearings.	Regulation 24

### 3 Plan-making process

Key Stages of Local Plan preparation	Involves	Regulations
	This may include consultation on proposed modifications to the draft Local Plan as deemed necessary by the Inspector.	
Publication of the Inspector's findings	A formal written report is published giving the Inspector's decision on the acceptability (legal compliance and soundness) of the Local Plan which may contain a series of modifications needed to allow it to be finalised.	Regulation 25
Adoption of the Local Plan	The final Local Plan, including any modifications, is considered at a meeting of the Full Council, and a decision made on whether to formally adopt it as part of the statutory development plan for the district.	Regulation 26
Period for Judicial Review	A six week period is allowed for filing a legal challenge on grounds of illegality, irrationality or procedural impropriety. If the case is proven some or all of the Local Plan may no longer be used.	

**3.4** In August 2020 the government issued for consultation the Planning for the Future White Paper to introduce and test proposals for long term structural changes to the English planning system. In February 2022 the government issued the Levelling Up White Paper, followed in May 2022 the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill which includes proposals for changes to the

planning system. Local Plans also need to take into account the government's planning aspirations as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

**3.5** In December 2022 the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities published consultation materials proposing revisions to the plan-making system in England. The outcomes of this may have substantial implications for the scope of the Local Plan update and the anticipated timetable for its preparation. The timing of the introduction of legislative and policy changes is uncertain and transition arrangements are expected to be proposed which may or may not apply to preparation of this proposed Local Plan update. Flexibility will be incorporated into the preparation approach to endeavour to ensure that work and engagement carried out in the early stages of plan preparation will be transferrable to any revised approach.



## 4 Updated Local Plan

**4.1** Huntingdonshire's updated Local Plan will form part of the statutory development plan for the district. It will set out the planning policies and site allocations to guide development and growth across the whole of the district. Once finalised and adopted it will replace in full [Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036](#). The updated Local Plan will be required to be in general conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and other elements of national legislation which may change during the course of the plan's preparation. It is required to keep up to date with changes at least until the plan is submitted for examination in public. It will be prepared by Huntingdonshire District Council in its capacity as the local planning authority. The updated Local Plan for Huntingdonshire will be a single document which:

- Establishes a vision for the future of the whole district
- Includes a set of strategic objectives to indicate the focus of future planning priorities
- Sets out strategic policies, which includes specifying the amount of new development required and identifying a comprehensive development strategy for this
- Allocates specific development sites on which new development can be delivered
- Provides development management policies to shape decisions on planning applications
- Identifies monitoring indicators to measure the implementation of the policies and allocations

**4.2** The Local Plan will be supported by an updated Policies Map to provide a spatial illustration of where each policy and allocation is applied.

**4.3** Table 2 below shows the anticipated timetable for preparation of the replacement Local Plan and phases of public engagement. Details of engagement are set out in the supporting Statement of Community Involvement. Precise timelines for preparation of the new Local Plan may

vary depending on issues raised during early engagement phases, the complexity of supporting evidence required and changes in national planning legislation. Significant changes will be reported through the Annual Monitoring process and may give rise to updates to this document if required.

**Table 2 Local Plan preparation timetable**

Phase of Local Plan preparation	Nature of engagement	Timeline
Initial Issues, call for sites and assessment methodologies (Regulation 18)	Online information and engagement documentation, online/ face-to-face meetings and presentations, local newspapers and social media	Spring 2023
Further Issues and Options (Regulation 18)	Online information and engagement documentation, drop in events/ public exhibitions, online/ face-to-face meetings and presentations, local newspapers and social media	Spring 2024
Preferred Options (full draft) Local Plan (Regulation 18)	Online information and engagement documentation, drop in events/ public exhibitions, online/ face-to-face meetings and presentations, local newspapers and social media	Summer/ Autumn 2025
Pre-submission Local Plan (Regulations 19 and 20)	Online information and engagement documentation seeking formal responses for consideration by the independent Planning Inspector	Spring 2027

## 4 Updated Local Plan

Phase of Local Plan preparation	Nature of engagement	Timeline
Submission of draft Local Plan to Secretary of State (Regulation 22)	N/A	Autumn 2027
Examination in Public (Regulation 24)	Public hearing sessions on matters selected by the Planning Inspector	Autumn 2027 onwards
Adoption (Regulation 26)	Notification of adoption; online/ face-to-face meetings and presentations introducing the updated Local Plan	Winter 2028

**4.4** All individuals or businesses who wish to be notified of new engagement opportunities may register on the Council's Planning Policy consultation portal at:

[Huntingdonshire District Council Consultation Home - Keystone](#)

## Evidence base and supporting documents

5

### 5 Evidence base and supporting documents

**5.1** The policies and proposals in the Local Plan will be shaped by the findings of a series of evidence base documents prepared both in-house and by specialist external consultants where necessary. To be successful at examination it is essential that these are robust and up to date at the time the Local Plan is submitted. The table below identifies the scope of key elements of the evidence base that will be required to illustrate the range of issues to be considered. Additional evidence will be added to this as preparation of the Local Plan moves forward if needed in response to issues raised during engagement with individuals and organisations.

**Table 3 Key Evidence Base Elements**

Subject	Purpose
Climate change and carbon emissions reductions	Informing planning policies and a growth strategy to support Huntingdonshire in working to become carbon neutral by 2040.
Sustainability appraisal	Considering the social, economic and environmental impacts of the growth strategy, proposed policies and site allocations individually and in combination.
Habitats Regulations Assessment	Considering the implications of proposed policies and site allocations individually and in combination on high value designated nature sites to protect their integrity.
Statement of Consultation	Summarising engagement processes and comments received, and explaining how they have helped to shape the Local Plan.
Economic development needs assessment and sector analysis	Forecasting the amount and nature of employment land needed to provide for new office, industrial and storage & distribution buildings.

Subject	Purpose
Town centres, retail and commercial leisure needs assessment	Assessing the most appropriate regeneration and future use of each town centre in the district, and forecasting the amount and nature of land needed for additional retail and commercial leisure uses or alternative uses for any surplus land or buildings.
Huntingdonshire futures (Place Strategy)	Shaping a shared vision for the future of Huntingdonshire for the next 30 years expressing aspirations and ambitions for the district.
Integrated water management plan	Presenting a water cycle study and strategic flood risk assessment including assessment of any proposed sites located in areas of higher flood risk.
Housing delivery	Analysing historic and anticipated housing delivery trends to inform deliverability of proposed allocations.
Housing needs of specific groups	Assessing the level of need for affordable housing, accessible and adaptable housing, specialist housing for older people and for other specified groups.
Gypsy, traveller, travelling showpeople and boat dwellers accommodation needs assessment	Identifying the level and nature of need for additional pitches, plots and moorings to meet forecast needs for gypsies, traveller, travelling showpeople and boat dwellers.
Land availability assessment(s)	Identification of land for potential development for a range of uses such as housing, employment and community uses, including the assessment of whether the sites are suitable and their likely timeframe for delivery.

## 5 Evidence base and supporting documents

Subject	Purpose
Transport modelling	Understanding the baseline transport infrastructure and travel situation and modelling potential travel demands of a range of possible growth scenarios to test their infrastructure requirements and deliverability.
Viability assessment	Testing the financial implications of potential policies and types of sites to assess their deliverability within the local context to shape priorities for the Local Plan.
Infrastructure study and delivery	Identifying the infrastructure needed to meet the growth strategy set out in the Local Plan and the timing and prioritisation of its provision.
Annual monitoring reports	Monitoring the delivery of housing, employment and selected other uses for assessment against targets set in the current Local Plan and nationally; monitoring of policy indicators established in the current Local Plan to determine their effectiveness; monitoring of neighbourhood plan preparation and monitoring of delivery against the timescales set out in the LDS.
Green infrastructure assessment	Considering the current scale and nature of green (and blue) infrastructure and assessment of the quantity of and approach to future needs.
Indoor leisure and outdoor sports facilities	Assessment of current provision of indoor and outdoor sports facilities and identification of future improvements needed in terms of quality and/ or quantity.

Subject	Purpose
Landscape character and natural capital	Considering the nature and influence of landscape character on approaches in the Local Plan and the value of the natural environment within Huntingdonshire and the benefits it provides.

## 6 Resources and risks

- 6.1** The production of the updated Local Plan, its supporting documents and any related supplementary planning documents will be done mainly by the Planning Policy Team. Specialist skills available elsewhere in the Council will also be drawn in where relevant, in particular involving Implementation, Development Management, Operations, Economic Development and Housing Strategy colleagues. However, it will be necessary for specialist consultants to be appointed for some evidence preparation such as climate change analysis and economic viability testing.
- 6.2** The Council does not have control over all aspects of Local Plan preparation. Its completion relies on input to the process from many people and organisations including local residents, town and parish councils, infrastructure providers, developers and neighbouring local authorities. Many of those involved will have their own priorities and processes which may not coincide with those of the Council. The Council will endeavour to ensure that working relationships with external groups and organisations are collaborative and progressive. In preparing the LDS, the Council has identified some of the main areas of risk and their impacts, together with potential ways to manage these to facilitate the anticipated Local Plan update timetable being delivered.
- 6.3** The process of preparing planning policy documents requires significant financial resources, particularly to meet costs arising from engagement, evidence gathering and examination in public. A reserve has been accrued towards this but supplementing this to ensure costs, particularly at later stages can be met, will need to be taken into account in preparation of future budgets.
- 6.4** The production of a Local Plan requires consideration of the potential risks involved in its preparation. Table 4 below highlights the main risks to its successful preparation and adoption as identified so far.

Table 4 Risk assessment

Risk that may arise	Impact that may occur	Mitigation measures that may be taken
Changes to national planning policy or guidance or to building regulations impacting on potential policy requirements including the potential for substantial revision to planning legislation and introduction of a replacement local planning system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional work to comply with new policy or guidance</li> <li>Need to revise documents already in progress</li> <li>Reduced weight accorded to the current Local Plan and risk of some policies being deemed out of date and national approaches substituted</li> <li>Need to adapt the content and programming of the local plan update to reflect a new national approach partway through preparation of the plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes to national policy and guidance are outside the Council's control, although responses will be submitted to relevant consultations to try to help shape the approach brought in</li> <li>Review emerging national legislation, and policy prior to starting formal statutory stages and consider any transitional arrangements proposed by the government</li> <li>Ongoing review of staffing and budgetary resources to expedite preparation of the Local Plan update</li> </ul>

## 6 Resources and risks

Risk that may arise	Impact that may occur	Mitigation measures that may be taken
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise the LDS as necessary</li> </ul>
Reduction or turnover in staff and/ or reduction of budgetary resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inability to meet the anticipated programme for preparation of the updated Local Plan and its associated evidence base and supporting documents</li> <li>Quality of the work may suffer giving rise to additional challenges at examination to the robustness of the submitted Local Plan update</li> <li>Other team or Council priorities may not be achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivery of effective staff retention and recruitment programmes.</li> <li>Robust project management to maintain the quality of material produced.</li> <li>Use of external consultants to provide specialist studies and advice where funding is available.</li> <li>Reassessment of departmental and Council priorities.</li> </ul>
Capacity of statutory consultees and other agencies to engage in the plan making process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delay or inability to meet duty to cooperate requirements which cannot be corrected once the plan has</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early engagement with statutory consultees and key agencies advising on the preparation programme,</li> </ul>

Risk that may arise	Impact that may occur	Mitigation measures that may be taken
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>been submitted for examination</li> <li>Delay in preparation of and/ or reduction in quality or robustness of the Local Plan or associated evidence base or supporting documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the timing and nature of engagement opportunities</li> <li>Ensure that engagement timescales are realistic for the scale and nature of input sought from partners</li> <li>Endeavour to build and maintain effective relationships with partners</li> </ul>
Inability to secure timely provision of infrastructure to support delivery of development as planned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare up to date evidence regarding infrastructure provision and needs to support Local Plan delivery including liaison with infrastructure providers over intended delivery timescales of new</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing engagement with infrastructure providers to ensure the Infrastructure Delivery Plan is realistic and adequately supports the delivery of proposed development allocations</li> </ul>

Risk that may arise	Impact that may occur	Mitigation measures that may be taken
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>and improved schemes</li> <li>Housing delivery trajectory may be impacted giving rise to the need to include reserve sites or phase delivery intentions</li> </ul>	
Volume of work involved in preparing the Local Plan is significantly greater than anticipated either due to particularly high numbers of representations during engagement phases or issues giving rise to the need for additional evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Local Plan will not be prepared and adopted within the anticipated timeframe</li> <li>Reduced weight accorded to the current Local Plan and risk of some policies being deemed out of date and national approaches substituted</li> <li>Pressure to reduce the scope or quality of work conducted to minimise preparation delays</li> <li>Delay or inability of staff to contribute to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor progress annually and reflect outcomes in the Annual Monitoring Report to support updating of the LDS if necessary</li> <li>Ensure comprehensive engagement takes place early in preparation of the Local Plan to minimise the level of objections at publication stage</li> <li>Endeavour to sustain effective corporate and political governance and support at each</li> </ul>

Risk that may arise	Impact that may occur	Mitigation measures that may be taken
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>other Council strategies or priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stage of plan preparation</li> <li>Ongoing review of staffing and budgetary resources as part of the project management of the plan's preparation</li> </ul>
Evidence base preparation takes longer than expected or elements become out of date due to rapidly changing circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delay in the preparation of the Local Plan</li> <li>Need to prepare or commission full or partial updates to elements of the evidence base at additional cost</li> <li>Robustness of evidence base elements may be reduced and challenged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure effective oversight of consultancy work and project management</li> <li>Monitor and update information where possible and relevant</li> <li>Commission short term updates where essential to ensure robustness of evidence at examination</li> </ul>

**6 Resources and risks**

Risk that may arise	Impact that may occur	Mitigation measures that may be taken
Competing political priorities or change in political control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential for delay and/ or additional work</li> <li>Inconsistency in approaches taken across different elements of the Local Plan detrimentally impacting on the coherence of the overall strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elected members to be involved throughout preparation of Local Plan update</li> <li>Political scrutiny and approval of key materials before launching engagement phases</li> </ul>
Planning Inspectorate have insufficient capacity to meet the anticipated timescale for examination and/ or reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inability to meet anticipated timelines for examination</li> <li>Delay in adoption of the plan with consequent impacts on weight accorded to older/ out of date policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is outside the control of the Council but ongoing liaison will be maintained with the Planning Inspectorate to ensure early identification of issues</li> <li>Review preparation timescales to take account of potential pinch points arising from changes to national legislation and any accompanying</li> </ul>

Risk that may arise	Impact that may occur	Mitigation measures that may be taken
		transitional arrangements
Submitted document fails any of the tests of soundness, duty to cooperate or legal requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reputational damage to the Council</li> <li>Lack of an up to date plan for an extended period until a further replacement is prepared, examined and found sound</li> <li>Additional demands on staff and financial resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) self-assessment toolkit to check all procedural requirements have been undertaken correctly and are fully documented</li> <li>Maintain ongoing liaison with duty to cooperate and other key partners</li> <li>Maintain a clear record of all discussions on strategic cross boundary issues and outcomes</li> <li>Commission an external review to assess the soundness of the plan prior to submission and amend or further</li> </ul>



Risk that may arise	Impact that may occur	Mitigation measures that may be taken
		justify elements as appropriate
Judicial review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional staff and financial resources required to defend the challenge</li> <li>• Potential for some or all of the plan to be quashed leading to increased likelihood of the need for an immediate or early review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure sufficient staff and financial resources are available for preparation of an adequate and robust evidence base</li> <li>• Use the PAS self-assessment toolkit to check all procedural requirements have been undertaken correctly and are fully documented</li> <li>• Seek and act on pre-submission advice from the Planning Inspectorate</li> <li>• Engage legal support at relevant preparation and examination stages</li> </ul>

## **7 Monitoring and review**

- 7.1 The Council is required to monitor annually how effective the Local Plan policies and proposals are. An Annual Monitoring Report will be published by the Council each year to see if we are meeting, or are on target to meet, the milestones set out in the LDS and, if not, what the reasons are. If necessary, the Annual Monitoring Report will recommend revisions to the LDS.

## Appendix 1: Glossary

### 1 Appendix 1: Glossary

**1.1** The following list clarifies key terms used within this document to aid comprehension by those less familiar with the planning system.

**Adoption** - The final confirmation of when a development plan document comes into use by the Council.

**Annual Monitoring Report** - A report prepared at least once a year that assesses progress against targets in the Local Development Scheme and how well policies in the Local Plan are being implemented. It includes an annually updated housing trajectory and 5 year housing land supply calculations.

**Development Plan** - The collection of documents that, by law, planning decisions on planning applications must be taken in line with unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It includes planning documents produced by Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and any Neighbourhood Plans prepared by Town or Parish Councils within the district.

**Duty to Cooperate** - A legal test which requires cooperation between local planning authorities and specified public bodies to maximise the effectiveness of policies for strategic matters in Local Plans that are likely to be of importance across more than one district.

**Evidence Base** - The data, information and analysis prepared by the Council or by specialist consultants on our behalf to shape and justify the policy approaches set out in Development Plan documents.

**Examination in Public** - An independent inquiry through both written material and verbal hearings which considers the soundness of a Development Plan document before it is finalised. It is led by an Independent Planning Inspector who is appointed on behalf of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities through the Planning Inspectorate. It considers whether the proposed development plan has been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, and whether it meets the tests of soundness explained below.

**Local Development Scheme (LDS)** - The Local Development Scheme sets out the Council's programme and timetable for preparing and reviewing statutory planning documents.

**Local Plan** - A plan for the future development of the District containing planning policies and site specific allocations (proposals). It is prepared by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. It can also be known as a development plan document.

**Localism Act 2011** - The Localism Act introduced changes to the planning system introducing the Duty to Cooperate and Neighbourhood Planning.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** - Sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It also provides guidance for local planning authorities and decision-makers when preparing plans and making decisions on planning applications.

**Neighbourhood Plan** - A development plan document prepared by a Town or Parish Council or a group of such councils for a defined neighbourhood area to provide local policies to be used when making decisions on planning applications within that specific area only.

**Policies Map** - An Ordnance Survey based map showing the extent of application of planning policies and proposals within the adopted development plan. It includes an explanation of any symbols or notation. It is often displayed online as an interactive map allowing users to select particular policies or proposals of interest to them. It was formerly known as the Proposals Map.

**Publication** - The point at which a draft Local Plan is issued for consultation prior to its submission to the Secretary of State for examination in public by an Independent Planning Inspector.

**Scoping Report** - Report produced as the first stage of Sustainability Appraisal. It examines existing environmental, social and economic conditions in the district, and identifies appropriate objectives against which to judge draft policies and proposals.

# 1 Appendix 1: Glossary

**Site allocation or proposal** - A specific area of land with the boundary shown on the Policies Map that is identified in the Development Plan to be used for a particular purpose such as development for new housing.

**Soundness** - The examination in public into a Local Plan considers whether the proposed Local Plan meets a series of nationally set tests known as the 'tests of soundness'. These are that the Local Plan is:

- a. Positively prepared – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- b. Justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
- c. Effective – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
- d. Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.

**Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** - A document setting out the Council's approaches to involving local communities, individuals, organisations, development professionals and landowners in preparing planning documents and making significant development management decisions.

**Submission** - The point at which the publication draft Local Plan and all consultation responses received on it, along with supporting documents and the evidence base documents are sent to the Independent Planning Inspector for examination in public on behalf of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities.

**Supplementary Planning Document** - A detailed document providing additional guidance on the application and interpretation of one or more adopted policies and/or proposals such as affordable housing provision.

**Sustainability Appraisal** - A systematic appraisal process carried out throughout the preparation of a Local Plan to evaluate the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the overall proposed strategy, policies and allocations in a Local Plan to assess the extent to which they align with sustainable development objectives.

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

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Title/Subject Matter:** Draft Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023

**Meeting/Date:** Cabinet – 21 March 2023

**Executive Portfolio:** Executive Councillor for Planning

**Report by:** Chief Planning Officer

**Ward(s) affected:** All Wards

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### **Executive Summary:**

When developing local plans, the Council must adhere to Government legislation and policy such as the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance.

Paragraph 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that 'Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.'

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 did this through the establishment of a settlement hierarchy for development, supported by additional policies to identify what type of development is acceptable and where.

The Huntingdonshire Draft Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023 has been developed to reassess settlements and aid in the establishment of a settlement hierarchy for the next Local Plan. Identifying those areas that are the most sustainable will help the Council to begin the process of finding suitable locations for growth that provide the most social, environmental and economic benefits for the district and local communities. The consultation document sets out the proposed methodology for the assessment of the sustainability of settlements within Huntingdonshire. Measures used to assess the proposed indicators have been derived using a combination of available data, existing key national guidance for example, the DfT journey time statistics; relevant studies (such as Local Transport Plans that assess the social impact of commuting time) and reports and papers such as The Royal Society for Public Health's study 'Health on the High Street 2019 - Running on Empty (which outline and justify the importance of certain services and facilities).

The finalised settlement hierarchy will be part of a suite of studies including but not limited to strategic flood risk assessments, transport assessments, housing need and infrastructure assessments and requirements, which will all contribute

towards the identification of areas most suitable for sustainable growth in the district. This will enable the Local Plan to demonstrate that it can meet the requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

It is proposed that public consultation is undertaken for six weeks starting shortly after this meeting and the relevant call-in period to enable people and organisations to contribute towards the development of a settlement hierarchy and provide local knowledge and feedback on the proposed method of assessment.

Following public engagement, the comments submitted will be assessed and amendments made to the settlement hierarchy methodology where considered appropriate. The comments and any changes made will be documented in the Council's Statement of Consultation. Once finalised, the Council will assess the district's settlements using the final indicators. The final assessments will be fed into the next stage of plan making and published as an evidence document.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet is

**RECOMMENDED**

- To approve the contents of the draft Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023; and
- To agree that the draft Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023 be published for public consultation for six weeks

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report sets out the purpose and content of the draft Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023 and asks that Cabinet approve the contents of the draft version of Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023 and agree that it can be published for public engagement for six weeks after this meeting and its call-in period.

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

- 2.1 The production of a local plan is enforced and guided by Statutory Instruments (Orders, Rules and Regulations) and Acts of Parliament (Acts). Two of the key items are the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 specifically identifies matters that must be taken into account when preparing a local plan. This includes national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
- 2.2 The NPPF (paragraph 20) asks that Local Plans contain strategic policies. These strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and make sufficient provision for:
- a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;
  - b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
  - c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
  - d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 2.3 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF also requires that local plans meet the principles of sustainable development; achieving net gains from an economic, social and environmental perspective.
- 2.4 This consultation paper sets out the proposed methodology for assessing the sustainability of settlements which will help inform the creation of a settlement hierarchy and future development strategy/pattern of development for Huntingdonshire's next Local Plan. It will assist the Council in ascertaining the most sustainable options for development and ensure that the Council has a robust evidence base to demonstrate that it meets legislation and the requirements of plan-making as set out in the NPPF.

### 3. DRAFT SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY METHODOLOGY 2023

3.1 The draft version of the Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023 provides a consistent, measurable methodology for assessing the sustainability of all settlements in Huntingdonshire. This will help inform the creation of a settlement hierarchy and future development strategy/pattern of development for Huntingdonshire's next Local Plan.

3.2 The draft Settlement Hierarchy Methodology covers the following matters:

- Chapter 1 – Introduction
- Chapter 2 – Context
- Chapter 3 - Geographical Study Area
- Chapter 4 - Topic Areas and Weighting
- Chapter 5 - Settlement Hierarchy Proposed Methodology
- Chapter 6 - Sample Score Sheet of Settlements
- Chapter 7 - Next Steps
- Chapter 8 - Appendices - Data Scoping and Refinement

3.3 Chapters 1 and 2 of the draft Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023 introduce the concept of a settlement hierarchy and set out some of the key national legislation, policy and guidance that have influenced its development. A section on *Sustainable Development Principles* in Chapter 2 reflects on these influences and summarises some of the main themes behind the principle of sustainable development (page 5 of Appendix 1).

3.4 For further context the section *Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036* (page 6 of Appendix 1) explains the current Local Plan's development strategy and settlement hierarchy, which comprises:

- Spatial Planning Areas
- Key Service Centres
- Small Settlements; and
- The Countryside

Engagement on issues relating to the Local Plan update will explore whether this settlement hierarchy remains appropriate or if a revised settlement hierarchy would better meet the future needs of the district and if so, what that hierarchy might look like.

3.5 Chapter 3 – Geographical Study Area (page 7 of Appendix 1) looks at Huntingdonshire as a whole and proposes that all settlements with 30 or more residential units are assessed using the proposed settlement hierarchy methodology. Settlements that fall below this threshold (hamlets) are proposed to be subject to a basic survey to illustrate their unsustainable nature whilst ensuring that a well-rounded assessment is conducted across as many settlements as possible within the district. A specific question is posed at the end of this section asking consultees if they agree with the approach proposed providing an opportunity for the public to influence the scope of the assessment.



- 3.6 Chapter 4 (pages 8 and 9 of Appendix 1) takes readers through the process of how the settlement hierarchy methodology was developed. It starts by explaining the main ‘topic areas’ that were identified as relevant to assess the sustainability of a settlement, these were guided by the requirements set out in the NPPF and include:
- Health
  - Education
  - Retail and Services
  - Sports and Leisure
  - Culture and Community
  - Transport
  - Communications; and
  - Employment
- 3.7 Next, the approach to identifying indicators for each topic area is explained as a four-part process comprising:
- Step One – determining the key factors/criteria that contribute towards sustainable development for each topic area eg. important assessment criteria for Culture and Community could focus on cultural buildings, libraries, community buildings and public houses
  - Step Two – identifying potential indicators and sourcing data that could be used to measure and assess the key factors/criteria eg. public houses could be assessed by identifying if there is a public house in a settlement, or by counting how many public houses there are. Data that could be used to assess this could be public house data from the Office of National Statistics, or CAMRA What Pub search facility.
  - Step Three – a review of all proposed indicators and additional information to select a preferred indicator and create a proposed scoring mechanism for that eg. settlements could be scored from 10 to 2, with 10 being a settlement with the highest number public houses and 2 the lowest.
  - Step Four – identification of final proposed indicator and weighting attached to said indicator eg. a weighting of times 2 is given to the indicator as a public house is used by some of the population, all of the time.
- 3.8 Chapter Four adds extra justification for the weighting of indicators (page 9 of Appendix 1). Weighting was devised to assist in establishing the significance of each indicator and its contribution towards the sustainability of a settlement. Each indicator was attributed a weighting based on frequency of use and the amount of the population that ‘use’ that service or facility. A specific question is posed at the end of this section asking consultees if they agree with this approach providing an opportunity for the public to influence the scope of the assessment.
- 3.9 Chapter 5 (pages 10 to 20) sets out in full the proposed settlement hierarchy methodology and includes each indicator, proposed scoring mechanism and weighting, below each topic area eg. Health; a maximum score is provided and the data sources that will be used to assess each indicator. Each topic area is followed by a question giving people the

opportunity to agree with the proposed indicator, express a preference for one of the other indicators considered in preparation of the methodology which are set out in each topic area appendix or to put forward their own suggested indicator. The means of assessment for settlements under 30 residential units is also set out in chapter 5. This chapter is expected to be the main focus of the consultation.

- 3.10 Measures used to assess the proposed indicators have been derived using a combination of available data, existing key national guidance for example, the DfT journey time statistics; relevant studies (such as Local Transport Plans that assess the social impact of commuting time) and reports and papers such as The Royal Society for Public Health's study 'Health on the High Street 2019 - Running on Empty (which outline and justify the importance of certain services and facilities).
- 3.11 To provide some examples of how the settlement hierarchy methodology would work in practice, four sample score sheets for settlements of varying size are provided in Chapter 6 (pages 21 to 34). The settlements chosen include St Neots (a main Market Town), Warboys (currently classified as a Key Service Centre), Stilton and Bythorn (two villages currently categorised as small settlements, but significantly different in size).
- 3.12 Chapter 7 (page 35) identifies the next steps of what happens after the consultation. This is further explained in section 5 of this Cabinet report.
- 3.13 Finally, a suite of appendices is provided (pages 35 onwards of Appendix 1). These are broken down into topic areas eg. Health, Education, Employment and allow those who wish to understand the methodology in more detail to see how each indicator has been developed. Each appendix is structured as follows:
- Step One – determining the key factors/criteria that contribute towards sustainable development for each topic area,
  - Step Two – identifying potential indicators and sourcing data that could be used to measure and assess the key factors/criteria,
  - Step Three – A review of all proposed indicators and additional information to select a preferred indicator and create a proposed scoring mechanism for that.

#### **4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

- 4.1 The Panel discussed the Draft Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023 at its meeting on 1st March 2023.
- 4.2 The Panel heard in response to a question from Councillor Gardener, that travel times shown were during peak time however travel times to doctors surgeries were during non-peak times as this is when most residents would access that service. In response to a further question, the Panel heard that the frequency of bus services had been considered rather than individual operators and that the TING service had not been included at this point as it is unknown whether this service will still be available at the time of the Local Plan's final publication.

- 4.3 It was observed by Councillors Gray and Pickering that significant portions of the data for St Neots appeared to be out of date with references being made to named businesses which had been out of business for many years, it was felt that this quality of data called into question the validity of the report. It was confirmed that the data collection occurred some time ago and that the data would be updated prior to Cabinet in relation to St Neots and Restaurants. The Panel heard that the team had used more in depth data to build a more comprehensive and relevant settlement assessment however, they were aware that more data quality checks were needed, it was hoped that town and parish councils would be able to assist in this task over the Summer.
- 4.4 Councillor Pickering observed that whilst it was useful to know how many residents could be served by a GP Surgery, it would be helpful to understand how many residents they are currently serving and therefore how sustainable this would be in the face of further development.
- 4.5 Following a further question from Councillor Pickering, the Panel heard that the Methodology needed to be tailored to Huntingdonshire in order to develop a robust plan which could then be scrutinised by the independent planning inspector, however all feedback received would be considered and adjustments made as the progress continues.
- 4.6 Following an observation from Councillor Corney on the 6 week consultation period causing issues to those parishes with bi or tri monthly meeting cycles, the Panel heard that although timescales were not statutory at this point, this would be the statutory timescale later on, therefore by using this timescale the process would be more familiar in the final stages. It was agreed that following the meeting, town and parish councils would be contacted and advised of the forthcoming consultation with the option to speak to the Planning team if the 6 week period would cause them significant issues.
- 4.7 The Panel heard, following a question from Councillor Gray that, any entirely new settlements would be considered separately to this document and would go through the usual Planning processes.
- 4.8 Councillor Gardener observed that parishes which border the A14 may be able to advise on alternative routes which residents use to safely access the road and that he was currently working with National Highways on improvements in this area.
- 4.9 The Panel heard, following a question from Councillor Pickering, that there is limited interaction between this report and the Call for Sites at present, there will be more interaction as the process develops.
- 4.10 Councillor Harvey enquired whether further education colleges were included within the secondary school information detailed, the Panel were advised that this would be checked and reported back. Following a further question the Panel heard that Dentists were not included due to the mainly private and chargeable nature of the service.

- 4.11 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for the Cabinet to make a decision on the recommendations.

## **5. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION & WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN**

- 5.1 Public engagement on the draft version of the Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023 is proposed to run for six weeks after this meeting and its call-in period.
- 5.2 At the close of consultation, the comments made will be assessed and changes made where considered appropriate. The comments and any changes made will be documented in the Council's Statement of Consultation or equivalent documentation.
- 5.3 Once finalised the Council will assess each settlement using the final indicators. The final assessments will be published as part of the evidence informing preparation of the Local Plan.
- 5.4 The finalised settlement hierarchy will form part of a suite of studies including but not limited to strategic flood risk assessments, transport assessments, housing need and infrastructure assessments and requirements. Consideration will also be given to the Council's Corporate Strategies and priorities such as The Place Strategy and the Climate Strategy as they are finalised insofar as they relate to the Local Plan update. This more in-depth assessment will be used to identify areas most suitable for sustainable growth in the district and will enable the local plan to demonstrate that it can meet the requirements set out in the national planning policy framework.

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

- 6.1 The production of a Settlement Hierarchy Methodology aligns with the objective 'improving housing provision' as set out in the Corporate Plan 2022/23, a key action of which is:

"Commence an update of the Local Plan. This should ensure that local planning policies include a focus on sustainability of new developments, achieving the right mix of housing sizes, types and tenures to meet the needs of residents, the quality of the built environment, creating healthy spaces and communities, public transport and digital connectivity."

- 6.2 The Settlement Hierarchy Methodology will assess the relative sustainability of settlements within the district. Alongside a more in-depth assessment this will be used to identify areas most suitable for sustainable growth in the district. This in turn will guide the location of and/or protection of housing, employment, green spaces, infrastructure, and community

services and facilities all of which work towards the corporate objectives of:

- Tackling climate change and caring for the environment
- Enhancing employment opportunities and supporting businesses
- Supporting our residents needs
- Improving housing provision
- Strengthening our communities

6.3 Consultation on the draft version of the Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023 also adheres to the Corporate Plan's central approach to develop 'an enduring dialogue with residents, meaningfully engaging with them in the widest possible aspects of our work and listening and responding to concerns in shaping policies and priorities'. The consultation will allow people and organisations to feed into the early stage of local plan preparation and contribute towards the assessment of sustainability of settlements within the district.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 To be effective Local Plans need to be kept up to date. As set out in Regulation 10a of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating. Approval was received from Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023:

'To agree to the commencement of work to compile an updated local evidence base to inform and support preparation of the full update to the adopted Local Plan, working with partners and consultants as necessary'

7.2 The review of the sustainability of settlements within the district through the establishment of a settlement hierarchy methodology is part of this process. The assessment of settlements through a finalised methodology will identify (in combination with other evidence), whether the current Local Plan settlement hierarchy and strategy for development is still the preferred approach, or whether alternative scenarios may need to be explored.

7.3 Providing a comprehensive assessment to inform the preferred strategy for development will also ensure that the Council can justify their decisions when the Local Plan is independently examined by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State.

## **8. HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Paragraph 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that 'planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.' This includes ensuring that the Local Plan and its policies meet the principles of sustainable development; achieving net gains from an economic, social and environmental perspective as follows:

- a) 'an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.'

(NPPF, paragraph 8)

- 8.2 The review of the sustainability of settlements within the district through the establishment of a settlement hierarchy methodology is part of this process. The assessment of settlements through a finalised methodology will identify (in combination with other evidence), the most sustainable and achievable way to plan development sustainably, creating positive impacts on health, the environment and climate change.

## **9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 9.1 Engagement on the draft version of the Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023 is considered beneficial in meeting many of the Council's Corporate Plan objectives. In particular it meets the required key action under 'improving housing provision' of 'commencing an update of the local plan'.
- 9.2 It is one of the key first steps towards the development of an evidence base to support preparation of a full update to the Local Plan as approved at Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023.
- 9.3 Engagement on the draft Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023 also adheres to the Corporate Plan's central approach to develop 'an enduring dialogue with residents, meaningfully engaging with them in the widest possible aspects of our work and listening and responding to concerns in shaping policies and priorities.' The consultation will allow people and organisations to feed into the early stage of local plan preparation and contribute towards the assessment of sustainability of settlements within the district.
- 9.4 The final methodology will identify (in combination with other evidence), the most sustainable and achievable way to plan development, creating positive impacts on health, the environment and climate change. This in turn will help the Local Plan to demonstrate that it can achieve the

principles of sustainable development as set out in paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework by taking into account social, economic and environmental considerations.

9.5 The recommendations are therefore:

- To approve the contents of the Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023
- To agree that the Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023 can be published for public consultation commencing on 29 March 2023 and concluding on 10 May 2023.

## 10. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Draft Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023

## 11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [Cabinet - Tuesday, 24 January 2023](#)
- [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)
- [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#)
- [National Planning Policy Framework](#)
- [National Planning Practice Guidance](#)

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### Document Information

**Title:** Draft Huntingdonshire Settlement Hierarchy Methodology: January 2023.

**Status:** Consultation paper to establish a methodology to assess the sustainability of settlements within Huntingdonshire to aid in the creation of the settlement hierarchy evidence base, the results of which will inform Huntingdonshire District Council's Local Plan Review.

**Date of approval for consultation:** Overview and Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) Panel, 1 March 2023. Cabinet, 21 March 2023.

**Document availability:** The Huntingdonshire Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023 can be found on the Council's [consultation portal](#). Copies can be downloaded from the portal and responses to the consultation may be entered directly into the portal. A hard copy can be viewed at Customer Services Reception, Huntingdonshire District Council, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon. This office is open from 8:45 to 17:00 Mondays to Thursdays and 8:45 to 16:30 on Fridays.

**Please note:** This document may be available in alternative formats on request.

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is inviting people to be involved in the formative process of shaping our district by commenting on the methodology which will ultimately guide the Council in determining the distribution and location of growth across the district.
- 1.2 The Huntingdonshire Settlement Hierarchy Methodology 2023 sets out the Council's proposed methodology for the assessment of the sustainability of settlements within Huntingdonshire to aid in the establishment of a settlement hierarchy for the next Local Plan. The document details the Council's justification for the assessment criteria, the results of which will form part of evidence base for the Local Plan. As part of the Local Plan process the final settlement hierarchy will be assessed through the Council's Sustainability Appraisal and be consulted upon as part of the preparation of the Local Plan.
- 1.3 An indicative timetable for the update to Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 can be found in the Local Development Scheme.

### How to Respond to the Consultation

- 1.4 The Consultation Paper was assessed by Overview and Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) Panel on 1 March 2023 before being approved for consultation at Cabinet on 21 March 2023. Engagement opportunities on the Consultation Paper are available from: **XXX** 2023 to **XXX** 2023.
- 1.5 Comments can be made via the Council's online consultation portal at: <https://consult.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/kse>
- 1.6 Printed copies are available to view at: Customer Services Centre, Huntingdonshire District Council, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon. Opening hours are: Monday to Thursday 8:45 to 17:00 and Friday 8:45 to 16:30 (excluding Bank Holidays).
- 1.7 Queries can be directed to Planning Policy by:
  - **Email:** local.plan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
  - **Telephone:** 01480 388424
  - **Post:** Planning Policy, Huntingdonshire District Council, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN
- 1.8 Following the close of consultation the responses will be evaluated and a final settlement hierarchy methodology established. The methodology will then be used to assess settlements within the Huntingdonshire District Council area. The outcomes will be published as part of the evidence base that will inform the creation of the Local Plan. The resultant settlement hierarchy will be assessed through the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal and subjected to consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) Committee and Cabinet as part of the Local Plan preparation process.

## 2 Context

### Legislation and Guidance

- 2.1 This consultation paper sets out the proposed methodology assessing the sustainability of settlements which will help inform the creation of a settlement hierarchy for Huntingdonshire's next Local Plan. The production of a local plan is enforced and guided by Statutory Instruments (Orders, Rules and Regulations) and Acts of Parliament (Acts). Two of the key items are the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) (as amended) and the [Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) (as amended)<sup>(1)</sup>. [Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) specifically identifies matters that must be taken into account when preparing a local plan; these include national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State such as the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance and other planning policies like the Parking Policy and Sustainable Drainage Systems Policy<sup>(2)</sup>. Other Statutory Instruments and Acts are taken into consideration in Local Plan production and more information on these can be found on the [Planning Portal](#).

### National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.2 The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF as amended)<sup>(3)</sup> sets out the Government's planning policies for England and the principles of sustainable development which must be taken into consideration in the creation of Local Plans. As always, the NPPF should be read as a whole and applied in a way that is appropriate to the type of plan being produced and therefore the whole of the NPPF has been taken into account in the production of this consultation paper.
- 2.3 Below, the Council has set out some paragraphs (excluding footnotes) of particular relevance to provide context and to highlight some of the principles relating to sustainable development that should be considered when looking at the establishment of a settlement hierarchy and methodology of assessment.

#### NPPF 2021

7. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs<sup>4</sup>. At a similarly high level, members of the United Nations – including the United Kingdom – have agreed to pursue the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development in the period to 2030. These address social progress, economic well-being and environmental protection<sup>5</sup>.
8. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
- a) an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

1 As at January 2023.

2 All found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

3 latest version 2021

**c) an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

- 9..... Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.
16. Plans should: a) be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development<sup>11</sup>;....
79. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.
84. Planning policies and decisions should enable:
- a. the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings
  - b. the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
  - c. sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and
  - d. the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
85. Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.
105. The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.
119. Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.

- 2.4** Note: A draft revised NPPF was published for consultation on 23rd December 2022; any relevant changes arising from the finalised updated NPPF will be taken into account when the Settlement Hierarchy Methodology is finalised following the engagement period subject to alignment of timings.

### National Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.5** [National Planning Practice Guidance](#)<sup>(4)</sup> provides extra guidance for the preparation of plans and the assessment of areas suitable for development in terms of identifying broad locations for development. In conformity with the principles of the NPPF the settlement hierarchy will help to establish broad areas where development may be possible, and help enhance or maintain services and facilities in settlements or provide for nearby settlements. It will also help to identify areas that adhere to the principles of sustainable transport helping to respond to climate change, and offer access to open spaces and cultural, social and economic opportunities. Key guidance in relation to identifying broad locations for development which could be relevant to the establishment of a settlement hierarchy have been identified below. However, it is important to note that further detailed assessment will be conducted to identify specific locations for growth and any constraints that may prevent sites from coming forward.
- 2.6** Below, the Council has set out some paragraphs of particular relevance to provide some context and to highlight some of the principles relating to sustainable development that could be considered when looking at the establishment of a settlement hierarchy and methodology for assessment.

#### **NPPG Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 3-010-20190722, Revision date: 22 07 2019**

##### How can sites/broad locations be identified?

When carrying out a desktop review, plan-makers need to be proactive in identifying as wide a range of sites and broad locations for development as possible (including those existing sites that could be improved, intensified or changed). Identified sites, which have particular constraints (such as Green Belt), need to be included in the assessment for the sake of comprehensiveness but these constraints need to be set out clearly, including where they severely restrict development. An important part of the desktop review, however, is to identify sites and their constraints, rather than simply to rule out sites outright which are known to have constraints. It is important that plan-makers do not simply rely on sites that they have been informed about, but actively identify sites through the desktop review process that may assist in meeting the development needs of an area.

#### **NPPG Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 37-001-20140306, Revision date: 06 03 2014**

##### How should open space be taken into account in planning?

Open space should be taken into account in planning for new development and considering proposals that may affect existing open space (see National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 96). Open space, which includes all open space of public value, can take many forms, from formal sports pitches to open areas within a development, linear corridors and country parks. It can provide health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby; have an ecological value and contribute to green infrastructure (see National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 171, as well as being an important part of the landscape and setting of built development, and an important component in the achievement of sustainable development (see National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 7-9)...

Related policy: [paragraph 92](#), [paragraphs 20-23](#), [paragraph 26](#), [paragraph 96](#)

<sup>4</sup> Guidance is regularly updated, it is recommended to refer to the NPPG for the latest updates.



**NPPG Paragraph: 046 Reference ID: 61-046-20190315, Revision date: 15 03 2019**What evidence might be needed to plan for health and well-being?

Strategic policy-making authorities can work with public health leads and health organisations to understand and take account of the current and projected health status and needs of the local population, including the quality and quantity of, and accessibility to, healthcare and the effect any planned growth may have on this. Authorities will also need to assess the quality and quantity of, and accessibility to, green infrastructure, education, sports, recreation and places of worship including expected future changes, and any information about relevant barriers to improving health and well-being outcomes. Strategic policy-making authorities may consult any relevant Health Impact Assessments and consider their use as a tool for assessing the impact and risks of development proposals.

**NPPG Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 8-005-20190721, Revision date: 21 07 2019**Why is green infrastructure important?

Green infrastructure is a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, at a range of scales. For communities, these benefits can include enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes, food and energy production, urban cooling, and the management of flood risk. These benefits are also known as ecosystem services.

**Sustainable Development Principles**

- 2.7 The NPPF and NPPG identify the principles of sustainable development and some key themes that the Council should consider when establishing the settlement hierarchy. Collectively these indicate that the settlement hierarchy methodology should be based around the following principles:

**Looking at how settlements can meet the needs of the present without compromising future generations<sup>(5)</sup>:** This could include looking at the existing capacity of services and facilities and the current quality of, quantity of and accessibility to healthcare, green infrastructure, education, sports, recreation, retail and places of worship <sup>(6)</sup>.

**Meeting economic, social and environmental objectives<sup>(7)</sup>:** this could entail looking at employment opportunities, social infrastructure such as community facilities and accessibility to natural and open spaces.

**Taking local circumstances into account that reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area<sup>(8)</sup>:** This could include cultural assets such as theatres, museums.

**Taking into account that services in one area could support nearby villages by providing additional services<sup>(9)</sup>.**

**Looking at how accessible services are by a variety of means, including by motorised vehicle or on foot, by cycling or by public transport<sup>(10)</sup>.**

5 NPPF, paragraph 7.

6 NPPG Paragraph: 046 Reference ID: 61-046-20190315, Revision date: 15 03 2019

7 NPPF, paragraph 8

8 NPPF, paragraph 9

9 NPPF, paragraph 79

10 NPPF, paragraph 85

Identifying the ability of a settlement to provide sustainable public transport options<sup>(11)</sup>.

Assessing a settlement's sustainability with regard to the environment, health and safety issues<sup>(12)</sup>. Taking into account open space and the health and recreation benefits it brings<sup>(13)</sup>.

## Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036

- 2.8** [Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036](#) established a settlement hierarchy based on four specific area classifications:
- Spatial Planning Areas (Local Plan Policy LP7) - these areas were centred on the district's traditional market towns and were considered the most sustainable centres.
  - Key Service Centres (Local Plan Policy LP8) - areas that had a concentration of services and facilities and had a role in providing services to residents of other nearby communities.
  - Small Settlements (Local Plan Policy LP9) - any remaining settlements of over 30 dwellings.
  - The Countryside (Local Plan Policy LP10) - guides development in the countryside including any development within hamlets.
- 2.9** Four Spatial Planning areas were identified: **Huntingdon** including Brampton and Godmanchester and the strategic expansion location of Alconbury Weald; **St Neots** including Little Paxton and the strategic expansion location of St Neots East, **St Ives** and **Ramsey** including Bury.
- 2.10** Seven key service centres were designated: Buckden, Fenstanton, Kimbolton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys, Yaxley.
- 2.11** Huntingdonshire's current settlement hierarchy does not include hamlets as a specific category. Hamlets are defined in the Local Plan (paragraph 4.84, page 53) as areas with small groups of houses or farms that contain less than 30 residential buildings. Policy LP10 The Countryside helps to address development proposals in these areas.
- 2.12** After further studies and assessment approximately three quarters of the objectively assessed need for housing and the majority of employment and retail growth was expected to be focused in the Spatial Planning Areas, with the remaining quarter of the objectively assessed need for housing, together with a limited amount of employment growth, expected on sites dispersed across the Key Service Centres and Small Settlements to support the vitality of these communities and provide flexibility and diversity in the housing supply. The main policies guiding development in these areas are LP7 Spatial Planning Areas, LP8 Key Service Centres, LP9 Small Settlements and LP10 The Countryside<sup>(14)</sup>.
- 2.13** Changes to the way people work including increased home working and the increasing importance of certain services and facilities such as broadband and open space means that the Council must re-assess the hierarchy to take into account the changing needs of the population. The Council has not pre-empted that the classification of the settlement hierarchy for the next local plan will remain the same as currently; nor has it decided how growth will be distributed across the district or identified constraints for development (which may eliminate some settlements from certain categories). The assessment of settlements outlined in this document will form a later stage of the plan-making process. The identification of a settlement assessment methodology at this stage is intended to categorise the level of sustainability of settlements within the district and to understand the implications that potential growth may have on them in terms of sustainable development and access to services and facilities.

11 NPPF, paragraph 105

12 NPPF, paragraph 119

13 NPPG Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 37-001-20140306, Revision date: 06 03 2014

14 Understanding that the Local Plan must be read as a whole to comprehensively determine what development is permitted.

### 3 Geographical Study Area

**3.1** The World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 in the Report [Our Common Future](#) (also known as the Brundtland Report) defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". (Chapter 2: Towards Sustainable Development, Paragraph 1).

**3.2** Paragraph 79 of the NPPF adds to the requirements of sustainable development in rural areas by asking local plan-makers:

'To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.'

**3.3** As such, many Local Plans establish a settlement hierarchy in order to sustainably distribute the required housing, infrastructure or business growth (amongst other requirements) across their districts. A settlement hierarchy allows developers and landowners to identify areas that may be suitable for certain levels of development dependant on the correct application of local plan policies. To establish a settlement hierarchy for the next Local Plan the Council must identify which settlements should be assessed.

**3.4** The Council proposes that all settlements within Huntingdonshire district should be reassessed to reflect any growth that has occurred since the adoption of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036. Settlements will be assessed on the perceived urban extent of the area as opposed to being constrained by administrative boundaries such as Parishes. Settlements containing less than 30 residential units are less likely to contain adequate services and facilities that would be necessary to support future development and are very unlikely to have access to public transport. As such it is considered that a full assessment of these settlements is unnecessary. This reflects the intentions of paragraph 105 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) which states that:

'The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.'

**3.5** For completeness however, it is suggested that a basic survey should be undertaken for each hamlet to demonstrate that the decision to disregard these settlements is justified and to illustrate their unsustainable nature. The proposed basic survey is illustrated in the next chapter. All settlements that contain 30 or more residential units will be subject to a full assessment, the proposed methodology for this is set out in the remainder of this document.

#### Question 1

##### Geographical Scope

Do you agree that all settlements of 30 or more dwellings should be assessed in full and those with less than 30 dwellings should have a basic survey?

## 4 Topic Areas and Weighting

- 4.1** Paragraph 8 of the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) sets out the principles of sustainable development which includes three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental which must be considered in plan-making.
- 4.2** The methodology to establish a settlement hierarchy will be based upon the principles of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF. The resultant assessments will allow the Council to determine the sustainability of settlements within Huntingdonshire. This will enable the Council to direct growth towards the most sustainable settlements through the establishment of a settlement hierarchy. It will also help the Council to direct proportionate growth to rural communities in order to support and maintain provision of local services within a settlement or in a nearby settlement, as instructed through paragraph 79 of the NPPF.
- 4.3** Analysis of settlements is based on eight key topic areas identified as important to the creation of sustainable communities and developments. These are based on the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
- **Health:** NPPF paragraphs 8, 20, 34, 130 and Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities.
  - **Education:** NPPF paragraphs 20, 34, 95, 106.
  - **Retail and Services:** NPPF paragraphs 8, 20, 73, 79, 84, 86, 92 and Section 7 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres
  - **Sports and Leisure:** NPPF paragraphs 8, 20, 28, 84, 106 and Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities.
  - **Culture and Community:** NPPF paragraphs 8, 20, 28, 84, 106, 174, 190, Section 7 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres and Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities.
  - **Transport:** NPPF paragraphs 8, 73, 84, 85, 88, 92, 130 and Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
  - **Communications:** NPPF paragraphs 8, 20, 73, 84, 85, 88 and Section 10 - Supporting high quality communications
  - **Employment:** 8, 20, 73, 84, 106 and Section 6 - Building a strong, competitive economy
- 4.4** In order to identify the appropriate indicators for each topic area the following approach was established.

**Table 1 Assessment Methodology**

Step One - Identification of Criteria
A set of criteria for each topic area was established to measure the sustainability of each settlement. The criteria were determined by identifying the key factors that contribute towards sustainable developments using current research, policy guidance and plans and strategies.
Step Two - Data Scoping
Potential indicators and data sources were identified which could be used to assess each of the chosen criteria.
Step Three - Data Elimination and Refinement
A review of all proposed indicators and additional information to select a preferred indicator and create a proposed scoring mechanism for that.
Step Four - Final Proposed Indicator

Presentation of the final indicator including chosen scoring mechanism and weighting which can be found in 5 'Settlement Hierarchy Proposed Methodology'

**Weighting of Indicators**

**4.5** To provide a balanced approach to the final assessment of sustainability within settlements, each indicator will be attributed a weight. Weighting will be applied based on frequency of use and the amount of the population that 'use' that service or facility. This will assist in establishing the significance of the indicator and its contribution towards the sustainability of a settlement. A matrix has been provided below to illustrate the method of assessment and the respective weighting of indicators.

**Table 2 Weighting Matrix**

Frequency \ Usage	Occasionally	Frequently
All of the Population	x2	x4
Some of the Population	x1	x2

**Sample Surveys & Quality Checking**

**4.6** Sample surveys including scores have been completed for St Neots, Warboys, Stilton and Bythorn, these can be found in 6 'Sample Score Sheet of Settlements' The surveys are based on the proposed indicators outlined in 5 'Settlement Hierarchy Proposed Methodology'. These surveys have been provided as a working example of how the proposed indicators perform and the type of information that will be assessed. It should be noted that the sample surveys have not been through a final quality checking process, the Council proposes that once final indicators have been established, surveys of all settlements will be undertaken and passed to the relevant Town or Parish Council(s) for a final quality check based on local knowledge.

**Question 2**

**Topic Area Weighting**

Do you agree with the proposed weighting approach to scoring indicators?

## 5 Settlement Hierarchy Proposed Methodology

### Settlements of 30 or more Dwellings

- 5.1** The proposed indicators and scoring to be used to assess settlements that contain 30 or more residential dwellings have been set out below.
- 5.2** The total score available is 440 which is broken down as follows:
- Health: 60
  - Education: 60
  - Retail and Services: 60
  - Sports and Leisure: 60
  - Culture and Community: 40
  - Transport: 60
  - Communications: 40
  - Employment: 60
- 5.3** The reference numbers provided in the first column refer to the indicator that was chosen as a result of data scoping and refinement. This information and a full list of indicators considered can be found in Section 8 'Appendices -Data Scoping and Refinement' under the relevant topic areas, including further justification for the choices made and methodology of assessment.

### Health

Reference	Indicator	Proposed Scoring mechanism	Weighting
H4	Time taken to an accident and emergency department from settlement by car.	10 points = within 10 minutes 8 points = within 15 minutes 6 points = within 20 minutes 4 points = within 25 minutes 2 points = within 30 minutes 0 points = more than 30 minutes	<b>X 2</b> <b>All of the Population</b> <b>Occasionally</b>
H7 & H8	Number of GP surgeries in settlement and access to GP surgeries.	10 points = 4 or more 8 points = 2 to 3 6 points = 1 4 points = no GP surgeries, but GP surgery up to 5 minutes away by car 2 points = no GP surgeries, but GP surgery between 5 to 15 minutes away by car 0 points = no GP surgeries, and GP surgery is more than 15 minutes away by car	<b>X 2</b> <b>All of the Population</b> <b>Occasionally</b>

Reference	Indicator	Proposed Scoring mechanism	Weighting
H11 & 12	Number of pharmacies in settlement and access to a pharmacy	10 points = 4 8 points = 2 to 3 6 points = 1 4 points = no pharmacies, but pharmacy up to 5 minutes away by car 2 points = no pharmacies, but pharmacy between 5 to 15 minutes away by car 0 points = no pharmacies, and pharmacy is more than 15 minutes away by car	<b>X 2</b> <b>All of the Population Occasionally</b>

**Maximum Score - 60**

**Data Sources:** using the NHS: [Find accident and emergency services tool](#), [Find a GP tool](#), [Find a pharmacy tool](#).

### Question 3

#### Health

Do you agree with the proposed indicators for health?

If not, please suggest your preferred alternative from those set out in 'Appendix 1 - Health' or propose your own indicator(s).

#### Education

Reference	Indicator	Proposed Scoring mechanism	Weighting
E3	Number of pre-schools and nurseries in a settlement.	10 points = 11+ 6 points = 6 to 10 4 points = 3 to 5 2 points = 1 to 2 0 points = no pre-school or nursery in the settlement	<b>X2</b> <b>Some of the Population Frequently</b>
E8	Number of primary schools in a settlement	10 points = 6+ 6 points = 4 to 5 4 points = 2 to 3 2 points = 1 0 points = no primary school in the settlement	<b>X2</b> <b>Some of the Population Frequently</b>
E13	Number of secondary schools in a settlement	10 points = 2+ 5 points = 1 0 points = no secondary school in the settlement	<b>X2</b> <b>Some of the Population Frequently</b>

## 5 Settlement Hierarchy Proposed Methodology

### Maximum Score - 60

The search will be conducted using Cambridgeshire County Council's [Directory of Services - Childcare](#) and [Directory of Services - Schools](#).

#### Question 4

##### Education

Do you agree with the proposed indicators for education?

If not, please suggest your preferred alternative from those set out in 'Appendix 2 - Education' or propose your own indicator(s).

### Retail and Services

Reference	Indicator	Proposed Scoring mechanism	Weighting
S2	<p>Presence of bank/building society, Post Office, or free cash machine in settlement.</p> <p>The indicator would add together the points attributed to each identified service for a final figure.</p>	<p>4 points = presence of bank/building society</p> <p>3 points = presence of post office</p> <p>3 points = presence of free cash machine</p> <p>1 point = mobile post office service (if no physical post office)</p> <p>0 points = no post office service</p>	<p><b>X 2</b></p> <p><b>All of the Population Occasionally</b></p>
S6	<p>Identification of convenience store by type.</p> <p>The indicator would add together the points attributed to each identified convenience store for a final figure.</p>	<p>4 points = presence of hypermarket / superstore</p> <p>3 points = presence of large food store/supermarket</p> <p>2 points = presence of small convenience store</p> <p>1 point = presence of single themed store</p> <p>0 points = no convenience store presence</p>	<p><b>= X 4</b></p> <p><b>All of the Population Frequently</b></p>
S9	<p>Diversity of comparison and other stores in settlement (based on categories).</p>	<p>10 points = 8 or more categories</p> <p>8 points = 6 to 7 categories</p> <p>6 points = 4 to 5 categories</p> <p>4 points = 2 to 3 categories</p> <p>2 point = 1 category</p> <p>0 points = no categories represented</p>	<p><b>X 2</b></p> <p><b>All of the Population Occasionally</b></p>



Reference	Indicator	Proposed Scoring mechanism	Weighting
S11	Number of restaurants, cafés and takeaways in settlement. Takeaways to be counted once despite the number present in a settlement.	10 points = 16 or more outlets 8 points = 11 to 15 outlets 6 points = 6 to 10 outlets 4 points = 3 to 5 outlets 2 point = 1 to 2 outlets 0 points = no outlets	<b>X 1</b> <b>Some of the Population Occasionally</b>

**Maximum Score - 60**

**S2 - Data Sources:** Location of cash machines [Link ATM locator](#), Post Offices and mobile Post Offices [Post Office website](#), [Find a Property Search](#) using the special category codes 021 - Banks/Insurance/Building Society Offices & Other A2 Uses, 217 - Post Office Sorting Centres and 018 – ATMs.

**S6 - Data Source:** [Find a Property Search](#) using special category codes 139 Hypermarkets/superstores , 152 large food stores, 106 convenience stores - the final category will be checked to ascertain if the store is a convenience store or a single themed store such as a butchers, bakers etc. thus splitting this category into: Small convenience store, and Single themed store. Stores may also include some proportion of comparison goods items.

**S9 -** The category lists are based on the Retail Sales Index Standard Industrial Classification reference numbers and would be identified using Business Rates. Categories include: Non-specialised stores; Textile, clothing and footwear stores; Household goods stores; Pharmaceutical, medical, cosmetic & toilet articles; Other retail sale in specialised stores; Books, Newspapers and Stationery; Sporting equipment, Games and Toys; Other retail sales in specialised stores not elsewhere classified; and Accountancy and Estate Agents.

**S11 - Data Source:** Business Rates: [Find a Property Search](#) using the special category codes 234 - restaurants, 409 - cafes and 442 - takeaway food outlet. Hotels with restaurants and bars are included under the Culture and Community category (Indicator CC10) and excluded here to avoid double counting.

**Question 5****Retail and Services**

Do you agree with the proposed indicators for retail and services?

If not, please suggest your preferred alternative from those set out in 'Appendix 3 - Retail and Services' or propose your own indicator(s).

**Sports and Leisure**

Reference	Indicator	Proposed Scoring mechanism	Weighting
SL2	Diversity of formal outdoor sports facilities (based on categories)	10 points = 10 plus categories 8 points = 7 to 9 categories 6 points = 5 to 6 categories 4 points = 2 to 4 categories 2 points = 1 category 0 points = no categories represented	<b>X 2</b> <b>Some of the Population Frequently</b>

## 5 Settlement Hierarchy Proposed Methodology

Reference	Indicator	Proposed Scoring mechanism	Weighting
SL5	Diversity of formal indoor sports facilities (based on categories)	10 points = 8 or more categories 8 points = 6 to 7 categories 6 points = 4 to 5 categories 4 points = 2 to 3 categories 2 points = 1 category 0 points = no categories represented	<b>X 2</b> <b>Some of the Population Frequently</b>
SL8	Diversity of of open / green spaces	10 points = 5 categories 8 points = 4 categories 6 points = 3 categories 4 points = 2 categories 2 points = 1 category 0 points = no categories represented	<b>X 2</b> <b>Some of the Population Frequently</b>

### Maximum Score - 60

**SL2** - The categories are based on and data gathered using facility types identified in [Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2016-21 \(2016\)](#) or successor documents. Categories could include: Artificial Turf Pitch - Full Size, Football - Youth / 9v9, Golf Courses - Holes, Artificial Turf Pitch - Training Size, Grass Pitch - Universal, Rugby Pitches - Senior, Cricket Pitches, MUGA, Rugby Pitches Junior, Football - Mini, Outdoor Bowls, Skate Park, Football - Senior, Outdoor Gym, Tennis Courts.

**SL5** - The categories are based on and data gathered using facility types identified in [Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2016-21 \(2016\)](#) or successor document. Categories could include: Activity Hall, Netball Courts, Swimming Pools, Fitness Stations, Gymnastics Hall, Sports Halls/Courts, Village Halls, Indoor Bowls Rink, Indoor Tennis, Squash Courts.

**SL8 - Data Sources:** HDC - Open space ward profiles, [Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards Technical Report Nov 2020](#), Ordnance Survey [Open Greenspace Map](#), Natural England's [Green Infrastructure Mapping Database](#). Categories developed from the Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping and Standards - Technical Report 2020/21 and informed by discussions with the Council's Operations Team. Categories include: Natural and semi natural urban green spaces, Urban Park, Country Park, Amenity Green Space and Allotments, Community Gardens and City (Urban) Farms.

### Question 6

#### Sports and Leisure

Do you agree with the proposed indicators for sports and leisure?

If not, please suggest your preferred alternative from those set out in 'Appendix 4 - Sports and Leisure' or propose your own indicator(s).

## Culture and Community

Reference	Indicator	Proposed Scoring mechanism	Weighting
CC1	Number of cultural buildings and offer	10 points = 5 plus 8 points = 4 6 points = 3 4 points = 2 2 points = 1 0 points = no cultural buildings or offer present	X 1 Some of the Population Occasionally
CC5	Opening times of library or library facility	10 points = 5 or more days a week 8 points = 4 to 4.5 days a week 6 points = 3 to 3.5 days a week 4 points = 1 to 2.5 days a week 2 points = mobile library 0 points = no library facility present	X 1 Some of the Population Occasionally
CC7	Number of community buildings in settlement	10 points = 15 or more 8 points = 10 to 14 6 points = 6 to 9 4 points = 3 to 5 2 points = 1 to 2 0 points = no community buildings present	X 1 Some of the Population Occasionally
CC10	Number of public houses in settlement	10 points = 11 or more 8 points = 6 to 10 6 points = 3 to 5 4 points = 2 2 points = 1 0 points = no public house present and operating	X 1 Some of the Population Occasionally

### Maximum Score - 40

**CC1 - Data Sources:** Business Rates: [Find a Property Search](#) (special category codes 195 and 196 museums, 278 theatres, 70 concert halls, 56 cinemas, 418, visitor centres and 735 historic property and heritage). Historic Landmarks identified using the Councils mapping layers of scheduled monuments and historic parks and gardens.

**CC5 - Data Sources:** Cambridgeshire County Council Directory of Services - [Libraries](#) and [Mobile Library Services](#).

**CC7 - Data Source:** Cambridgeshire County Council's [Directory of Services](#) (Community facilities and provision, Faiths religion and beliefs). The business rates [Find a Property Search](#) using special category codes: 293 Village Halls, Scout Huts, Cadet Huts Etc, 067 Community Day Centres, 208 Pavilions.

**CC10 - Data Source:** CAMRA [What Pub?](#) search and local knowledge.

### Question 7

#### Culture and Community

Do you agree with the proposed indicators for culture and community?

## 5 Settlement Hierarchy Proposed Methodology

If not, please suggest your preferred alternative from those set out in 'Appendix 5 - Culture and Community' or propose your own indicator(s).

### Transport

Reference	Indicator	Proposed Scoring mechanism	Weighting
T4	Frequency of Bus Service	10 points = grade A 8 points = grade B 6 points = grade C 4 points = grade D 2 points = grade E 0 points = below grade E	<b>X 2</b> <b>Some of the Population Frequently</b>
T5	Presence of railway station	10 points = presence of a railway station 5 points = railway station within 5 kms 0 points = no railway station present	<b>X 2</b> <b>All of the Population Occasionally</b>
T9	Time taken to Principal Road Network	10 points = 1 to 3 minutes 8 points = 4 to 6 minutes 6 points = 7 to 9 minutes 4 points = 10 to 12 minutes 2 points = 13 to 15 minutes 0 points = more than 15 minutes	<b>X 2</b> <b>Some of the Population Frequently</b>

#### Maximum Score - 60

**T4** - Frequency of services assessed using the [Place Based Carbon Calculator](#) Transport Stops indicator. Stops are coloured based on a graded system from A+ to F- with A+ representing the best 1% of all stops based on frequency (most frequent) to FF-, stops that are within the worst 1% of overall frequency in the UK (least frequent). Grade C represents an above average frequency whilst grade D depicts a below average frequency.

**T5 Data Source:** National Rail Enquiries - [Stations](#)

**T9** - Time taken to access the principal roads will be measured from the centre of a settlement to the junction of the nearest identified A road (A1, A14, A428, A141, A421, A1307) and will be assessed based on a morning peak period to provide a worse case scenario reflective of potential capacity, congestion and the environmental impact associated with travelling by car.

**Question 8****Transport**

Do you agree with the proposed indicators for transport?

If not, please suggest your preferred alternative from those set out in 'Appendix 6 - Transport' or propose your own indicator(s).

**Communications**

Reference	Indicator	Proposed Scoring mechanism	Weighting
C2	Coverage of broadband service across a settlement	10 points = ultrafast broadband available across the whole settlement 6 points = superfast broadband available across the whole settlement 2 points = standard broadband available across the whole settlement 0 points = no fixed broadband connection available	<b>X 2</b> <b>All of the Population Occasionally</b>
C5	Number of service providers that provide 'good' (green tick) indoor 4G voice coverage in settlement.	10 points = green tick for all four providers 8 points = green tick for three providers 6 points = green tick for two providers 4 points = green tick for one provider 2 points = amber triangle for one or more providers 0 points = red cross indicating no signal expected	<b>X 2</b> <b>All of the Population Occasionally</b>

**Maximum Score - 40**

**Data Source:** Officers will use Ofcom's [Mobile and Broadband Checker](#) . Post codes will be identified for the centre of each settlement to undertake a search of coverage within the area with additional visual map checks.

**Question 9****Communications**

Do you agree with the proposed indicators for communications?

If not, please suggest your preferred alternative from those set out in 'Appendix 7 - Communications' or propose your own indicator(s).

## 5 Settlement Hierarchy Proposed Methodology

### Employment

Reference	Indicator	Proposed Scoring mechanism	Weighting
EM2	Time taken to nearest Established Employment Area or Market Town by private motorised vehicle.	10 points = up to 6 minutes 8 points = 7 to 12 minutes 6 points = 13 to 18 minutes 4 points = 19 to 24 minutes 2 points = 25 to 30 minutes 0 points = more than 30 minutes	<b>X 2</b> <b>Some of the Population Frequently</b>
EM4	Number of businesses in settlement	10 points = within 10th decile 9 points = within the 9th decile 8 points = within the 8th decile 7 points = within the 7th decile 6 points = within the 6th decile 5 points = within the 5th decile 4 points = within the 4th decile 3 points = within the 3rd decile 2 points = within the 2nd decile 1 points = within the 1st decile 0 points = no businesses recorded in the inter-departmental business register	<b>X 2</b> <b>Some of the Population Frequently</b>
EM7	Number of employees in settlement	10 points = within 10th decile 9 points = within the 9th decile 8 points = within the 8th decile 7 points = within the 7th decile 6 points = within the 6th decile 5 points = within the 5th decile 4 points = within the 4th decile 3 points = within the 3rd decile 2 points = within the 2nd decile 1 points = within the 1st decile 0 points = no employees recorded in the inter-departmental business register	<b>X 2</b> <b>Some of the Population Frequently</b>

**Maximum Score - 60**

**EM2** - Established Employment Area (EEA) will be identified using the definition in Policy LP 18 of [Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036](#) (pages 81 to 84), additional Established Employment Areas may be included if they are of a size and nature similar to the current EEAs and have been built since the adoption of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036. Areas outside the Huntingdonshire boundary will also be included where employment hubs or town centres may be closer than those identified in Huntingdonshire.

**EM4 - Data Source:** [Inter-Departmental Business Register](#) number of businesses in a settlement. Settlements will be ranked from lowest to highest. Settlements will be grouped into deciles. This will allow the Council to 'grade' all settlements against each other to provide an accurate comparison of business distribution within the district. It should be noted that the IDBR covers around 2.7 million businesses in all sectors of the economy, but due to data collection thresholds very small businesses will, in most cases, not be included.

**EM7 Data Source:** [Inter-Departmental Business Register](#) number of employees in a settlement. Settlements will be ranked from lowest to highest. Settlements will be grouped into deciles. This will allow the Council to 'grade' all settlements against each other to provide an accurate comparison of business distribution within the district.

**Question 10****Employment**

Do you agree with the proposed indicators for employment?

If not, please suggest your preferred alternative from those set out in 'Appendix 8 - Employment' or propose your own indicator(s).

**For Settlements Under 30 Residential Units**

For completeness, it is suggested that a basic survey should be undertaken for each hamlet (settlements with 30 or fewer dwellings) to demonstrate that the proposal to disregard these settlements is justified and to illustrate their unsustainable nature. The proposed basic survey is illustrated below.

Assessment Criteria	Description of Assessment Method
Number of Dwellings	Count of the number of dwellings within a Hamlet using Huntingdonshire District Council's Council Tax mapping portal.
Services and Facilities	Identify and name any services and facilities for example, shops, business services, schools, nurseries, leisure facilities using the Valuation Office's <a href="#">Find a Property Search</a> , the <a href="#">Inter-Departmental Business Register</a> (IDBR). <sup>(15)</sup> , Cambridgeshire County Council's Cambridgeshire County Council's <a href="#">Directory of Services</a> and the Council's <a href="#">Business Rates data</a> . The search can be conducted on a street by street basis due to the limited number of streets contained within a hamlet. Businesses that do not pay business rates cannot be identified, however a quick map search or site visit by an officer could enable a more comprehensive picture of the area to be created if required.
Public transport	Identification of any public transport that stops in the settlement including its route and destination. An initial search of public transport stops will be conducted using the <a href="#">Place Based Carbon Calculator</a> which provides map based data on the location of public transport stops and the frequency of services.

<sup>15</sup> The IDBR is "a comprehensive list of UK businesses used by government for statistical purposes.

Assessment Criteria	Description of Assessment Method
	Bus services and operating days will be identified through a combination of sources including Cambridgeshire County Council's - <a href="#">Bus timetables</a> , and timetable and operating day information from <a href="#">Stagecoach</a> , <a href="#">Whippet</a> (the two main bus service providers in the district) and <a href="#">Traveline</a> (a partnership of transport companies, local authorities and passenger groups who compile routes and times for all travel in Great Britain by bus, rail, coach and ferry). Community transport schemes will not be included due to their limited and ad hoc nature.
Other relevant information	This could include information such as road capacity, remoteness from other settlements, density of settlement etc.
Summary of Assessment	A summary of why the hamlet should not be assessed using the full settlement hierarchy methodology.

### Question 11

#### Basic Assessment

Do you agree the proposal to limit settlements that contain less than 30 dwellings to a basic assessment?



## 6 Sample Score Sheet of Settlements

**6.1** Sample surveys including scores have been completed for St Neots, Warboys, Stilton and Bythorn. The surveys are based on the proposed indicators outlined in this consultation document. These surveys have been provided as a working example of how the proposed indicators perform and the type of information that will be assessed. It should be noted that the sample surveys have not been through a final quality checking process, the Council proposes that once final indicators have been established, surveys of all settlements will be undertaken and passed to Parish Council's for a final quality check based on local knowledge.

**6.2** In summary the settlements produced the following scores:

- St Neots - 416
- Warboys - 214
- Stilton - 176
- Bythorn - 78

**Table 3 St Neots**

REF	INDICATOR	RESULT	SCORE
H4	Time taken to an accident and emergency department from settlement by car.	18min to Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, Hinchingsbrooke Park, Huntingdon, PE29 6NT.	12
H7 & H8	Number of GP surgeries in settlement and access to GP surgeries.	5 GPs • St Neots Health Centre, 24 Moore's Walk, PE19 1AG • Cedar House Surgery, 14 Huntingdon Street, PE19 1BQ • Almond Road Surgery, Almond Road, PE19 1DZ • Lakeside at St Neots, 274 Great North Road, PE19 8BB • Dumbelton Medical Centre, Chapman Way, PE19 2HD	20
H11 & H12	Number of pharmacies in settlement and access to a pharmacy	5 pharmacies • Boots – 33 High Street, PE19 1BW • Well ST Neots – 14 Huntingdon Street, PE19 1BQ • Tesco Pharmacy – Barford Road, PE19 2SA • Lloyds Pharmacy – 271 Great North Road, PE19 8BB • Loves Farm Pharmacy – 5 Kester Way, PE19 6SL	20
E3	Number of pre-schools or nurseries in settlement.	7 pre-schools or nurseries • Treetops Nursery - Marlborough Road, PE19 8YP • Little Acorns - Ernulf Academy, Barford Road, PE19 2SH • Apricot Day Nursery, Longsands Road, PE19 1LQ • Apricot Pre-school - Priory Park Infant School, Almond Road, PE19 1DZ • Priory Park Playgroup - Priory Park Infant School, Almond Road, PE19 1DZ • Round House Pre-School - School Drive, PE19 6AW • Kester Pre-School - 15 Kester Way, PE19 6SL	12

## 6 Sample Score Sheet of Settlements

REF	INDICATOR	RESULT	SCORE
E8	Number of primary schools in a settlement.	4 primary schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Mary's CofE Primary Academy, Wintringham Road, PE19 1NX</li> <li>• Priory Junior School, Longsands Road, PE19 1TF</li> <li>• Priory Park Infant School - Almond Road, PE19 1DZ</li> <li>• The Round House Primary, School Drive, PE19 6AW</li> </ul>	12
E13	Number of secondary schools in a settlement	2 secondary schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longsands Academy (inc. Sixth Form), Longsands Road, PE19 1LQ</li> <li>• Ernulf Academy, Barford Road, PE19 2SH</li> </ul>	20
S2	Presence of bank/building society, Post Office, or free cash machine in settlement.	Presence of ATM, Post Office and bank/building society <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ATM - Cardtronics at Waitrose - Priory Lane, PE19 2BH</li> <li>• Bank - Barclays Bank, 39-43 High Street, PE19 1AS*</li> <li>• Bank - Halifax, 38 High Street, PE19 1BJ*</li> <li>• Bank - HSBC - 5 High Street, PE19 1DE*</li> <li>• Bank - Santander - 56 Market Square, PE19 2HL*</li> <li>• Bank - Lloyds - 17-19 Market Square, PE19 2BQ*</li> <li>• Bank - Nationwide - 5 Market Square, PE19 2AR*</li> <li>• Bank - Yorkshire Building Society - 1 High Street, St Neots, PE19 1BU</li> <li>• Post Office - 35 High Street, PE19 1NL</li> </ul> * Including free ATM	20
S6	Identification of convenience store by type	Presence of superstore, large foodstore/supermarket, small convenience store and single themed store  <u>Superstores</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Tesco Superstore, Barford road, PE19 2SA</li> <li>· Waitrose, Bec Road/Priory Lane, PE19 2BH</li> </ul> <u>Supermarket</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Iceland, 31 Market Square, PE19 2AR</li> <li>· Lidl Foodstore, 29 Great North Road, PE19 8EN</li> <li>· Lidl, Cambridge Street, PE19 1JP</li> <li>· Co-operative Food, Great North Road, Eaton Socon, PE19 8FT</li> <li>· M&amp;S Foodhall, 49 High Street, St Neots, PE19 1BN</li> <li>· Aldi, Unit 1 Quora Retail Park, Howard Road, Eaton Socon, St Neots, Cambs, PE19 8EX</li> </ul> <u>Small convenience</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· One Stop Store, 29 St Neots Road, Pe19 7BA</li> </ul>	40

REF	INDICATOR	RESULT	SCORE
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Morrisons Daily, 3 Bishops Road, PE19 2QA</li> <li>·Premier Stores, 194-198 Great North Road, PE19 2UE</li> <li>·One Stop, 44 Berkely Street, PE19 2ND</li> <li>·Tesco Express, 7 Kester Way, PE19 6SL</li> <li>·Tesco Express, 151, Great North Road, PE19 8EJ</li> <li>·Ser &amp; Beri food and wines, 9 South Street, St Neots</li> </ul> <p><u>Single themed store</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·The Bakers Best/ St Neots Bakery, 10 Moore's Walk, St Neots, PE19 1AG</li> <li>·Gilberts Family Butchers, 2-4 New Street, PE19 1AE</li> </ul>	
S9	Diversity of comparison and other stores in settlement. One store identified only for each category	<p>9 categories</p> <p><u>Non-specialised stores</u></p> <p>B&amp;M, Quora Retail Park, Howard Road, St Neots, PE19 8ET</p> <p><u>Textile, clothing and footwear stores</u></p> <p>M &amp; Co, 25-27, Market Square, St Neots, Cambs, PE19 2AR</p> <p><u>Household goods stores</u></p> <p>Brittains the Furnishers, 58 - 62 High Street, St. Neots, Cambridgeshire, PE19 1JQ</p> <p><u>Pharmaceutical, medical, cosmetic &amp; toilet articles</u></p> <p>Boots, 29-33, High Street, PE19 1BN</p> <p><u>Other retail sale in specialised stores</u></p> <p>Entertainment Base, 37a Market Square, St. Neots PE19 2AR</p> <p><u>Books, newspapers and stationery</u></p> <p>The Works, 27, High Street, PE19 1BU</p> <p><u>Sporting equipment, games and toys</u></p> <p>Mountain Warehouse, 41, Market Square, PE19 2AR</p> <p><u>Other retail sales in specialised stores not classified elsewhere</u></p> <p>Pets Corner, 14/16, Moores Walk, PE19 1AG</p> <p><u>Accountancy and estate agents</u></p> <p>Lovett Sales &amp; Lettings, 24 Market Square, St. Neots, Cambridgeshire PE19 2AF</p>	20
S11	Number of restaurants, cafés and takeaways in settlement. Takeaways to be counted once despite the number present in a settlement.	<p>Restaurants, Cafes &amp; Take Aways Present (Does not include all present in the area)</p> <p><u>Restaurants &amp; Cafes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Hong Kong, 16 Market Square, PE19 2AF</li> <li>· Buffalo, 20-22 Huntingdon Street, PE19 1BB</li> </ul>	10

## 6 Sample Score Sheet of Settlements

REF	INDICATOR	RESULT	SCORE
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Nawab Lounge, 3 South Street, PE19 2BW</li> <li>· Bosphorus, 46 Market Square, PE19 2AF</li> <li>· Café Nero, 50 Market Square, PE19 2AA</li> <li>· Abkar Tandoori, 99 Great North Road, PE19 8EL</li> <li>· Ambience Cafe &amp; Kiosk, Riverside Park, PE19 7AF</li> <li>· Aunties Thai Restaurant 35, Cambridge Street, PE19 1JP</li> <li>· Olive, Montagu Square, PE19 2TL</li> <li>· Pizza Express, Unit 1 At the Rowley Arts Centre, Huntingdon Street, PE19 1BG</li> <li>· Prezzo, Unit 3 At the Rowley Arts Centre, Huntingdon Street, PE19 1BG</li> <li>· Victor Chan Oriental Cuisine, 77 Huntingdon Street, PE19 1DU</li> <li>· No. 6 Restaurant, New Street, St Neots, PE19 1AE</li> <li>· Il Girasole, 13 South Street St Neots, XXXX</li> <li>· La Cucina, 42 Market Square, St Neots, PE19 2AF</li> <li>· Bohemia, Cross Keys Mews, Market Square, PE19 2AR</li> <li>· Betty Bumbles Vintage Tea Rooms, 30 Market Square, PE19 2AF</li> <li>· Poppy Vintage Tea Room, 17 Church Walk, St Neots, PE18 1JH</li> <li>· Moore's Walk Café, 20, Moore's Walk, St Neots, Cambs, PE19 1AG</li> <li>· Caffè Nero, 50 Market Square, St Neots, PE19 2AA</li> </ul> <p><u>Takeaways</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Keys Kebab House, 18 Cross Keys Mews, Market Square, PE19 2AR</li> <li>· USA Chicken, 38 Cambridge Street, PE19 1JP</li> <li>· Sea Shell Fish and Chips, 46, High Street, St Neots, Cambs, PE19 1JG</li> </ul>	

REF	INDICATOR	RESULT	SCORE
SL2	Diversity of formal outdoor sports facilities and play	14 Categories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 ATP Full Size</li> <li>• ATP Training Size</li> <li>• 3 Outdoor Bowls</li> <li>• 10 Tennis Courts</li> <li>• 2 Cricket Pitches</li> <li>• MUGA</li> <li>• Skate Park</li> <li>• 7 Rugby Pitches Senior</li> <li>• 5 Rugby Pitches Junior</li> <li>• 1 Universal Grass Pitch</li> <li>• 11 Football Senior</li> <li>• 5 Football Youth/9v9</li> <li>• 6 Football Mini</li> <li>• 1 Golf Course - 18 Holes</li> </ul>	20
SL5	Diversity of formal indoor sports facilities	8 Categories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 Sports Hall Courts</li> <li>• Swimming Pool</li> <li>• Indoor Bowls Rink</li> <li>• 109 Fitness Stations</li> <li>• 2 Squash Courts</li> <li>• 12 Netball Courts</li> <li>• 3 Activity Halls</li> <li>• 2 Village Halls</li> </ul>	20
SL8	Diversity of open / green spaces	2 Categories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allotments etc: 4</li> <li>• Urban Parks: 51</li> </ul>	8
CC1	Number of cultural buildings and offer	Museum and cinema identified <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Neots Museum, New Street, PE19 1AE</li> <li>• Cineworld Unit 5 At The Rowley Arts Centre, Huntingdon Street, PE19 1BG</li> </ul>	4
CC5	Opening times of library or library facility	Library open 5.5 days - Priory Ln, PE19 2BH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday 9.30am to 5pm</li> <li>• Tuesday 9.30am to 5pm</li> <li>• Wednesday 1.30pm to 7pm</li> <li>• Thursday 9.30am to 5pm</li> <li>• Friday 1pm to 5pm</li> <li>• Saturday 9.30am to 4pm</li> </ul> Also various stops on Mobile Library	10

## 6 Sample Score Sheet of Settlements

REF	INDICATOR	RESULT	SCORE
CC7	Number of community buildings in a settlement	<p>26 Community buildings</p> <p><u>Hall</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jubilee Hall, School Lane, PE19 8HN</li> <li>• Scout Hall, Bedford Street, PE19 1AX</li> <li>• St Neots &amp; District Voluntary Welfare Assoc, Church Walk, PE19 1JH</li> <li>• Scout Hut, Mill Hill Road, PE19 7AQ</li> </ul> <p>Children's Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Butterfly Children's Centre Winhills Primary School, Cromwell Road, PE19 2EY</li> <li>• Eaton Socon Children's Centre Bushmead Primary School, Bushmead Road, PE19 8BT</li> </ul> <p><u>Community Centre</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eatons Community Centre, The Maltings, PE19 8ES</li> <li>• Loves Farm House, 17 Kester Way, PE19 6SL</li> <li>• Priory Centre, Priory Lane, PE19 2BH</li> <li>• St Johns Ambulance Headquarters, Cemetery Road, PE19 2BX</li> <li>• Steve Van De Kerkhove Community Centre, Cemetery Road, PE19 2BX</li> </ul> <p><u>Pavilion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eaton Socon Sports Club, River Road, PE19 7AU</li> </ul> <p><u>Faith</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Neots Evangelical Church, Cambridge St, PE19 1PL</li> <li>• St Neots Parish Church, Church St, PE19 2BU</li> <li>• St Mary the Virgin, The Parish Church of Eynesbury, St Mary's St, PE19 2NA</li> <li>• Opendoor Church Centre, 31A St Neots Rd, PE19 7BA</li> <li>• River Church St Neots, The Maltings, PE19 8ES</li> <li>• Berkley Street Methodist Church, 10 Berkley St, PE19 2NB</li> <li>• St Neots Spiritualist Church, St Neots Voluntary Welfare Association, Church Walk, PE19 1JH</li> <li>• New Street Baptist Church, 22 New St, PE19 1AE</li> <li>• St Neots United Reformed Church URC, High St, Tebbutts Rd, PE19 1BN</li> <li>• St Joseph's RC Church, No5, Priory park, 39 East St, PE19 1JU</li> <li>• St Mary's Church, Eaton Socon, Great N Rd, PE19 8EJ</li> <li>• Kingdom Hall Jehovah's Witness, Bushmead Rd, PE19 8BT</li> <li>• Eaton Ford Methodist Church, 38-110 St Neots Rd, PE19 7BA</li> </ul> <p><u>Ex Services</u></p> <p>Eaton Socon Ex Services Club, 20 School Ln, PE19 8GW</p>	10

REF	INDICATOR	RESULT	SCORE
CC10	Number of public houses in settlement	<p>Public houses (Does not include a full list of all public houses in the settlement)</p> <p>Olde Sun, 11 Huntingdon Street, PE19 1BL</p> <p>Weeping Ash, 15 New Street, PE19 1AD</p> <p>Pig n Falcon, 9 New Street, PE19 1AE</p> <p>Hyde Park, New Street, PE19 1AJ</p> <p>Bridge House, Market Place, PE19 2AP</p> <p>Bulls Head, Cambridge Street, PE19 1PJ</p> <p>Barley Mow, 27 Crosshall Road, PE19 7AB</p> <p>Hare and Hounds, Berkeley Street, PE19 2TX</p> <p>The Cambridgeshire Hunter, 64 Berkeley Street, PE19 2NF</p> <p>Eaton Oak, Crosshall Road/Great North Road, PE19 7DB</p> <p>George and Dragon, 267 Great North Road, PE19 8BL</p> <p>River Mill, School Lane, PE19 8GW</p> <p>The Waggon &amp; Horses, 184 Great North Road, PE19 8EF</p> <p>The Old Sun, 161 Great North Road, PE19 8EQ</p> <p>The Millers Arms, 38 Ackerman Street, PE19 8HR</p> <p>The White Horse, 103 Great North Road, PE19 8EL</p> <p>Highwayman, Colmworth Business Park, PE19 8YP</p> <p>The Crown, 1 Great North Road, PE19</p>	10
T4	Frequency of bus service	<p>Stop Id: 0500HSTNS015</p> <p>Grade: B+</p>	16
T5	Presence of railway station	St Neots Train Station	20
T9	Time taken to principal road network	8 mins to A428 at Cambridge Road/B1428 Junction	12
C2	Coverage of broadband service across a settlement	<p>Identified postcode: PE19 1BG</p> <p>Available broadband: Ultrafast</p>	20
C5	Number of service providers that provide 'good' (named as green)	<p>Identified postcode: PE19 1BG</p> <p>4 green</p>	20

## 6 Sample Score Sheet of Settlements

REF	INDICATOR	RESULT	SCORE
	indoor 4G voice coverage in settlement		
EM2	Time taken to nearest Established Employment Area or market town by private motorised vehicle	St Neots is a market town. So time taken is 0mins.	20
EM4	Number of businesses in settlement	Number of businesses: 1,137 Decile: 10	20
EM7	Number of employees in settlement	Number of employees: 11,125 Decile: 10	20
		Total	416

**Table 4 Warboys**

REF	INDICATOR	RESULT	SCORE
H4	Time taken to an accident and emergency department from settlement by car.	18min to Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, Hinchingsbrooke Park, Huntingdon, PE29 6NT.	12
H7 & H8	Number of GP surgeries in settlement and access to GP surgeries.	1 GP • Moat House Surgery, Beech Close, PE28 2RQ supported by the Moat House Surgery Resource Centre, 3 Popes Lane, PE28 2RN	12
H11 & H12	Number of pharmacies in settlement and access to a pharmacy	1 pharmacy Wards of Warboys – 1 Ramsey Road, PE28 2RW	12
E3	Number of pre-schools or nurseries in settlement.	1 pre-school Warboys Under Fives Pre-School - High Street, PE28 2TA	4
E8	Number of primary schools in a settlement.	1 primary school Warboys Community Primary School, Humberdale Way, PE28 2RX	4
E13	Number of secondary schools in a settlement	No secondary school	0
S2	Presence of bank/building society, Post Office, or free cash machine in settlement.	Presence of ATM and Post Office • ATM - Cardtronics at Spar - 2/4 Mill Green, PE28 2SA • Post Office - 2-4 Mill Green, PE28 2SA	12



REF	INDICATOR	RESULT	SCORE
S6	Identification of convenience store by type	Presence of small convenience store and single themed store <u>Small convenience</u> • Spar, Mill Green, PE28 2SA <u>Single themed store</u> • The Brass Rolling Pin/ T/A Windmill Bakery, 13 High Street, PE28 2RH	12
S9	Diversity of comparison and other stores in settlement. One store identified only for each category	3 categories <u>Textile, clothing and footwear stores</u> Audrey Sirdar Wools and Poppy Range Knitwear, 103 High Street, PE28 2TB <u>Household goods stores</u> Warboys Hardware, 30 High Street, PE28 2RH <u>Pharmaceutical, medical, cosmetic &amp; toilet articles</u> Wards of Warboys, 1 Ramsey Road, PE28 2RW	8
S11	Number of restaurants, cafés and takeaways in settlement. Takeaways to be counted once despite the number present in a settlement.	Take Away (1) • Kims Fish and Chips, 107 High Street, PE28 2TB	2
SL2	Diversity of formal outdoor sports facilities and play	6 Categories • Outdoor Bowls • Tennis Court • Cricket pitch • Football Senior • Football Youth/9v9 • Outdoor Gym	12
SL5	Diversity of formal indoor sports facilities	1 Category • 1 Village Hall	4
SL8	Diversity of open / green spaces	2 Categories • Allotments etc: 1 • Urban Park: 5	8
CC1	Number of cultural buildings and offer	No cultural buildings or offer identified	0
CC5	Opening times of library or library facility	Library open 2.5 days - 48 High St, PE28 2TA • Monday 2pm to 5pm • Tuesday 10am to 1pm • Thursday 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm • Saturday 10am to 1pm	4

## 6 Sample Score Sheet of Settlements

REF	INDICATOR	RESULT	SCORE
CC7	Number of community buildings in a settlement	4 Community buildings <u>Hall</u> • Warboys Parish Centre, High Street, PE28 2TA • Warboys Table Tennis Club, Forge Way, PE28 2TN <u>Faith</u> • Warboys Baptist Church, High St, PE28 2TA • The Methodist Church, 35 High St, PE28 2TA • Church of St Mary Magdalene, Church Rd, PE28 2RJ	4
CC10	Number of public houses in settlement	1 Public house • White heart, 35 High Street, PE28 2TA	2
T4	Frequency of bus service	Stop ID: 0500HWARB008 Grade: D	8
T5	Presence of railway station	No railway station identified	0
T9	Time taken to principal road network	2 mins to A141, at B1040 roundabout	20
C2	Coverage of broadband service across a settlement	Identified postcode: PE28 2TA Available broadband: Superfast	12
C5	Number of service providers that provide 'good' (named as green) indoor 4G voice coverage in settlement	Identified postcode: PE28 2TA 4 green	20
EM2	Time taken to nearest Established Employment Area or market town by private motorised vehicle	5 mins to Warboys Airfield Industrial Estate	20
EM4	Number of businesses in settlement	Number of businesses: 99 Decile: 6	12
EM7	Number of employees in settlement	Number of employees: 441 Decile: 5	10
		Total	214

**Table 5 Stilton**

REF	INDICATOR	RESULT	SCORE
H4	Time taken to an accident and emergency department from settlement by car.	14min to Peterborough City Hospital, Edith Cavell Campus, Bretton Gate, PE3 9GZ.	16
H7 & H8	Number of GP surgeries in settlement and access to GP surgeries.	0 GPs Nearest GP: Lakeside Healthcare, Landsdowne Road, Yaxley, PE7 3JL. 7-12min from centre of settlement	4

REF	INDICATOR	RESULT	SCORE
H11 & H12	Number of pharmacies in settlement and access to a pharmacy	1 pharmacy • Halls the Chemist – Stilton Memorial Hall, 39A North Street, PE7 3RP	12
E3	Number of pre-schools or nurseries in settlement.	1 pre-school/nursery • Stilton Playgroup, Church Street, PE7 3RF	4
E8	Number of primary schools in a settlement.	1 primary school • Stilton CofE Primary School Church Street, PE7 3RF	4
E13	Number of secondary schools in a settlement	No secondary school	0
S2	Presence of bank/building society , Post Office, or free cash machine in settlement.	Presence of ATM and Post Office • ATM - Yourcash at Nisa - 4 Church Street, PE7 3RF • Post Office - 4 Church Street, PE7 3RF	12
S6	Identification of convenience store by type	Presence of small convenience store <u>Small convenience</u> • Nisa Local – 4 Church Street, PE7 3RF	8
S9	Diversity of comparison and other stores in settlement. One store identified only for each category	1 category <u>Pharmaceutical, medical, cosmetic &amp; toilet articles</u> Halls the Chemist – Stilton Memorial Hall, 39A North Street, PE7 3RP	4
S11	Number of restaurants, cafés and takeaways in settlement. Takeaways to be counted once despite the number present in a settlement.	Restaurant (1) • The Angel Spice, 2-4 High Street, PE7 3RA	2
SL2	Diversity of formal outdoor sports facilities and play	2 Categories • Skate park • Football Senior	8
SL5	Diversity of formal indoor sports facilities	No indoor sports facilities	0
SL8	Diversity of open / green spaces	2 Open Spaces, 1 category • Urban Park: 2	4
CC1	Number of cultural buildings and offer	No cultural buildings or offer identified	0
CC5	Opening times of library or library facility	Mobile library every 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday	2
CC7	Number of community buildings in a settlement	2 Community buildings <u>Hall</u> • Stilton Memorial Hall 39a, North Street, PE7 3RR <u>Faith</u> • St Mary Magdalene Church, Church St, PE7 3RF	2

## 6 Sample Score Sheet of Settlements

REF	INDICATOR	RESULT	SCORE
CC10	Number of public houses in settlement	3 Public houses • Talbot Inn, 5 North Street, PE7 3RP • Bell Inn, Old Great North Road, PE7 3RA • S Bar, 2-4 High Street, PE7 3FJ	6
T4	Frequency of bus service	Stop ID: 0500HSTIL010 Grade: C	12
T5	Presence of railway station	No railway station identified	0
T9	Time taken to principal road network	3 min to A1(M)	20
C2	Coverage of broadband service across a settlement	Identified postcode: PE7 3XG Available broadband: Superfast	12
C5	Number of service providers that provide 'good' (named as green) indoor 4G voice coverage in settlement	Identified postcode: PE7 3XG 2 green (O2 and Vodafone) and 2 amber (EE and Three)	12
EM2	Time taken to nearest Established Employment Area or market town by private motorised vehicle	8 to 12 mins to Old Great North Road Industrial Estate	16
EM4	Number of businesses in settlement	Number of businesses: 54 Decile: 4	8
EM7	Number of employees in settlement	Number of employees: 326 Decile: 4	8
		Total	176

**Table 6 Bythorn**

REF	INDICATOR	RESULT	SCORE
H4	Time taken to an accident and emergency department from settlement by car.	18 min to Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, Hinchingsbrooke Park, Huntingdon, PE29 6NT.	12
H7 & H8	Number of GP surgeries in settlement and access to GP surgeries.	0 GPs Nearest GP: The Meadows Surgery, Thrapston 12min from centre of settlement	4
H11 & H12	Number of pharmacies in settlement and access to a pharmacy	0 pharmacies in settlement Thrapston pharmacy – 46 High Street, NN14 4JH: 8-12min away	4
E3	Number of pre-schools or nurseries in settlement.	No pre-schools or nurseries	0

REF	INDICATOR	RESULT	SCORE
E8	Number of primary schools in a settlement.	No primary school	0
E13	Number of secondary schools in a settlement	No secondary school	0
S2	Presence of bank/building society , Post Office, or free cash machine in settlement.	No ATM, Post Office or bank/building society	0
S6	Identification of convenience store by type	No convenience stores	0
S9	Diversity of comparison and other stores in settlement. One store identified only for each category	0 categories	0
S11	Number of restaurants, cafés and takeaways in settlement. Takeaways to be counted once despite the number present in a settlement.	No restaurants, cafes or takeaways	0
SL2	Diversity of formal outdoor sports facilities and play	No outdoor sports facilities	0
SL5	Diversity of formal indoor sports facilities	No indoor sports facilities	0
SL8	Diversity of open / green spaces	1 Open Space, 1 Category · Urban Park: 1	4
CC1	Number of cultural buildings and offer	No cultural buildings or offer identified	0
CC5	Opening times of library or library facility	No library or library facility identified	0
CC7	Number of community buildings in a settlement	2 Community buildings <u>Hall</u> • Village Hall, Bythorn, PE28 0QR <u>Faith</u> • Church of St Lawrence, Church Ln, PE28 0QW	2
CC10	Number of public houses in settlement	No public houses identified	0
T4	Frequency of bus service	No stops identified	0
T5	Presence of railway station	No railway station identified	0
T9	Time taken to principal road network	3 mins to A14, Toll Bar Lane Junction	20

## 6 Sample Score Sheet of Settlements

REF	INDICATOR	RESULT	SCORE
C2	Coverage of broadband service across a settlement	Identified postcode: PE28 0QW Available broadband: Superfast	12
C5	Number of service providers that provide 'good' (named as green) indoor 4G voice coverage in settlement	Identified postcode: PE28 0QW 1 green (EE) and 3 amber (Three, O2 and Vodafone)	8
EM2	Time taken to nearest Established Employment Area or market town by private motorised vehicle	14 to 22 mins to Hinchingsbrooke Business Park	8
EM4	Number of businesses in settlement	Number of businesses: 10 Decile: 1	2
EM7	Number of employees in settlement	Number of employees: 14 Decile: 1	2
		Total	78

## 7 Next Steps

- 7.1** After consultation closes the Council will read all comments submitted and amend the settlement hierarchy methodology where necessary. The comments and any changes made will be summarised in the Council's Statement of Consultation. Once finalised the Council will assess each settlement using the final indicators. Draft versions of the assessment will be sent to each relevant Town or Parish Council for review prior to finalisation. The final assessments will inform the next stage of plan making and be published as part of the supporting evidence.
- 7.2** The settlement hierarchy assessment outcomes will help inform preparation of the development strategy for the updated Local Plan. Therefore, to establish and refine a settlement hierarchy based on the assessment of settlements a number of further studies will need to be produced and outcomes taken into account. These documents include, but are not limited to:
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessments
  - Strategic Transport Assessments
  - Housing Need Assessment - based on the Government's [Standard Method](#)
  - Infrastructure Needs Assessment
- 7.3** These documents will identify the amount of land required for growth and will also identify constraints or opportunities which could promote or demote certain settlements within a settlement hierarchy. In combination with the assessment of settlements and the evidence-based documents above, a proposed settlement hierarchy will be identified and consulted on in the Council's Local Plan Options Document.

## 8 Appendices -Data Scoping and Refinement

**8.1** The following Appendices set out the range of potential indicators and their associated data sources that were considered during preparation of this proposed methodology. The potential indicators for each topic area and sub-topic are presented in a series of tables. Each is supported by explanatory text detailing the consideration of each potential indicator and setting out the reasoning for why the preferred indicators were chosen.

### Appendix 1 - Health

#### Step One - Identification of Criteria

- 8.2** A key objective of the Government's definition of sustainable development is to ensure that planning fulfills a social objective<sup>(16)</sup> that reflects current and future needs and supports the health and well-being of the community.
- 8.3** Contributors to health and well-being come in a variety of forms which all work together to improve the quality of life of residents. Interventions include creating well designed places which encourage cycling and walking<sup>(17)</sup> and mixed-use developments that promote social interaction. Interventions such as these specifically influence the design and layout of new developments and will be addressed through the Council's planning policies. In order to determine the factors that contribute towards the health of existing communities and reflect the sustainability of current settlements it is important to address the issue of what services and facilities already exists within the area.
- 8.4** [The RTPI Research Paper: Settlement Patterns, Urban Form & Sustainability - An Evidence Review \(May 2018\)](#) (RTPI Evidence Review 2018) notes that lack of access to healthcare services such as hospitals and doctors surgeries can "lead rural patients to experience poorer health outcomes than those living in urban areas. [In addition] Healthcare facilities which serve rural and dispersed populations can struggle to attract GP trainees, and face challenges in providing healthcare over a wide geographical area" (page 38). This highlights the importance of access to services such as hospitals, accident and emergency facilities, GP surgeries and pharmacies. Access to these services ensures adequate healthcare provision in settlements across the district. The further residents have to travel to access these facilities, the greater the risk that residents will experience poorer health outcomes leading to health inequality across the district. Therefore, reasonable criteria for assessment would be hospitals, accident and emergency departments, GP surgeries and pharmacies.

#### Step Two and Three - Data Scoping, Data Elimination and Refinement

**8.5** This section looks at each of the criteria for assessment identified in Step One and reviews the potential indicators identified through a data scoping exercise. Preferred indicators are then refined based on available and suitable data sources to inform the final proposed indicator which can be found in 5 'Settlement Hierarchy Proposed Methodology'.

#### Hospitals and Accident and Emergency Departments

**Table 7 Potential Indicators - Hospitals and Accident and Emergency Departments**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
H1	Hospital	Presence of a hospital in settlement.	Identification of all hospitals in Huntingdonshire.	NHS: <a href="#">Find a Hospital tool</a>

16 Paragraph 8b of the [NPPF](#)

17 Paragraph 92a of the [NPPF](#)



Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
H2	Hospital	Access to a hospital.	Identification of all hospitals in Huntingdonshire and the surrounding areas. Measure distance or time taken by car from the mid-point of a settlement to the location of the nearest hospital.	NHS: <a href="#">Find a Hospital tool</a>
H3	Accident and Emergency Departments	Presence of an accident and emergency department in settlement.	Identification of all accident and emergency departments in Huntingdonshire.	NHS: <a href="#">Find accident and emergency services tool</a>
H4	Accident and Emergency Departments	Time taken to an accident and emergency department from settlement by car.	Identification of all accident and emergency departments in Huntingdonshire and the surroundings areas. Measure distance or time taken by car from the mid-point of a settlement to the location of the nearest accident and emergency department.	NHS: <a href="#">Find accident and emergency services tool</a>
H5	Accident and Emergency Departments	Ambulance response time to settlement.	The average time it takes from receiving a 999 call to a vehicle arriving at a specific settlement.	NHS: <a href="#">Ambulance Quality Indicators</a>

- 8.6** The healthcare system is made up of many public and private healthcare providers. A study by the Commission on the Future of Health and Social Care in England estimated that roughly 11 per cent of the UK population has some form of private medical insurance with varying degrees of medical cover<sup>(18)</sup>. Looking for the presence of all types of hospitals (NHS and private) within the district would not be representative of general population usage as private hospitals would be financially inaccessible for a large percentage of the population. Therefore, it is considered that indicators *H1 Presence of a hospital in settlement* and *H2 Access to a hospital* (found in Appendix 1) would not be an appropriate means of assessment if all hospitals were taken into account.
- 8.7** If indicator H1 was refined to include solely the presence of and distance to NHS hospitals, this would provide a limited indication of sustainability. Due to the way the NHS distributes hospital healthcare (The Kings Trust notes that: as of October 2019 there were 223 trusts some of which run more than one hospital<sup>(19)</sup>), NHS hospitals tend to be located within larger areas and population centres. Identifying the presence of a hospital in a settlement would indicate a larger settlement within the district and demonstrate a higher health service provision, but provide little additional information of the sustainability of nearby settlements. It is therefore considered that applying indicator H1 would still not represent an appropriate measure of sustainability.
- 8.8** Reducing the scope of indicator H2 to assess the distance or time taken to reach an NHS hospital would be a more useful measure of accessibility to health infrastructure. The indicator could be used to assess how easy it is for outpatients in settlements to access health care and could be measured by public transport. However this indicator presents two issues, firstly outpatient facilities e.g. eye clinics are not always located at a hospital which would make it difficult to identify where people may be travelling to and; secondly, for those who may find it difficult to travel to a hospital [free patient transport](#) can be provided. Therefore, It is considered more appropriate to assess the sustainability of a settlement based on access to accident and emergency departments. Adequate access to urgent and emergency care enables the NHS to address health inequalities and outcomes between different settlements and socio-economic groups<sup>(20)</sup>.

18 [Commission on the Future of Health and Social Care in England: The UK private health market \(2014\)](#)  
 19 <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/audio-video/key-facts-figures-nhs>  
 20 [Transforming urgent and emergency care services in England 2014](#)

- 8.9 As with indicator H1 the presence of an accident and emergency department in a settlement (indicator H3) would indicate a larger settlement within the district and demonstrate a higher health service provision, but provides little additional information on the sustainability of nearby settlements. It is therefore considered that applying indicator H3 would still not represent an appropriate measure of sustainability.
- 8.10 One of the measures that the NHS uses to measure performance and efficiency of urgent and emergency care is the time it takes from receiving a 999 call to a vehicle arriving at the patient's location. Calls are triaged into four categories according to the patient's condition. Ambulances are expected to reach people with life-threatening illnesses or injuries (category 1) in an average time of seven minutes. <sup>(21)</sup> Unfortunately, the data is only published at regional level and cannot be linked to individual settlements meaning indicator 'H5 - Ambulance response time to settlement' cannot be used to assess settlement level accessibility.
- 8.11 Indicator *H4 Time taken to an accident and emergency department from settlement by car* provides the option of assessing access to accident to emergency via distance to, or time taken. It is considered that the time taken to access accident and emergency would be a more preferable indicator than the actual distance travelled as the metric would be able to take into account limitations such as travel time on rural roads and congestion whilst still reflecting the benefits of indicator H5 and the NHS targets that it represents. **Therefore the chosen indicator is indicator H4 with a focus on time taken by car and not distance.**
- 8.12 In order to refine indicator H4 and to provide a means of scoring each settlement, further research was undertaken on the optimum response time for ambulances to reach people with life-threatening illnesses or injuries (category 1). The optimum response time for an ambulance responding to a category 1 emergency is 7 minutes<sup>(22)</sup>. It would be difficult to estimate the distance covered in seven minutes and equate this to a metric due to the fact that emergency services are not only allowed to travel faster than the legal speed limits (when safety allows), but also because the departure point of that ambulance may not be the accident and emergency department, or the settlement.
- 8.13 Furthermore it cannot be reasonably or safely argued that the general population should reach an accident and emergency department within the NHS target of 7 minutes. Therefore an alternative optimum time to reach an accident and emergency department should be established. The Department for Transport (DfT) publishes statistics and data of journey times to key services including health care facilities<sup>(23)</sup>. Although the publication of these statistics are currently suspended and will be reviewed, the data provides an insight into average travel times and can be used as a guide to determine optimal travel times to services. The DfT identifies a threshold of 15 minutes for access to GP surgeries, primary schools and food stores<sup>(24)</sup>.
- 8.14 The Health Foundation and Nuffield Trust produced [Quality Watch: Focussing on distance from home to emergency care](#) (2014), the report focused on distance from home to emergency care and notes that "on average, the distance between a person's home and the hospital at which they receive an emergency admission is around 30 per cent shorter than the distance that they are prepared to travel for other trips, such as travelling to work, education, shopping or leisure." (page 34).
- 8.15 Reducing the DfT threshold of 15 minutes for access to GP surgeries, primary schools and food stores by 30% (as indicated by The Health Foundation and Nuffield Trust Quality Watch report) equates to a 10.5 minute journey time. Therefore 10 minutes has been chosen as the optimal travel time with a graduated scoring system of 5 minute intervals which awards lesser points to settlements that are further away. The lowest denominator is considered to be a 30 minute travel time. This is supported by findings in the DfT [accessibility statistics](#) that do not measure anything above a 30 minute travel time.
- 8.16 As DfT data is only available at Lower Super Output Area it cannot be used to determine travel times to the smaller settlements within the District. As a result, journey time will be measured through the means of Google maps which has the functionality of taking into account average journey times and speed limits by road and not straight line distance. The time taken to reach accident and emergency will be measured

21 <https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/resource/ambulance-response-times>

22 <https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/resource/ambulance-response-times>

23 <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/journey-time-statistics>

24 DfT: [Journey Time Statistics 2013](#)

by journey time by car from the centre of a settlement using the NHS: [Find accident and emergency services tool](#) assuming that in an emergency most people would travel by car and not walk or use public transport due to the urgency of the situation. Emergency services can be located outside of the district.

- 8.17** It is considered that the final indicator meets the NPPFs principles of sustainable development through the social objective of providing accessible services (paragraph 8).

## GP Surgeries

**Table 8 Potential Indicators - GP Surgeries**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
H6	GP Surgeries	Presence of a GP surgery in settlement.	Identification of all GP surgeries in Huntingdonshire.	NHS: <a href="#">Find a GP tool</a>
H7	GP Surgeries	Number of GP surgeries in settlement.	Identification of all GP surgeries in Huntingdonshire. Count of number of GP surgeries in a settlement	NHS: <a href="#">Find a GP tool</a>
H8	GP Surgeries	Access to a GP surgery.	Identification of all GP surgeries in Huntingdonshire and the surrounding areas. Measure distance or time taken by car from the mid-point of a settlement to the location of the nearest GP surgery.	NHS: <a href="#">Find a GP tool</a>
H9	GP Surgeries	Availability of GP surgery in settlement.	Identification of the presence of a GP surgery within a settlement and its opening times.	NHS: <a href="#">Find a GP tool</a>

- 8.18** Delivering healthcare through a wide range of mediums including in people’s own homes, in community clinics, community centres and schools means that overall healthcare provision in individual settlements will be difficult to gauge. These services are less visible than services delivered through GP surgeries. Therefore it is reasonable to argue that the final indicator should focus on GP surgeries with the assumption that they will be located in accessible locations and be available for the wider population. This is supported by findings from the [NHS Long-Term Plan 2019](#) which notes that locating GP surgeries in accessible locations enables GP practices to recruit and retain staff more easily<sup>(25)</sup> and manage financial and estates pressures.

- 8.19** Indicator *H6 - Presence of a GP Surgery in settlement* is not considered to be a reasonable method for assessing healthcare provision in a settlement. Due to the population of settlements, it is likely that larger populations will require more than one GP surgery to service its population.

- 8.20** Indicator H9 - Availability of GP surgery in settlement would identify the presence of a GP surgery in a settlement and its opening times. The opening hours could identify the capacity of a GP Surgery to serve a wider population and indicate the importance of the settlement as a central healthcare hub for other rural settlements. However, using this method of assessment would prove overly complicated if a settlement has more than one GP surgery. Indicator H9 is therefore not considered appropriate.

- 8.21** The [NHS Long-Term Plan 2019](#) sets out a plan for healthcare provision; GP practices in England have come together to establish around 1,300 Primary Care Networks covering populations of approximately 30–50,000 patients each. These networks will work towards delivering a wider range of services across a larger area including enhanced health in care homes, anticipatory care (with community services), personalised care and involve a wider set of staff roles than might be feasible in individual practices. For example, first contact physiotherapy, extended access and social prescribing. These networks will be the footprint around which integrated community-based teams will develop, and community and mental health

<sup>25</sup> The NHS Long-Term Plan sets out an aim to produce a [workforce implementation plan](#) which will address the issues of hard-to-recruit to geographies among other issues.

services will be expected to configure their services within Primary Care Network boundaries. Indicator *H7 - Number of GP surgeries in settlement* would help to reflect the intentions of the NHS Long-Term Plan 2019 as settlements with more GP surgeries would indicate a wider availability of healthcare service provision in the area.

- 8.22** It is also known that smaller settlements may not have their own GP surgery and residents may have to travel to reach healthcare. GP surgeries located in less accessible locations restricts the NHS from recruiting and retaining staff easily.<sup>(26)</sup> It is therefore considered that to assess access to healthcare provision in settlements with no GP surgery that an additional level of assessment should be included alongside indicator H7. As such indicator *H7 - Number of GP surgeries in settlement* should be combined with indicator *H8 - Access to a GP surgery* (which measures the distance or time taken by car from the mid-point of a settlement to the location of the nearest GP surgery). The time taken to access a GP surgery is more preferable than the actual distance travelled as this measurement can take into account limitations such as travel time on rural roads and congestion
- 8.23** The proposed indicator should therefore count the number of GP surgeries in a settlement using the NHS: [Find a GP tool](#); a settlement with 4 or more surgeries representing a wide range of healthcare services and settlements with 1 GP surgery representing adequate healthcare provision. Settlements with no GP surgery should be assessed by distance to a GP surgery (which could be located outside the district) as guided by the Department for Transport's Journey Time Statistics. **This would make the final indicator *H7 & H8 Number of GP surgeries in settlement and access to GP surgeries*.**
- 8.24** The Department for Transport (DfT) publishes statistics and data on journey times to key services including GP surgeries<sup>(27)</sup>. In general the Journey Time statistics consider that an acceptable travel time to GP Surgeries is within 15 minutes<sup>(28)</sup>. Therefore 15 minutes has been chosen as the maximum travel time to a GP surgery before a settlement is considered to have inadequate access to healthcare services. As the NHS anticipates that GP surgeries may cover a wider population area travel time will be measured by journey time by car.
- 8.25** It is considered that the proposed indicator meets the NPPF's principles of sustainable development through the social objective of providing accessible services (paragraph 8) not only in distance but through the number of GP surgeries which can be used to represent a wider provision of healthcare services. The indicator also meets NPPG guidance to create and maintain healthy communities<sup>(29)</sup> by reducing inequalities and providing greater access to first contact health services and reducing the impact on emergency services and hospital care through early intervention.

### Pharmacies

**Table 9 Potential Indicators - Pharmacies**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
H10	Pharmacies	Presence of a pharmacy in settlement.	Identification of all pharmacies in Huntingdonshire.	NHS: <a href="#">Find a pharmacy tool</a> (includes pharmacies not linked to GP surgeries e.g. Boots.
H11	Pharmacies	Number of pharmacies in settlement.	Identification of all pharmacies in Huntingdonshire. Count of number of pharmacies in a settlement	NHS: <a href="#">Find a pharmacy tool</a> (includes pharmacies not linked to GP surgeries e.g. Boots.

26 The NHS Long-Term Plan 2019 sets out an aim to produce a [workforce implementation plan](#) which will address the issues of hard-to-recruit to geographies among other issues.

27 DfT [Journey Time Statistics](#)

28 DfT [Accessibility Statistics 2013](#)

29 NPPG [Healthy and Safe Communities](#)

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
H12	Pharmacies	Access to a pharmacy.	Identification of all pharmacies in Huntingdonshire and the surrounding areas. Measure distance or time taken by car from the mid-point of a settlement to the location of the nearest pharmacy.	NHS: <a href="#">Find a pharmacy tool</a> (includes pharmacies not linked to GP surgeries e.g. Boots).
H13	Pharmacies	Availability of a pharmacy in settlement.	Identification of the presence of a pharmacy within a settlement and its opening times.	NHS: <a href="#">Find a pharmacy tool</a> (includes pharmacies not linked to GP surgeries e.g. Boots).

- 8.26 The NHS Long-Term Plan 2019 sets out the need to make greater use of community pharmacists' skills and opportunities to engage patients. The Plan states that from 2019, "NHS 111 will start direct booking into GP practices across the country, as well as referring on to community pharmacies who support urgent care and promote patient self-care and self-management. CCGs [Clinical Commissioning Groups] will also develop pharmacy connection schemes for patients who don't need primary medical services."<sup>(30)</sup>
  
- 8.27 It is proposed that the same approach to assessing pharmacy provision is taken to that of the criterion - GP Surgeries. This means that the proposed indicator for pharmacies is recommended to be a combination of indicators *H11 - Number of pharmacies in settlement* and *H12 - Access to a pharmacy*. **This would make the final indicator *H11 & H12 Number of Pharmacies in settlement and access to Pharmacies*.**
  
- 8.28 The proposed indicator should therefore count the number of pharmacies in a settlement using the NHS: [Find a pharmacy tool](#); a settlement with 4 or more pharmacies representing a wide range and greater access to healthcare services and settlements with 1 pharmacy representing adequate provision. Settlements with no pharmacy should be assessed by distance to a pharmacy (within or outside the district) as guided by the Department for Transport's Journey Time Statistics.
  
- 8.29 It is considered that the proposed indicator would meet the NPPF's principles of sustainable development through the social objective of providing accessible services (paragraph 8) not only in distance but through availability and range of services.

30 Paragraph 1.10 <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/>

## Appendix 2 - Education

### Step One - Identification of Criteria

- 8.30** Paragraph 95 of the NPPF establishes the importance of having a sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities. It notes that "Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education."
- 8.31** Herbert Giradet's *Creating Sustainable Cities*<sup>(31)</sup> emphasises the requirement for sustainable cities to meet their own needs and improve their well-being without jeopardising the living conditions of others (now and in the future). Part of this process includes providing good quality education. This infers that the presence of educational establishments within settlements, the quality of that education and the capacity for future growth to meet future population demand are all important areas for consideration within the settlement hierarchy. Thus, this topic area looks at education criteria across the age spectrum: pre-schools and nurseries, primary schools and secondary schools.
- 8.32** Universities have not been considered as part of this assessment. There are no universities in the Huntingdonshire district; nearby universities include: Cambridge University, Anglia Ruskin University Cambridge and Peterborough Campuses and the University of Bedfordshire, Luton<sup>(32)</sup>. Student's choice of university relies on a number of variables such as availability of suitable courses, qualifications and personal choice. In addition, the option of whether to 'commute' to university or to move onto campus is heavily influenced by factors such as deprivation, public or state education and ethnicity<sup>(33)</sup>. Some young people may also choose vocational based training or prefer to go straight into the workplace. Therefore, the complexities involved in assessing this criteria coupled with the fact that university education is not a legal requirement are considered too great to provide an assessment of any value.

### Step Two and Three - Data Scoping, Data Elimination and Refinement

- 8.33** This section looks at each of the criteria for assessment identified in Step One and reviews the potential indicators identified through a data scoping exercise. Preferred indicators are then refined based on available and suitable data sources to inform the final proposed indicator which can be found in 5 'Settlement Hierarchy Proposed Methodology'.

### Pre-Schools and Nurseries

**Table 10 Potential Indicators - Pre-Schools and Nurseries**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
E1	Pre-Schools and Nurseries	Presence of a pre-school or nurseries in settlement.	Identification and count of all pre-schools and nurseries in settlement.	Cambridgeshire County Council: <a href="#">Directory of Services - Childcare</a>
E2	Pre-Schools and Nurseries	Distance or time taken to nearest pre-school or nursery.	Identification of pre-schools and nurseries in the settlement and the surrounding areas. Measure distance or time taken from the mid-point of a settlement to the location of the primary school.	Cambridgeshire County Council: <a href="#">Directory of Services - Childcare</a>
E3	Pre-Schools and Nurseries	Number of pre-schools and nurseries in settlement.	Identification and count of all pre-schools and nurseries within settlement.	Cambridgeshire County Council: <a href="#">Directory of Services - Childcare</a>

31 Giradet, H. (1999) *Creating Sustainable Cities*. Dartington: Green Books

32 UCAS: [UK Map of Unis and Colleges by Region](#)

33 DfT Press release: [Poorer students over three times more likely to live at home](#), 27 February 2018

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
E4	Pre-Schools and Nurseries	Current catchment demand - catchment versus capacity	Identification of all pre-schools and nurseries including published admission numbers, capacity, number of pupils on roll, surplus/deficit, current catchment demand and catchment versus capacity.	Cambridgeshire County Council Education department
E5	Pre-Schools and Nurseries	Quality of pre-school or nursery.	Identification of all pre-schools and nurseries in the settlement and recording of Ofsted Inspection Report assessment and date of report.	Ofsted: <a href="#">Find an Ofsted Inspection Report</a>

- 8.34** Local childcare is a particular requirement for those with young children. A choice of childcare within a settlement can draw people with young children, or those wishing to have children to an area. The availability of places in pre-schools and nurseries provides an indication of the opportunities available for potential new residents and the sustainability of a settlement to provide services to its existing residents or those working within it.
- 8.35** Cambridgeshire County Council's statutory responsibility in respect of early years and childcare includes: securing sufficient, accessible, flexible and affordable childcare to enable parents to work or to undertake education or training which could lead to employment; a key objective of Government's childcare schemes [House of Commons Treasury Committee Childcare Ninth Report of Session 2017–19](#). Provision of sufficient pre-school and nursery facilities allows families to return to work (where possible or wanted) thus helping to stimulate the economy and improve the prosperity of residents.
- 8.36** Indicator *E4: Current catchment demand - catchment versus capacity* could be used to assess early years provision in a settlement. Cambridgeshire County Council's [Policy for Provision Of Early Years Education and Childcare In Cambridgeshire \(2016\)](#) looks to ensure that all families have access to high-quality early learning and care and that there is a "choice and diversity in the provision available to families with no single model or provider dominating or monopolising the market".<sup>(34)</sup> Unfortunately, research indicates that it would be very difficult to implement indicator E4 as the average number of children attending a pre-school /nursery is difficult to obtain. Data from the DFE: [Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2019](#) notes that figures can only be obtained for state-funded nurseries<sup>(35)</sup>. However, the majority of nurseries are provided as private or community nurseries which are not included in the school census. Schools with a nursery or pre-school attached also record their pupil numbers within the total school pupil numbers and do not separate the figures out as nursery/pre-school and primary pupils. Another option to assess capacity would be to search Ofsted reports, which do identify capacity and the number of pupils on the roll however, the reports/inspections are sporadic and are not conducted every year. As a result, indicator E4 would not be able to provide a comprehensive picture of capacity across all types of pre-school or nursery services.
- 8.37** In the same vein, indicator '*E5 - Quality of pre-school or nursery*' would also be unable to provide an accurate measure of quality due to the sporadic nature of Ofsted reports. In addition, some facilities may have ceased trading or commenced trading between inspections making it difficult to obtain consistent data across all providers.
- 8.38** In order to assess the potential of indicators E1, E2 and E3 it is important to understand the way in which pre-schools and nurseries operate. For children up to the age of five the required staff-pupil ratio varies depending on the age of the child<sup>(36)</sup>:
- children aged under two require at least one member of staff for every three children.

34 Page 2, [Cambridgeshire County Council's Policy For Provision Of Early Years Education And Childcare In Cambridgeshire \(2016\)](#)

35 These are nurseries maintained by the local authority in which they operate

36 Source: [Early years foundation stage statutory framework 2020](#).

- children aged two require at least one member of staff for every four children
- children aged three and over require mostly between 8 and 13 children per member of staff (dependent on qualifications). However, this figure could be greater, depending on the number of children who will reach five within a school year.

**8.39** Therefore, in general, the child capacity for a pre-school / nursery tends to be significantly less than that of a primary school due to higher staff requirements. This means that the proliferation of pre-schools and nurseries tends to be greater than primary schools; smaller settlements that do not have a primary school may still have one or more pre-schools /nurseries.

**8.40** As pre-school and nursery facilities can be more dispersed and decisions on choice of nursery/ pre-school are based on a wide range of parental preferences it is considered that the distance to, or time taken to access these facilities may be difficult to implement. The start and end point for measuring distance or time could be represented by a variety of different routes and options. Although investigating into all routes and options would provide a useful assessment of pre-school and nursery accessibility, the work needed this to achieve this would be labour intensive and only result in a potential average distance travelled or time taken per settlement. It is considered therefore that indicator '*E2 - Distance or time taken to nearest pre-school or nursery*' would result in an over-engineered assessment of accessibility and sustainability.

**8.41** It is considered that **the proposed indicator should be E3 - Number of pre-schools and nurseries in settlement** as opposed to *E1 - Presence of a pre-school or nurseries in settlement*. This is because the capacity of each pre-school or nursery is variable and the presence of one facility would not provide enough detail on the sustainability of a settlement. Indicator E3 provides a greater indication of capacity by highlighting the proliferation of facilities within a settlement and also an indication of the choice of facilities on offer.

**8.42** The assessment of pre-school and nursery provision for indicator E3 will include private childcare facilities (with the exception of those associated with public schools) as well as nurseries and pre-schools associated with schools in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the number of facilities on offer. This allows the indicator to reflect the importance of the private sector and the fact that private childcare tends to operate 51 weeks a year whereas school based nurseries are term-time only, limiting the flexibility for those parents who wish to work, or have other commitments. The report '[Understanding the childcare provider market: implications for educational suppliers](#)' from the Family and Childcare Trust in association with the British Educational Suppliers Association (BESA) estimated that there were 19,500 day nurseries and 7,900 pre-schools, 410 maintained nursery schools and 15,588 state schools with nursery classes in the England in 2016, backing up this assumption.

**8.43** Due to the proliferation of these services it is proposed that the scoring system for indicator E3 should range from 1 to 2 nurseries (which would be expected in small villages) to over 11 (which would be considered suitable for more urban areas). The search will be conducted using Cambridgeshire County Council's [Directory of Services - Childcare](#) which lists all pre-school and nursery providers in the area, categories to be used will include 'Day Nursery', 'Pre School Playgroup' and 'Qualified Nursery Class/School'. It is considered that this indicator meets the NPPF's principles of sustainable development through the social objective of providing accessible services (paragraph 8).

### Primary Schools

**Table 11 Potential Indicators - Primary Schools**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
E6	Primary Schools	Presence of a primary school in settlement.	Identification of a primary school in the settlement.	Cambridgeshire County Council: <a href="#">Directory of Services - Schools</a>



Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
E7	Primary Schools	Distance to or time taken to nearest primary school	Identification of all primary schools in Huntingdonshire and the surrounding areas. Measure distance or time taken from the mid-point of a settlement to the location of the primary school.	Cambridgeshire County Council: <a href="#">Directory of Services - Schools</a>
E8	Primary Schools	Number of primary schools in settlement	Identification and count of all primary schools within settlement.	Cambridgeshire County Council: <a href="#">Directory of Services - Schools</a>
E9	Primary Schools	Current catchment demand - catchment versus capacity	Identification of all primary schools within settlement including published admission number, capacity, number of pupils on roll, surplus/deficit, current catchment demand and catchment versus capacity.	Data to be obtained from Cambridgeshire County Council Education department, or the <a href="#">Department of Education school capacity data</a>
E10	Primary Schools	Quality of primary school provision.	Identification of all primary schools in the settlement and recording of Ofsted Inspection Report assessment and date of Report.	Cambridgeshire County Council: <a href="#">Directory of Services - Schools</a>  Ofsted: <a href="#">Find an Ofsted Inspection Report</a>

**8.44** Plan-makers are required "to work with local authorities with education responsibilities and developers to coordinate the phasing and delivery of housing growth with the delivery of new school places to ensure that sufficient school capacity is available at the right time".<sup>(37)</sup> The Council's Developer Contributions SPD 2011, produced in collaboration with Cambridgeshire County Council, provides the mechanism for the County Council to collect financial contributions to finance the development of new schools or the expansion of existing schools. Larger allocated developments in Huntingdonshire's Local Plan also identify requirements for educational facilities where required. This allows the Council to secure education provision across the district to meet growth.

**8.45** Indicator E7 looks to assess primary school provision by measuring the distance to, or time taken to reach the nearest primary school. However, Cambridgeshire County Council provides [free-school transport](#) to pupils who:

- live within the area where Cambridgeshire is the local council,
- is registered at his or her designated\* school (catchment school)
- lives more than 2 miles from their school; and
- are able to complete the journey in less than 45 minutes.

**8.46** This infers that all Primary Schools should be accessible to all primary school children in Huntingdonshire, because if a school is not within a reasonable distance, free-school transport will be provided<sup>(38)</sup>. It is therefore considered that indicator '*E7 - Distance to or time taken to nearest Primary School*' is not an appropriate indicator as all children should have access to a primary school.

**8.47** As discussed in Step One, the path to sustainable communities includes providing good quality education. Good quality education can reduce inequality and deprivation providing more future economic opportunity for children. Indicator '*E10 Quality of Primary School provision*' could be used to provide a measure of primary school quality, this could be achieved by searching primary school Ofsted reports. Unfortunately, the Ofsted reports/inspections are sporadic and are not conducted every year, this would not provide a consistent or comparable assessment of Primary Schools across the district as the performance may have changed between inspections.

<sup>37</sup> [NPPG: Healthy and Safe Communities](#) Paragraph: 008 Reference ID:53-008-20190722

<sup>38</sup> Excluding those who have chosen not to go to their designated school.

- 8.48** The availability of places could provide an indication of the opportunities available for potential new residents by directing proportionate growth to rural communities in order to support and maintain provision of local services. This could be achieved through indicator *E9 Current catchment demand - catchment versus capacity*. This could provide additional value with regards to the assessment of sustainability by identifying areas that would be capable of taking on smaller more immediate development as opposed to larger scale development that would require the provision of a school on-site. Cambridgeshire County Council can provide information to assess this indicator by providing the following data:
- School Published admission number
  - Capacity
  - Number of pupils on roll
  - Surplus/ deficit (number of pupils versus capacity)
  - Current catchment demand
  - Catchment versus capacity
- 8.49** Catchment and capacity is regularly monitored by Cambridgeshire County Council and where capacity has been reached, Cambridgeshire County Council can request developer contributions to either fund future extensions or improvements to existing schools, or in the case of larger scale development require the provision of a school on-site. Therefore it is considered that proposed indicator '*E9 Current catchment demand - catchment versus capacity*' would represent an over-engineered assessment of a settlement as measures are already in place to deal with under or over capacity of schools as part of the planning and developer contributions process. As such indicator E9 is not considered appropriate.
- 8.50** It is considered that **the proposed indicator should be E8 - Number of primary schools in a settlement** as opposed to *E6 - Presence of a primary school in a settlement* . The Developer contributions SPD 2011 indicates that new developments would typically generate 30-40 primary age children (4-10 year olds) per 100 dwellings and the average state-funded primary school now has 282 pupils on its roll (DFE: [Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2019](#)). This will not be the same for all settlements as it is dependent on County provision, allocation and resources, although, it does provide a rough guide to the size of a settlement and the current provision for residents with young children. Therefore the indicator will score settlements based on the number of primary schools, with a settlement containing 6 or more primary schools scoring 10 points and representing a large settlement capable of providing over 1,600 places. The search will be conducted using Cambridgeshire County Council's [Directory of Services - Schools](#) which lists all state primary schools in the Cambridgeshire area. The assessment will count state primary schools only, private schools are usually only available to those who may be more affluent and therefore do not meet the need of all in the community.
- 8.51** It is considered that this indicator meets NPPF paragraph 79 which states "To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby."

### Secondary Schools

**Table 12 Potential Indicators - Secondary Schools and Further Education**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
E11	Secondary Schools and Further Education	Presence of a secondary school	Identification of a secondary school in the settlement.	Cambridgeshire County Council: <a href="#">Directory of Services - Schools</a>

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
E12	Secondary Schools	Distance to or time taken to nearest secondary school.	Identification of all secondary schools in Huntingdonshire and the surrounding areas. Measure distance or time taken from the mid-point of a settlement to the location of the secondary school.	Cambridgeshire County Council: <a href="#">Directory of Services - Schools</a>
E13	Secondary Schools	Number of secondary schools in settlement	Identification and count of all secondary schools within settlement.	Cambridgeshire County Council: <a href="#">Directory of Services - Schools</a>
E14	Secondary Schools	Current catchment demand - catchment versus capacity	Identification of all secondary schools within settlement including published admission number, capacity, number of pupils on roll, surplus/deficit, current catchment demand and catchment versus capacity.	Data to be obtained from Cambridgeshire County Council Education department, or the <a href="#">Department of Education school capacity data</a>
E15	Secondary Schools	Quality of secondary school	Identification of all secondary schools in the settlement and recording of Ofsted Inspection Report assessment and date of report.	Cambridgeshire County Council: <a href="#">Directory of Services - Schools</a>  Ofsted: <a href="#">Find an Ofsted Inspection Report</a>

**8.52** Cambridgeshire County Council provides [free school transport](#) to pupils under 16 years old who:

- live within the area where Cambridgeshire is the local council,
- is registered at his or her designated\* school (catchment school)
- lives more than 3 miles from their school; and
- are able to complete the journey in less than 1 hour and 15 minutes.

**8.53** Post 16 financial assistance is also available to some pupils from low income households dependent on certain criteria. It is therefore considered that indicator 'E12 - Distance to or time taken to nearest Secondary School' is not an appropriate indicator as all children under 16 should have free transport to secondary education and in the event that financial viability restricts post 16 years pupils from attending secondary education, financial support is also available.

**8.54** It is proposed that the same approach to assessing Secondary School provision is taken to that of the criterion - Primary Schools. **This would make the final indicator E3 Number of Secondary Schools in settlement.**

**8.55** As discussed above, good quality education contributes to the creation of sustainable communities by reducing inequality and deprivation, providing more future economic opportunity for children. Indicator *E15 Quality of Secondary School* could be used to provide a measure of secondary education using Ofsted reports as a source. However these reports are sporadic and would not provide a consistent or comparable assessment of secondary education. The availability of schools also provides an indication of the opportunities available for potential new residents and the capacity of a settlement to provide services to its existing residents and surrounding neighbours, this is because Secondary schools often provide additional benefit to the wider community by providing space for evening community events and groups, evening classes or sports and leisure opportunities.

**8.56** The indicator will score settlements based on the number of secondary schools within a settlement with 2 or more secondary schools scoring 10 points and representing a large settlement capable of providing over 1,930 places. In general across Huntingdonshire most settlements will have no secondary schools and instead rely on County provision of school transport to access nearby facilities, therefore the indicator allocates points based on a limited range (1, or 2 or more) to reflect the limited distribution of secondary education facilities within the district. The assessment will count state secondary schools only, private

schools are usually only available to those who may be more affluent and therefore do not meet the need of all in the community. The search will be conducted using Cambridgeshire County Council's [Directory of Services - Schools](#) which lists all secondary education facilities in the Cambridgeshire area. This indicator meets the NPPF's principles of sustainable development through the social objective of providing accessible services (paragraph 8).

## Appendix 3 - Retail and Services

### Step One - Identification of Criteria

- 8.57** A key requirement of sustainable development is to balance economic and environmental priorities and goals with that of social objectives. The [RTPI Evidence Review 2018](#) established that 'settlement patterns and urban forms' that provide good access and close proximity to a diverse range of retail outlets are thought to encourage healthy ageing and social interaction (page 46). This social aspect, including the need to have accessible services, is also supported by the NPPF. Paragraph 84 d in particular asks that planning policies and decisions enable the "the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship". This section looks specifically at the retail offer and services that settlements can provide for their residents taking into account the current health of the high street, wider retail offer and key requirements that combine to create a sustainable settlement.
- 8.58** The health of the high street and retail offer available within settlements was first impacted throughout the 1970s and 1980s by the decentralisation of shops and economic activity. This resulted in an increase in car dependency and expanded the distance that people had to travel to access services and retail outlets<sup>(39)</sup>. Retail outlets were also impacted by the economic crisis of 2007/8<sup>(40)</sup> many high street staples such as BHS, Comet and Woolworths closed leaving large vacant outlets which struggled to be replaced with continuing financial pressure from online shopping and austerity. The general decline of the retail sector coupled with the effects of austerity and recession led to a lack of retail offer and services within smaller settlements leading to an increase in emissions as people travelled further to reach shops and a separation of disadvantaged groups and rural settlements from access to retail and services, decreasing the quality of life of all involved. It is consequently important to ensure that settlements retain or develop healthy high streets to ensure sustainable development and reduce inequalities and the impact on the environment.
- 8.59** The presence of empty shops on the high street is also known to produce negative effects on mental wellbeing. The Royal Society for Public Health's study [Health on the High Street 2019 - Running on Empty](#) (page 25) noted that clusters of empty shops not only affect the feel of the high street, but give the perceived impression of antisocial behaviour and lack of safety. This creates a negative social impact upon high streets and local centres. Mary Portas also described high streets as at "crisis point" having suffered "many years of erosion, neglect and mismanagement"<sup>(41)</sup>. Once a community hub, in many parts of the UK the high street is now in desperate need of renewal.
- 8.60** In order to identify criteria for assessment of retail and services this Paper looked towards The Royal Society for Public Health's study 'Health on the High Street 2019 - Running on Empty'. The Study identified that the high street provides many benefits to residents ranging from health, social, access to services and advice, and mental wellbeing. Cafés and coffee shops in particular were recognised as providing positive social and mental wellbeing benefits; as were convenience stores.
- 8.61** In addition to more traditional retail and leisure pursuits another common staple of the traditional high street includes financial services such as banks, building societies and post offices. The Government's Treasury Committee launched an inquiry into [Consumers' access to financial services](#) the results of which were published in May 2019. The inquiry noted that between 1988 and 2017 the number of bank branches in the UK decreased from 20,583 to 9,690 some as a result of technological and financial innovation. However, the inquiry also evidenced that while the number of branch visits had reduced, banks still play an important role within local communities. Furthermore, the closure of high street banks impacted more disproportionately on rural communities, those on lower incomes, those with learning disabilities and the elderly.

39 RTPI Research Paper: Settlement Patterns, Urban Form & Sustainability - An Evidence Review (May 2018), page 8.

40 Royal Society for Public Health: [Health on the High Street 2019 - Running on Empty](#)

41 Source: The Portas Review An independent review into the future of our high streets 2011, page 2

- 8.62** People are now also facing a greater challenge in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; many businesses have closed creating a greater shift towards online services, shopping and retail<sup>(42)</sup>. In this context it is considered that access to online food deliveries should also be considered an important aspect of service provision. During COVID-19 many people were faced with self-isolation meaning that access to online food deliveries, or having someone to provide food was essential<sup>(43)</sup> - in rural areas this option may not be as accessible as many think. Therefore, as part of this topic it is considered that accessibility to online deliveries should also be considered in terms of providing sustainable community services.
- 8.63** As discussed above, research highlights the benefits of retail and services such as cafés and shops, comparison retail and convenience stores which are all proven to provide positive social and mental wellbeing benefits. Whilst often considered as a source of decline in the high street online shopping provision also has a place with regard to the sustainability of settlements, access to retail and services and provision of community support. Finally, the presence of financial services on the high street helps to reduce the inequality gap for those on low incomes, those with disabilities and the elderly by providing easy access and advice to finance and financial advice. Therefore, it is considered that reasonable criteria for assessment would be financial services, convenience stores, comparison and other stores, cafes restaurants and takeaways, and online shopping availability.

### Step Two and Three - Data Scoping, Data Elimination and Refinement

- 8.64** This section looks at each of the criteria for assessment identified in Step One and reviews the potential indicators identified through a data scoping exercise. Preferred indicators are then refined based on available and suitable data sources to inform the final proposed indicator which can be found in 5 'Settlement Hierarchy Proposed Methodology'.

### Financial Services

**Table 13 Potential Indicators - Financial Indicators**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
S1	Financial Services	Number of banks/ building societies, Post Offices, mobile bank branches and/or cash machines in settlement.	Identification and count of all banks, Post Offices, mobile bank branches and/or cash machines in settlement.	Site visits / search of NNDR / search of economic development database.
S2	Financial Services	Presence of bank, building society, Post Office, mobile bank branches and/or cash machines in settlement.	Identification any of bank post office, mobile bank branches and/or cash machine in settlement.	Site visits / search of NNDR / search of economic development database.

- 8.65** Evidence from the Government's Treasury Committee inquiry into [Consumers' access to financial services](#) published in May 2019 identified a severe drop in physical financial service provision between 1988 and 2017. An article in the [Financial Times](#) (13 March 2020) further demonstrates that although the physical presence of banks are diminishing, those that remain open are beginning to evolve to meet the changing needs of those who still require face to face contact. Banks are beginning to diversify, new solutions include incorporating coffee shops, children's savings areas, hosting property and music events and providing co-working areas. Some branches have even downsized to become part of a community hub, whilst others have taken a vehicular mobile banking approach (mobile bank branches). As such counting the number of financial institutions in one high street / settlement may not be the most effective way of identifying a sustainable settlement. This leads to the conclusion that indicator S1: *Number of banks/building societies, Post Offices, mobile bank branches and/or cash machines in settlement* cannot be considered the most effective indicator.

42 Source: ONS Blog - [How the COVID-19 Pandemic has accelerated the shift to online spending](#) (18 September 2020)

43 Source: Public Health England Blog: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Self-isolating protects your friends, family and community](#) 28 September 2020

- 8.66** As banks will not be present in all settlements (due to the reduction in banking outlets and a change in operating procedures) it seems more logical to combine all forms of financial institution or mechanism that may provide benefit to the community. The presence of any financial service will help to reduce the disproportionate impact that a lack of financial services has on rural communities, those on lower incomes, those with learning disabilities and the elderly; some to a greater extent than others. Identifying whether a settlement has either a bank/building society, Post Office, mobile bank branch or cash machine in a settlement would be a more appropriate method of ensuring that settlements have at least one form of access to financial provision/advice. **This justifies the use of indicator S2: Presence of either bank, building society, Post Office, mobile bank branch or cash machines in settlement.** Free cash machines have been included as according to *Which* "Vulnerable consumers risk being excluded as the double blow of bank branches and ATMs can leave them without easy, free access to cash to pay for essential goods and services."<sup>(44)</sup>. It was noted that people on incomes lower than £10,000 are 14 times more likely to depend on cash than those on incomes of £30,000, with the limited funds available to those on lower incomes the ATM fee in comparison to the amount of money that can be withdrawn is significantly disproportionate.
- 8.67** After researching into banks that provide mobile banking services ([Royal Bank of Scotland](#), [Lloyds Bank](#), [Natwest](#), [Barclays](#)) it was identified that no mobile banking provision exists in the district anymore. Therefore mobile banking was removed from the indicator. However, mobile post office services are available in certain settlements and as such will be included.
- 8.68** In order to identify the services within a settlement officers will identify the location of cash machines using the [Link ATM locator](#). The locator identifies free cash machines (coloured green) and also those that charge (coloured purple); post offices and mobile Post Offices can be identified through the [Post Office website](#). Most services can also be identified using the Government's [Find a Property Search](#) using the categories: 021 - Banks/Insurance/Building Society Offices & Other A2 Uses, 217 - Post Office Sorting Centres and 018 – ATMs (although this does not identify if they are free ATMs). Further verification can be provided through officer site visits if necessary.
- 8.69** The proposed indicator is therefore revised to **S2 - Presence of bank/building society, Post Office, or free cash machine in settlement**. Two points will be attributed to each category present in a settlement to represent the diversity of financial services, with the exception of mobile Post Offices which will score one point on account of the lack of continuous presence in the settlement. If a bank/building society, Post Office (not mobile) and free cash machine are all present within a settlement an additional four points will be applied to represent a greater offer and thus a more sustainable settlement in terms of financial service provision. An additional two points will be applied if two of identified financial services (excluding mobile Post Office) are present in a settlement to represent a mid-level financial service offer. It is considered that the proposed indicator allows the assessment to reflect the diversity of financial services available and enables the indicator to assess the sustainability of a settlement by ensuring that the services are within a sustainable location that could be accessed by either, public transport, cycling or walking as required through paragraph 85 of the NPPF.

## Convenience Stores

**Table 14 Potential Indicators - Convenience Stores**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
S3	Convenience Stores	Number of convenience stores in settlement.	Identification and count of all convenience stores in settlement.	Site visits / search of NNDR / search of economic development database.
S4	Convenience Stores	Total retail floorspace in sqm of all convenience stores in settlement.	Identification and count of all convenience stores in settlement.	Site visits / Business Rates: <a href="#">Find a Property Search</a>

44 Source: The Government's Treasury Committee launched an inquiry into [Consumers' access to financial services](#)

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
			Identify retail sales floorspace in sqm of each unit.	
S5	Convenience Stores	Presence of convenience store in settlement	Identification of any convenience store in settlement.	Site visits / search of NNDR / search of economic development database.
S6	Convenience Stores	Assessment of convenience stores by type.	Identification of convenience store by type e.g. village shop, butchers, bakers, mini market, supermarket for each settlement.	Site visits / search of NNDR / search of economic development database.

- 8.70** The Royal Society for Public Health's study '[Health on the High Street 2019 - Running on Empty](#)' noted that "demographic changes, such as the increase in smaller households, an ageing population and longer working hours now means that consumers expect retailers to fit into their lives, rather than vice versa." (page 28). It establishes that convenience stores have a role to play in meeting the needs of individuals in communities and that these stores aid in the reduction of stress associated with busy schedules by making food more easily accessible. It also identifies that the local convenience store provides a social benefit to the elderly who can find social support from local shops.
- 8.71** Identifying the presence of a convenience store in a settlement, does give an indication of the potential sustainability of a settlement, but provides little value in terms of the services on offer within a settlement. It is therefore considered that indicator *S5: Presence of convenience store in settlement* provides a limited assessment of the benefits or impact that the store/stores may have on a community. Likewise indicator *S3: Number of convenience stores in settlement area* divulges more information with regards to the distribution of convenience stores in a settlement, but not the offer provided. This could also be argued for indicator *S4: Total retail floorspace in sqm of all convenience stores in settlement*.
- 8.72** It is therefore considered that the diversity and provision of stores available would be a more valuable means of assessment in order to demonstrate the value of the convenience stores provided within a settlement. This would include identifying the type of stores on offer, ranging from newsagents, village shops, butchers, mini markets and supermarkets and determining the classification of supermarket/mini market based on the size ranges of existing stores. **Therefore, indicator S6: Assessment of convenience stores by type seems the most appropriate method of assessment.**
- 8.73** Convenience shopping is described in the [Planning Portal](#) as "The provision of everyday essential items, such as food", therefore stores that should be considered could include newsagents, butchers, bakers, delicatessen, green grocers, village shops, superstores and supermarkets.
- 8.74** Alongside the identification of store types, size of store must also be considered. The size of a store will provide an indication of the quantity and range of goods on offer. Table 3: Description of Types of Development, of the Government's Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres (2005) described superstores as self-service stores selling mainly food, or food and non-food goods, usually with more than 2,500 sq m trading floorspace, with supporting car parking. Supermarkets were described as self-service stores selling mainly food, with a trading floorspace less than 2,500 sq m, often with car parking.
- 8.75** This is also reflected through Governments Business Rates: [Find a Property Search](#) which identifies different sized stores using its special category codes. Therefore in order to identify convenience stores within a settlement officers will search convenience stores using the Governments Business Rates: [Find a Property Search](#) or the Council's Business Rates system using the special category codes.
- '139 Hypermarkets/superstores (over 2500m2)';



- '152 large food stores (750 - 2500m2)' used for supermarkets;
- '106 convenience stores' - This category will be checked to ascertain if the store is a convenience store or a single themed store such as a butchers, bakers, or delicatessen etc using officer site visits, google maps or via the Council's Business Rates system, thus splitting this category into:
  - Small convenience store, and
  - Single themed store

\* Stores may also include some comparison goods items.

**8.76** Further verification could also be conducted through officer site visits, or consultation with the Parish Council. The indicator will add up all uses identified to create a total score which will reflect the diversity of convenience store provision. It is considered that the proposed indicator meets paragraph 84 d of the NPPF by reflecting the availability of accessible local services such as local shops.

### Comparison and Other Stores

**Table 15 Potential Indicators - Comparison and Other Stores**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
S7	Comparison and Other Stores	Number of comparison and other stores in settlement	Identification and count of all comparison and other stores in settlement.	Site visits / search of NNDR / search of economic development database.
S8	Comparison and Other Stores	Presence of comparison and other stores in settlement	Identification of any comparison and/or other stores in all identified settlements in Huntingdonshire.	Site visits / search of NNDR / search of economic development database.
S9	Comparison and Other Stores	Diversity of comparison and other stores in settlement	Identification of all comparison and other stores in settlement. Identify store type by defined categories e.g. hairdresser, estate agent clothes shop etc.	Site visits / search of NNDR / search of economic development database.

**8.77** As discussed above, the last few years have seen an increase in online shopping leading to a closure of some retail outlets and the presence of empty units on the high street. However, this does not mean that the presence of comparison stores on the high street is not important. The Association of Town & City Management's paper [Successful town centres - developing effective strategies](#) establishes that a diverse retail offer can contribute to the social well-being of local communities, act as a driver for tourism by making centres more attractive and contributes to urban regeneration and the vitality and viability of town centres (page 6).

**8.78** As the economic impact of recent market downturns and COVID-19 increased the number of vacant units, high streets need to become more versatile and flexible. This could mean a reduced number of retail units, but with a more diverse offer. Therefore it is considered that the most appropriate measure for assessing the sustainability of settlements is not the number or presence of comparison stores in a settlement, but the diversity of stores on offer. This leads to the assumption that **indicator S9: Diversity of comparison and other stores in settlement is the most effective indicator for this criteria**. Types/categories of stores will be grouped together for simplicity. This assumption is also endorsed by an article in the [Financial times](#) (How high street decline is hitting community cohesion, 3 July 2018), where The Local Data Company predicted that the ongoing contraction in bricks-and-mortar retailing would not only put 35,000 jobs at risk but meant that the diversity of shops would also be important. A lack of diversity would leave the more vulnerable (such as the elderly, disabled and those on low income) needing to take a bus ride to do their shopping. This also creates a less sustainable local economy by creating a negative spiral, as its residents

travel further afield to work and to spend their money. Kate Nicholls, chief executive of the trade body *UKHospitality* also noted that "The high streets that are doing the best are those with mixed use. If there is no offer then there is no justification for people coming and staying longer into that post 5pm slot" <sup>(45)</sup>.

- 8.79** To identify comparison stores within a settlement officers will search provision in each settlement using the Council's Business Rates system. Further verification could also be conducted through officer site visits, google searches or consultation with the Parish Council. The indicator will add up all uses identified to create a total score which will reflect the diversity of comparison and other store provision.
- 8.80** To identify the store categories reference has been made to The Office of National statistics [Retail Sales Index categories](#) Standard Industrial Categories (SIC) to ensure that all stores are categorised appropriately. An additional category of Accountancy and Estate Agents have been included as to represent additional high street services that are available to settlements. The final list of categories are listed below and include reference to the Retail Sales Index Standard Industrial Classification reference numbers:
- **Non-specialised stores** (47.19 Non-specialised stores where sales of food, beverages and tobacco is not predominant (i.e. department stores).
  - **Textile, clothing and footwear stores** (47.51 Textiles, 47.71 Clothing, 47.72 footwear and leather goods)
  - **Household goods stores** (47.52 Hardware, paints and glass, 47.54 Electrical household appliances, 47.59 Furniture, lighting equipment and household articles not elsewhere classified, 47.43 Audio and video equipment, 47.63 Music and video recordings, 47.53 Carpets, rugs, wall and floor coverings).
  - **Pharmaceutical, medical, cosmetic & toilet articles**(47.74 Medical and orthopaedic goods, 47.75 Cosmetic and toilet articles)
  - **Other retail sale in specialised stores** (47.41 Computers, peripheral units and software, 47.42 Telecommunications equipment)
  - **Books, Newspapers and Stationery** (47.61, 47.62)
  - **Sporting equipment, Games and Toys** (47.64, 47.65)
  - **Other retail sales in specialised stores not elsewhere classified** (47.76 Flowers, plants, seeds, fertilisers, pet animals and pet food, 47.77 Watches and jewellery, 47.78 Other retail sales of new goods in specialised stores)
  - **Accountancy and Estate Agents**
- 8.81** It is considered that the indicator meets paragraph 84 d of the NPPF by reflecting the availability of accessible local services such as local shops.

### Cafes, Takeaways and Restaurants

**Table 16 Potential Indicators - Cafes, Takeaways and Restaurants**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
S10	Cafes, Restaurants and Takeaways	Presence of a restaurant, café or takeaway	Identification of any restaurants, cafés and restaurants in settlement.	Site visits / search of NNDR / search of economic development database.
S11	Cafes, Restaurants and Takeaways	Number of restaurants, cafés , takeaways	Identification and count of all restaurants, café and restaurants in settlement.	Site visits / search of NNDR / search of economic development database.

45 Financial times - [Retailers suffer as shoppers desert the high street in May](#), 10 June 2019

- 8.82** Cafés, restaurants and takeaways contribute toward the creation of sustainable settlements by providing both a daytime and an evening service to residents; stimulating the evening economy and expanding the local job offer. Extending the offer available to residents also reduces the need to travel for social interaction which is especially important for those with no access to private or public transport, the elderly and those with disabilities who may find travel difficult. This is supported by the [RTPI Evidence Review 2018](#) which notes that those in more rural areas are believed to suffer more from social isolation, which is associated with higher rates of ill-health and mortality (page 44). Therefore for a rural district such as Huntingdonshire, facilities that offer opportunities to socialise hold even more weight than in city centres, where this offer is more readily available.
- 8.83** It is noted that the presence of takeaways within large settlements is contrary to the healthy high street agenda; Public Health England's [Healthy High Streets Good place-making in an urban setting](#) (2018) notes that there are higher densities of fast food outlets in areas of deprivation and that higher densities of fast food outlets can have a greater impact on less mobile populations disproportionately. However, it is also important to note that a local fish and chip shop in a small settlement can be considered by many residents to form a vital piece of community infrastructure. Especially when there may be little provision in the way of cafés or restaurants. It will be the responsibility of the Local Plan and any new government planning guidance to determine how the distribution and availability of take away facilities should be managed in settlements and therefore it is also considered that counting the number of take-aways in a single settlement would be counter-productive. Therefore the presence of a takeaway should only be counted once to account for the potential impacts of this service to the wider population. In contrast the availability of cafés and restaurants can be counted more than once to reflect their positive social and mental wellbeing benefits. As such **indicator S11: Number of restaurants, cafés, takeaways is considered a reasonable assessment of cafes, restaurants and takeaways if modified to count the occurrence of a takeaway once only.**
- 8.84** To avoid double-counting of facilities restaurants which form part of a public house will be attributed to the Culture and Community indicator measuring public houses.
- 8.85** In order to identify the number of restaurants, cafés and the presence of a takeaway within a settlement officers will search provision in each settlement using the Governments Business Rates: [Find a Property Search](#) using the special category codes 234 - restaurants, 409 - cafes and 442 - takeaway food outlet. Further verification could also be conducted through officer site visits, google searches or consultation with the Parish Council, this could help to any 'hidden offer' where outlets are diversifying to retain footfall within the settlement e.g. cafes that are integrated with a book or clothing store. It is considered that the indicator reflects the requirements of paragraph 8 of the NPPF which notes that sustainable developments support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.

## Online Shopping Availability

**Table 17 Potential Indicators - Online Shopping Availability**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
S10	Online Shopping Availability 1	Ability of settlement to receive online shopping deliveries	Identification of major food retailers and search for delivery availability in settlement.	Identification of top food retailers.  Manual search using retailer delivery website to identify possibility of delivery to settlement.
S11	Online Shopping Availability 2	Number of major superstores that provide online shopping deliveries to settlement area.	Identification and count of major food retailers that deliver to settlement.	Identification of top food retailers.

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
				Manual search using retailer delivery website to identify possibility of delivery to settlement.

- 8.86** It is well known that the use of online retailing services increased during the pandemic. The Office of National Statistics recorded a marked increase in online retail in the months from February to August 2020 whereas store bought purchases diminished. While overall sales did recover, in store sales were still nearly 10% down as of August 2020 and whilst food retail sales remained high there was a significant increase in online purchases, which accounted for almost 10% of all sales<sup>(46)</sup>.
- 8.87** Whilst the general trends towards increasing online sales has had a marked effect on our high streets<sup>(47)</sup> it cannot be ignored that there are also benefits to online food sales. Over the course of the pandemic, the opportunity for people to receive online food deliveries has provided security to those classed as vulnerable by ensuring that they do not have to visit crowded convenience stores, reducing their exposure to the virus. It has also allowed people to shop for essentials whilst self-isolating, or avoid crowds by using the Click and Collect service.
- 8.88** However, not all people are able to access or use online food delivery services. This could be due to a number of reasons such as lack of internet access, poor internet connection (more common in rural areas), insufficient funds to pay for internet/broadband services or in the cases of the older generation a lack of knowledge or fear of using the internet.
- 8.89** As a starting point to assess the effectiveness of an indicator that can reflect online shopping availability a search was undertaken to identify the major comparison food retailers in the market. [YouGov](#) (an international research data and analytics group headquartered in London) identifies the top ten most popular food retailers<sup>(48)</sup> as: Morrisons, Lidl, M&S, Aldi, Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's, Co-op, Iceland and Waitrose. [Retail Economics](#) also identifies the same retailers in their list of top ten food and grocery retailers by market share (2018/19). From one to ten these include: Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda, Morrisons, Aldi, Co-op, M&S, Waitrose, Lidl and Iceland.
- 8.90** It was therefore considered that the stores identified above by YouGov and Retail Economics would be the most appropriate online convenience stores to use as search criteria. After further investigation using multiple postcodes within the Huntingdonshire district, in rural and more urban locations it was established that it is highly unlikely that any online delivery comparison will not deliver to settlements in Huntingdonshire. **This lead to the conclusion that the assessment of online shopping availability was unnecessary to establish the sustainability of a settlement.**

46 Source: ONS Blog - [How the COVID-19 Pandemic has accelerated the shift to online spending](#) (18 September 2020) & ONS *Monthly Business Survey – Retail Sales Inquiry*

47 The Royal Society for Public Health's study [Health on the High Street 2019 - Running on Empty](#)

48 if double counting of retailers is ignored e.g. Tesco and Tesco Express

## Appendix 4 - Sports and Leisure

### Step One - Identification of Criteria

- 8.91** A key aspect of the NPPF's principles of sustainable development is to support the provision of social and environmental benefits to the community. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF in particular identifies that Local Authorities should foster "a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being". From an environmental perspective the NPPF also highlights the importance of contributing towards protecting and enhancing "our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently". The discussion below identifies potential criteria which supports sustainable communities from a health, social and cultural well-being perspective.
- 8.92** Access to indoor and outdoor sports facilities is considered a key criteria in the assessment of sustainable development and communities. The NHS actively promotes the [benefits of sport and exercise](#) for the general population.
- "People who exercise regularly have a lower risk of developing many long-term (chronic) conditions, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and some cancers. Research shows that physical activity can also boost self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy, as well as reducing your risk of stress, depression, dementia and Alzheimer's disease."<sup>(49)</sup>
- 8.93** Provision of, and access to formal indoor and outdoor sporting facilities (such as playing pitches, gyms, swimming pools and childrens play) is also considered important for sustainable healthy communities, especially as people move towards more desk based working and children are exposed to more sedentary activities such as video games <sup>(50)</sup>. Easy access to these facilities without the need to travel helps to foster a more active and physically and mentally healthy society.
- 8.94** In addition to formal sports provision green, or open spaces also provide a similar benefit. The the RTPI Research Paper: [Settlement Patterns, Urban Form & Sustainability](#) - An Evidence Review (May 2018) identifies the benefits of green and open space, which from a community perspective improve companionship, sense of identity, belonging and happiness, whilst also providing both physical and mental benefits, reducing stress across all age groups. In addition The Fields in Trust [Revaluing Parks and Greenspaces \(2019\)](#) also notes that parks and greenspaces are estimated to save the NHS around £111 million per year by reducing the number of visits to GP visits. The benefits of open spaces and parks are also of benefit to children by providing opportunities for outdoor play enabling them to "unleash their imagination" ([HDC Healthy Open Spaces Strategy 2020](#), page 17).
- 8.95** Open spaces are an essential element in the delivery of sustainable communities. They not only contribute to the health and well-being of the area, they are also vital to the biodiversity and delivery of a high quality designed development. The Government's push towards nature recovery through [A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment](#) (2018) was taken forward in the NPPF with a requirement for authorities to provide "net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures" (paragraph 174d). These aimed to provide benefit in terms of climate change, improvements to biodiversity and connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing. As such it is considered that the benefits of natural greenspaces should also be taken into account in the assessment of sustainable settlements.
- 8.96** In light of the above information it is considered that this topic area will focus on the criteria of outdoor sports facilities, indoor sports facilities and open/green spaces that support the NPPF's principles of sustainable development, all of which promote mental, social and physical health within communities.

### Step Two and Three - Data Scoping, Data Elimination and Refinement

49 Source: NHS [benefits of sport and exercise](#).

50 Source: NHS [benefits of sport and exercise](#)

**8.97** This section looks at each of the criteria for assessment identified in Step One and reviews the potential indicators identified through a data scoping exercise. Preferred indicators are then refined based on available and suitable data sources to inform the final proposed indicator which can be found in 5 'Settlement Hierarchy Proposed Methodology'.

### Outdoor Sports Facilities

**Table 18 Potential Indicators - Outdoor Sports Facilities**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
SL1	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Number of formal outdoor sports facilities	Count of formal outdoor sport pitches in settlement.	HDC - Open space ward profiles. Ordnance Survey <a href="#">Open Greenspace Map</a>
SL2	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Diversity of formal outdoor sports facilities	Identification of all formal outdoor sports pitches in settlement. Group and identify facilities and play spaces by type.	HDC - Open space ward profiles. Ordnance Survey <a href="#">Open Greenspace Map</a>
SL3	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Area of formal outdoor sports facilities per person	Identification of all formal outdoor sports pitches in settlement. Map and measure total area of all facilities in square metres and divide by settlement population.	HDC - Open space ward profiles. Ordnance Survey <a href="#">Open Greenspace Map</a>

**8.98** The Council's Development Team (who provide guidance on open spaces and play provision), recommend a specific quantity of outdoor sports facilities per person generated from residential development. Counting the number of outdoor sports facilities per person in a settlement could help to establish if an adequate quantity of outdoor sports provision is provided within a settlement (indicator SL4). The number of residents per settlement could be collected through a variety of methods: by postcode areas from the Census 2011 (although this data would be out of date and not reflective of housing growth achieved since 2011) and through [Cambridgeshire County Council's mid year population estimates](#). The mid-year population estimates data is only available at parish or ward level and therefore cannot be identified at settlement level. As such it is considered that indicator *SL4 Area of formal outdoor sports facilities per person* is not an appropriate measure for outdoor sports facilities.

**8.99** Outdoor sports provision can come in many different forms such as BMX facilities and athletic tracks, cricket, rugby and football pitches, bowling greens, trim trails, outdoor gyms and watersports facilities etc. Sports England's [Planning for Sport Guidance](#) recommends co-locating facilities to allow for improved maintenance, providing for a network of multifunctional open space. This means that some outdoor sports grounds can be adapted for multiple uses. Therefore, counting the number of pitches as proposed through indicator *SL1: Number of formal outdoor sports facilities* may not adequately reflect the provision on offer as the function and number of pitches that can be accommodated on open land may vary depending on seasons and demand.

**8.100** It is therefore proposed that a more reasonable assessment of outdoor sports and play facilities should be indicator ***SL2: Diversity of formal outdoor sports facilities*** as opposed to the number of outdoor sports facilities (indicator SL4). It is considered that identifying the types of pitches and facilities that are available in a settlement throughout the year can present the most accurate assessment for a settlement in terms of its ability to meet the needs of a population, representing the diversity of needs and varying requirements of the whole population irrespective of age or ability.

**8.101** Sports England defines a playing pitch as a marked out area of 0.2 hectares or more (including recommended run-off areas) which can be used for sports such as association football, rugby, cricket, hockey, tennis and bowling. Pitches can be artificial or natural in nature<sup>(51)</sup>. The number of pitches that

51 [Sports England Playing Fields Policy and Guidance March 2018](#)

can be accommodated on open land may vary depending on seasons and demand for each settlement. Taking this into consideration a list of sporting categories have been identified in order to assess the diversity of outdoor sports facilities and are outlined below, noting that each pitch/facility could accommodate multiple sports.

**8.102** The Council will use facilities identified in the [Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2016-21 \(2016\)](#) (which is shaped by Sports England guidance) to define a list outdoor sports facilities across the district. A full review of the Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy is anticipated to be completed in early 2023, which will include an up to date audit of outdoor sports facilities. Once complete the identified outdoor sports facilities will be used as the criteria for assessment. However, to provide an example of the types of facilities that could be used for the indicator the current outdoor sports facilities as identified in the Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2016-21 have been listed below.

**Table 19 Indicator SL2 - Outdoor sports facilities categories**

Outdoor Sports Facilities Categories		
Artificial Turf Pitch - Full Size	Football - Youth / 9v9	Golf Courses - Holes
Artificial Turf Pitch - Training Size	Grass Pitch - Universal	Rugby Pitches - Senior
Cricket Pitches	MUGA	Rugby Pitches Junior
Football - Mini	Outdoor Bowls	Skate Park
Football - Senior	Outdoor Gym	Tennis Courts

**8.103** The data will be gathered by referencing the Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy, and the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy Assessment (2023). A point will be attributed to each category that is present within a settlement, with the areas with the greatest diversity receiving maximum points reducing on a graduated basis. Depending on whether sites are identified at parish or settlement level, additional verification of outdoor sports facilities may required. This will be undertaken through officer site visits, reference to Ordnance Survey's [Open Greenspace Map](#), Natural England's [Green Infrastructure Mapping Database](#), or consultation with local Parish and Town Councils. It is considered that the indicator reflects paragraph 98 of the NPPF which notes that "Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. "

### Indoor Sports Facilities

**Table 20 Potential Indicators - Indoor Sports Facilities**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
SL4	Indoor Sports Facilities	Number of formal indoor sports facilities	Count of formal indoor sports facilities in settlement.	HDC <a href="#">One Leisure sites</a> Search of NNDR Business Rates: <a href="#">Find a Property Search</a> Officer Site visits
SL5	Indoor Sports Facilities	Diversity of formal indoor sports facilities	Identification of all formal indoor sports facilities in settlement. Group and identify facilities by type.	HDC <a href="#">One Leisure sites</a> Search of NNDR Business Rates: <a href="#">Find a Property Search</a> Officer Site visits

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
SL6	Indoor Sports Facilities	Area of indoor sports facilities per person	Identification of all formal indoor sports facilities and children's play spaces in settlement. Map and measure total area of all facilities in square metres and divide by settlement population.	HDC <a href="#">One Leisure sites</a> Search of NNDR Business Rates: <a href="#">Find a Property Search</a> Officer Site visits

**8.104** Sports England's [Planning for Sport Guidance](#) planning aim is to work "with the planning system to help provide active environments that maximise opportunities for sport and physical activity for all" (Page 8). In order to meet the needs and activity levels of all age groups a choice of indoor sport facilities would be required. For example indoor low impact activities such as bowls and exercise classes would enable the older population to participate in physical and social activities, whilst the younger population may favour more strenuous activities associated with gym facilities. It is therefore considered that indicators *SL4: Number of formal indoor sports facilities* and *SL6: Area of indoor sports facilities per person* would not be sufficient to highlight the diversity of facilities on offer. **The most appropriate indicator for the assessment of indoor sports facilities would be *SL5: Diversity of formal indoor sports facilities*** enabling the assessment to highlight the type of facilities on offer and the population ranges that they serve.

**8.105** As with outdoor sports facilities, indoor sports facilities are identified in Huntingdonshire's Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2016-21. A full review of the Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy is anticipated to be completed in early 2023 (the document will be informed by Sports England guidance), which will include an up to date audit of indoor sports facilities. Once complete the identified indoor sports facilities will be used as the criteria for assessment. However to provide an example of the types of facilities that will be used for the indicator the current indoor sports facilities as identified in the Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2016-21 have been listed below.

**Table 21 Indoor Sports Facilities Categories**

Indoor Sports Facilities Categories		
Activity Hall	Netball Courts	Swimming Pools
Fitness Stations	Sports Halls/Courts	Village Halls
Indoor Bowls Rink	Squash Courts	Gymnastics Hall
Indoor Tennis		

**8.106** Depending on whether sites are identified at parish or settlement level in the updated Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy, additional verification of indoor sports facilities may required. This will be undertaken through officer site visits or consultation with local Parish and Town Councils. A point will be attributed to each category that is present within a settlement. It is considered that the indicator reflects paragraph 98 of the NPPF and the importance placed on sports facilities to facilitate the health and well-being of communities.

## Green / Open Spaces

**Table 22 Potential Indicators - Green / Open Spaces**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
SL7	Open / Green Spaces	Number of open / green spaces	Count of open / green spaces in settlement.	HDC - Open space ward profiles. Ordnance Survey <a href="#">Open Greenspace Map</a>



Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
SL8	Open / Green Spaces	Diversity of open / green spaces.	Identification of all open / green spaces in settlement. Group and identify facilities by type.	HDC - Open space ward profiles. Ordnance Survey <a href="#">Open Greenspace Map</a>
SL9	Open / Green Spaces	Area of open / green spaces per person	Identification of all open / green spaces in settlement. Map and measure total area of all facilities in square metres and divide by settlement population.	HDC - Open space ward profiles. Ordnance Survey <a href="#">Open Greenspace Map</a>
SL10	Open / Green Spaces	Distance to open / green space	Identification of open/ green spaces in Huntingdonshire and the surrounding areas. Measure distance or time taken from the mid-point of a settlement to the location of the nearest open space.	HDC - Open space ward profiles. Ordnance Survey <a href="#">Open Greenspace Map</a>

- 8.107** The RTPI Research Paper: [Settlement Patterns, Urban Form & Sustainability](#) - An Evidence Review (May 2018), highlights the benefits of access to green and open space in terms of physical and mental health and that higher levels of green and open spaces are associated with "improved companionship, sense of identity, belonging and happiness" (Page 36). Indicator *SL7: Number of open / green spaces* would allow settlements to be assessed based on the quantity of open space available in a settlement and thus, its contribution to sustainable development from an environmental and social perspective. However, a simple count of open spaces does not adequately reflect whether the open space offer in a settlement meets the needs of that community.
- 8.108** Indicator *SL10: Distance open space* was considered, as evidence suggests that "shorter distances between homes and green spaces were associated with reduced stress across all age groups, due in part to their role in promoting outdoor activities and active travel" (RTPI Evidence Review 2018, Page 36). However, this indicator was considered too complex to assess due to the fact that many settlements will have multiple open spaces distributed across a variety of locations.
- 8.109** Indicator *SL9: Area of open / green spaces per person* would be considered complimentary to the [HDC Healthy Open Spaces Strategy 2020](#). The Healthy Open Spaces Strategy 2020 identifies that 1.7% of the District is green space amounting to 8.7 ha of green space per 1,000 population, or 87sqm of green space per person. This is higher than the Great Britain and East of England average of 35.22 sqm and 42,75 sqm respectively and would provide a established baseline for assessment. The number of residents per settlement could be collected through a variety of methods: by postcode areas from the Census 2011 (although this data would be out of date not not reflective of housing growth achieved since 2011) and through [Cambridgeshire County Council's mid year population estimates](#). The mid-year population estimates data is only available at parish or ward level and therefore cannot be identified at settlement level. It is therefore considered that indicator *SL9 Area of open/green per person* is not an appropriate measure for outdoor sports facilities.
- 8.110** It is considered that the most appropriate indicator for the assessment of open / green spaces would be indicator *SL8: Diversity of open / green spaces* enabling the assessment to highlight the range and type of spaces on offer and provide an indication of the population ranges that they serve.

**8.111** Green / open space typologies have been selected with reference to the HDC Healthy Open Spaces Strategy 2020 and ongoing work which is being undertaken as part of the Cambridgeshire [Future Parks Accelerator Programme](#) <sup>(52)</sup> A list of categories and definitions have been provided below. Definitions have been provided from the Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping and Standards - Technical Report 2020/21 and informed by discussions with the Council's Operations Team.

- **Natural and semi natural urban green spaces:** Urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas (e.g. cliffs, quarries and pits) with a primary purpose of wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.
- **Urban Park:** A designed green space that provides a social and recreational focal point for a neighbourhood that offers a variety of facilities including recreation centres, sports fields and playgrounds and providing opportunities for a variety of active and passive outdoor activities and access to nature.
- **Country Park:** A predominantly natural or semi-natural landscape of at least 10 hectares in size; for example woodland, grassland, wetland, heathland or parkland, with no more than 5% of the area built upon (excluding car parks).
- **Amenity Green Space:** Informal recreation spaces and green spaces in and around housing, with a primary purpose of providing opportunities for informal activities close to home or work.
- **Allotments, Community Gardens and City (Urban) Farms:** Allotments an area of land, leased either from a private or local authority landlord, for the use of growing fruit and vegetables. In some cases this land will also be used for the growing of ornamental plants, and the keeping of hens, rabbits and bees.' Community Gardens are similar to allotments but gardened by a group of people. City Urban Farms are an area of land where farming or gardening occurs within an urban setting.

**8.112** Open / Green Spaces will be identified through the HDC - Open space ward profiles (to be completed as part of the Council's Healthy Open Spaces Strategy 2020)<sup>(53)</sup>, or through datasets relating to the Future Parks Accelerator and/or [Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards Technical Report Nov 2020](#). This will be supplemented with reference to the Ordnance Survey [Open Greenspace Map](#), Natural England's [Green Infrastructure Mapping Database](#), officer site visits and consultation with Parish or Town Council's where necessary. A point will be attributed to each category that is present within a settlement, with the areas with the greatest diversity receiving maximum of 10 points reducing on a graduated basis the fewer open/ green spaces that are available to residents.

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52 The Future Parks Accelerator is a joint initiative between the National Trust, The National Lottery Fund and Local Authorities, with financial support from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Reference to joint working and opportunities to improve and secure green infrastructure in the Huntingdonshire District is referenced in the Council's [HDC Healthy Open Spaces Strategy 2020](#).

53 Figure 15: Ten Year Action Plan - [HDC Healthy Open Spaces Strategy 2020](#)

## Appendix 5 - Culture and Community

### Step One

- 8.113** Paragraph 8 of the NPPF highlights that social and cultural well-being should be taken into account to help achieve the principles of sustainable development and that prosperous and rural economies should enable the "retention and development of "accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship" (Paragraph 84 d). As such this topic area will look at the most appropriate measures to assess the sustainability of a settlement from a cultural and community perspective.
- 8.114** The Arts Council commissioned two reports in 2020: [Data report: Arts Council-funded cultural infrastructure](#) and the [Arts and Place Shaping: Evidence Review](#). Both reports extol the benefits of arts and cultural facilities (including libraries) to communities and the sustainability of settlements. The Arts and Place Shaping report specifically identifies that arts and cultural facilities help to:
- develop cohesive communities,
  - support the rehabilitation of offenders,
  - support health and wellbeing,
  - make attractive areas to live,
  - act as a catalyst for regeneration,
  - help to drive footfall and the visitor economy,
  - revitalise the High Street,
- 8.115** The *Data Report* also notes the economic importance of arts and cultural buildings to more deprived areas through job creation opportunities; over 300 cultural venues and buildings were assessed as being located in unemployment hotspots<sup>(54)</sup>.
- 8.116** The availability of community buildings, including community centres, village halls and faith facilities, can have a direct influence over the quality of life of residents. Community buildings can help to promote healthy and socially inclusive communities. The landscape of community building provision is changing and is moving towards the co-location of multiple services or self-help provision which is becoming more common e.g. health clinics, parent and toddler groups, sports / function hall facilities and computer facilities whereby people can 'self-help'<sup>(55)</sup>. This is corroborated by the RTPI Research Paper: [Settlement Patterns, Urban Form & Sustainability - An Evidence Review](#) (May 2018), which notes that "in order to reduce the need to travel, developments should also contain a mixture of uses, including essential community facilities which are within walking distance of housing, and buildings which can support a range of different uses" (page 18).
- 8.117** The final strand of community services is public houses. Public houses are considered to provide a number of benefits to the community presenting themselves as community hubs where people can gather and share ideas and trades, meet new people and socialise. The benefits of public houses are also supported through paragraph 84d of the NPPF which notes that "Planning policies should support...the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as public houses." The impact of the pandemic upon the financial stability of public houses is yet unknown, however there were reports in the media that over one quarter (39,700) of public houses may not survive the pandemic <sup>(56)</sup>, the current cost of living crisis may also have a similar impact. It is therefore considered that public houses should be included within the assessment of sustainable settlements.
- 8.118** In light of the above information it is considered that this topic area will focus on the criteria of cultural buildings, libraries, community buildings and public houses that support the NPPFs principles of sustainable development, providing social, recreational and community benefit.

54 [Arts and Place Shaping: Evidence Review](#) (2020)

55 'Source: [My Community](#)

56 Source: [Financial Times](#) - British Pubs in crisis as Covid calls last orders 16 October 2020

## Step Two and Three - Data Scoping, Data Elimination and Refinement

**8.119** This section looks at each of the criteria for assessment identified in Step One and reviews the potential indicators identified through a data scoping exercise. Preferred indicators are then refined based on available and suitable data sources to inform the final proposed indicator which can be found in 5 'Settlement Hierarchy Proposed Methodology'.

### Cultural Buildings

**Table 23 Potential Indicators - Cultural Buildings**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
CC1	Cultural Buildings	Number of cultural buildings and offer	Count of cultural buildings and offer in settlement.	Officer site visits Google search
CC2	Cultural Buildings	Diversity of cultural buildings and offer	Identification of all cultural buildings and offer in settlement. Group and identify buildings by type.	Officer site visits Google search

**8.120** The Arts Council commissioned report [Arts and Place Shaping: Evidence Review](#) (2020) noted that participation in the arts and culture positively contributes to the development of sustainable communities and place. The presence of arts and cultural buildings improves negative connotations associated with the evening economy by increasing the diversity of offer within town centres. A cultural offer can also include visitor attractions to historic locations and monuments such as Castle Mound in Huntingdonshire where residents and school children can visit and learn about the history of a place or settlement.

**8.121** The presence of arts and cultural buildings in cities, towns, or settlements can vary greatly, some provide a mix of theatres, museums, art galleries, historic attractions, whilst others encourage tourism and recreation through a more focused offer. This can be demonstrated through places such as Liverpool which is famous for its museums and art galleries focused around the Albert Dock and London's West End which is renowned for its theatres. It is therefore considered that **CC1: Number of cultural buildings** as opposed to **CC2: Diversity of Cultural buildings would be a more appropriate choice of indicator** as a lack of diversity in cultural attractions cannot be considered a negative contributor to sustainability.

**8.122** The chosen indicator (CC1) identifies the number of cultural buildings within a settlement. The Arts Council commissioned report [Arts and Place Shaping: Evidence Review](#) (2020) identifies a number of categories for cultural buildings including art galleries and museums. In order to assess the provision in a settlement this list has been expanded to include a selection of visitor attractions that provide a cultural offer to residents in terms of entertainment, historical importance, and cultural learning opportunities. This includes:

- Museums
- Theatres
- Concert Halls
- Cinemas,
- Visitor attractions such as historic properties and landmarks (such as Castle Hill, Huntingdon)
- Cultural education facilities (e.g. Hinchingsbrooke Countryside Centre, visitor centres).

**8.123** A search will be conducted through the Business Rates: [Find a Property Search](#) to identify all appropriate venues. Search criteria to be used will include category codes 195 and 196 museums, 278 theatres, 70 concert halls, 56 cinemas, 418, visitor centres and 735 historic property and heritage. Historic Landmarks will be identified using the Councils mapping layers of scheduled monuments and historic parks and gardens. Additional verification may be provided through Officer site visits, Google and tourism website searches if required, or through discussion with Parish or Town Councils. The bigger the cultural offer the greater the contribution towards participation in the arts and culture which positively contributes to the development of more sustainable communities and place ([Arts and Place Shaping: Evidence Review](#) ,

2020). Therefore points will be attributed to the number of cultural buildings & sites within a settlement and scored from 10 to 2 with 10 being a settlement with the highest number cultural buildings and sites and 2 the lowest.

**8.124** It is considered that the indicator reflects the NPPFs principles of sustainable development, in particular paragraph 8b and paragraph 190 which asks that "Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment".

## Libraries

**Table 24 Potential Indicators - Libraries**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
CC3	Libraries	Presence of library or library facilities in settlement.	Identification of library facility in settlement.	Cambridgeshire County Council Directory of Services - <a href="#">Libraries</a> Cambridgeshire County Council <a href="#">Mobile Library Services</a>
CC4	Libraries	Distance to nearest library or library facility from centre of settlement.	Identification of library facilities in Huntingdonshire and the surrounding areas. Measure distance or time taken from the mid-point of a settlement to the location of the nearest library facility.	Cambridgeshire County Council Directory of Services - <a href="#">Libraries</a> Cambridgeshire County Council <a href="#">Mobile Library Services</a>
CC5	Libraries	Opening times of library or library facility	Identification of library facility in settlement and opening hours. Score accessibility of library based on opening hours of the facility.	Cambridgeshire County Council Directory of Services - <a href="#">Libraries</a> Cambridgeshire County Council <a href="#">Mobile Library Services</a>

**8.125** Indicator *CC4: Distance to nearest library or library facility* from centre of settlement is not considered a substantial indicator as some library facilities within a settlement are mobile. The mobile nature and intermittent availability of such facilities mean that the distance to a library would vary depending on the day. For example if a mobile library facility is available in a village on a wednesday the distance to a library facility would be minimal on a wednesday but on other days of the week one would have to travel further afield to visit a library.

**8.126** The Town and Country Planning Associations [Improving culture, arts and sporting opportunities through planning a good practice guide'](#) (2013) notes that libraries are often integrated with other cultural or community uses. They also provide valuable access to learning facilities in all forms of media (including digital) and can help people to gain the skills required to move towards employment and reconnect with the community.

**8.127** The House of Commons [Briefing Paper on public libraries](#) (Number 5875, 23 January 2020) identifies the changing face of libraries comprising a variety of different organisational approaches<sup>(57)</sup> such as:

- Commissioned libraries: part of the statutory service and funded by the local authority, but the running of the service has been transferred to a separate trust or organisation
- Community-run libraries: which have some level of ongoing support from the local authority, but staff may sometimes be volunteers.
- Independent community libraries: managed by a non-local authority body and is outside the local authority statutory network.

57 Page 4, [Briefing Paper on public libraries](#) (Number 5875, 23 January 2020)

- 8.128** The different organisational approaches will have an impact on the opening hours of library facilities due to funding and staff/volunteer time. Reduced opening hours mean that the positive impacts that library facilities have on communities will be diminished due to their lack of availability. It is therefore considered that the impact of a library facility cannot be assessed purely on its presence within a settlement (indicator CC3), but should instead assess its impact based on opening hours within a settlement - **CC5: Opening times of library or library facility**.
- 8.129** The chosen indicator assesses the opening times of library or library facilities. The presence and opening times of libraries can be found by searching the Cambridgeshire County Council Directory of Services - [Libraries](#), whilst occasional mobile library service provision can be found through Cambridgeshire County Council [Mobile Library Services](#) search.
- 8.130** Initial research suggests that larger libraries such as [Huntingdon Library](#) are open 5 or more days a week, reflecting their accessible town centre location, enhanced collection and facilities such as computers and micro-fiches. Full days will be classified as 5 or more hours a day to take into account potential closures of small libraries for lunch. Mobile library provision will be attributed the lowest score (2 points) due to the fact that visits may only occur once or twice a month for a few hours<sup>(58)</sup>.
- 8.131** It is considered that the indicator reflects paragraph 20c of the NPPF which asks that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, and make sufficient provision for: community facilities such as health, education and cultural infrastructure.

### Community Buildings

**Table 25 Potential Indicators - Community Buildings**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
CC6	Community Buildings	Presence of community building in settlement	Identification of community buildings in settlement.	Officer Site visits Parish Council websites Consultation with Huntingdonshire District Council's Community Services Team
CC7	Community Buildings	Number of community buildings in Settlement	Count of community buildings in settlement.	Officer Site visits Parish Council websites Consultation with Huntingdonshire District Council's Community Services Team
CC8	Community Buildings	Diversity of community buildings in Settlement	Identification of all community buildings in settlement. Group and identify buildings by type.	Officer Site visits Parish Council websites Consultation with Huntingdonshire District Council's Community Services Team

- 8.132** Step One addressed the issue of the availability of community buildings, identifying their contribution towards promoting healthy and socially inclusive communities<sup>(59)</sup>. Community buildings come in many forms, can offer a wide range of community provision and may also incorporate multi-purpose services. It is therefore considered that identifying the diversity of community buildings (indicator *CC8: Diversity of community buildings in settlement*) would be difficult to achieve due to the multi-functional nature of many buildings and the changing nature of the provision over time. Likewise, the identification of just one community building as in indicator *CC6: Presence of community building in settlement* would not provide

<sup>58</sup> Cambridgeshire County Council [Mobile Library Services](#) search

<sup>59</sup> Source: [My Community](#)

sufficient insight into the dispersal of community facilities within a settlement or community access and availability to such services. This however, could be achieved using **indicator CC7: Number of community buildings in settlement.**

- 8.133** The proposed indicator would assess the number of community buildings within a settlement. Paragraph 20c of the NPPF identifies community facilities as health, education and cultural infrastructure; paragraph 84d expands on this definition and includes local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. Assessment of health, education and local shops have been assessed in previous chapters ('Appendix 1 - Health', 'Appendix 2 - Education', 'Appendix 3 - Retail and Services' and 'Appendix 4 - Sports and Leisure' ). Further indicators have also been developed in this chapter for cultural buildings. This indicator will assess the remaining community buildings that can be found within a settlement and will include buildings such as community centres, village halls, pavilions, faith and other cultural facilities (those which have not been addressed through other indicators), scout huts, social clubs and ex-service and working men's clubs etc. all of which provide a social and community function.
  
- 8.134** Identification of community buildings will be conducted through consultation with Huntingdonshire District Council's Community Services Team, Cambridgeshire County Council's [Directory of Services](#) also lists: Community facilities and provision, Faiths religion and beliefs. The following community venues can also be identified using the business rates [Find a Property Search](#) special category codes : 293 Village Halls, Scout Huts, Cadet Huts Etc, 067 Community Day Centres, 208 Pavilions. This can be supplemented through google map and Parish or Town Council website searches and officer site visits where necessary. Points will be attributed to the number of community buildings within a settlement and scored from 10 to 2 with 10 being a settlement with the highest number community buildings and sites and 2 the lowest. As it is quite common for some small historic villages to have multiple religious buildings, for example many small settlements may contain a minimum of 2 religious venues a community centre and a village hall / pavilion/ scout hut, the maximum score for community buildings has be set at 15 or more.
  
- 8.135** It is considered that the indicator meets the requirements of paragraphs 20, 84 and 93 of the NPPF highlighting the importance of community buildings in sustainable place-making.

## Public Houses

**Table 26 Potential Indicators - Public Houses**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
CC9	Public Houses	Presence of public house in settlement	Identification of public house in settlement	Public house data from the <a href="#">Office of National Statistics</a> CAMRA <a href="#">What ?ub</a> search Officer site visits / local knowledge
CC10	Public Houses	Number of public houses in settlement	Count of public houses in settlement	Public house data from the <a href="#">Office of National Statistics</a> CAMRA <a href="#">What ?ub</a> search Officer site visits / local knowledge
CC11	Public Houses	Distance to nearest public house	Identification of public houses in Huntingdonshire and the surrounding areas. Measure distance or time taken from the mid-point of a settlement to the location of the nearest public house.	Public house data from the <a href="#">Office of National Statistics</a> CAMRA <a href="#">What ?ub</a> search Officer site visits / local knowledge

- 8.136** The number of public houses has been reducing rapidly over the past years. Data from the [Office of National Statistics](#) reported a large fall in the number of pubs, from around 50,000 pubs in 2008 to around 39,000 pubs in 2018. In Huntingdonshire the Office of National Statistics (ONS) reported that there were around 6.5 pubs per 10,000 people in 2018 (the UK average was 5.8). Records suggest a small decrease in the number of public houses from 140 to 115 between 2001 and 2018 in Huntingdonshire, whilst the number of jobs in pubs and bars increased from around 1,000 to 1,250.
- 8.137** The reduction nationally of public houses means that some rural villages or settlements have lost their last public house meaning that some form of motorised travel may be required to reach the nearest public house. It is therefore not considered that distance to the nearest public house (indicator CC11) would be an adequate measure of settlement sustainability as this would require travel outside of the community.
- 8.138** As Minister Jake Berry noted in March 2019 "Our pubs are at the heart of local communities supporting thousands of jobs and providing places for local residents to not only enjoy a pint, but also to get together"<sup>(60)</sup>.
- 8.139** The value of a public house as a community facility (as defined through paragraph 84d of the NPPF) as social hub and local employer indicates that **the most appropriate measure would be indicator CC10: Number of public houses in settlement** as opposed to indicator CC9: *Presence of public house in settlement* as this would reflect not only the increased local job offer for residents but also the ability of a settlement to provide greater options for community involvement and social interaction.
- 8.140** Identification of public houses will be conducted using public house data from the CAMRA [What Pub](#) search and officer site visits / local knowledge. Points will be attributed to the number of public houses within a settlement and scored from 10 to 2 with 10 being a settlement with the highest number public houses and 2 the lowest. As discussed earlier, the reduction nationally of public houses means that some rural villages or settlements have lost their last public house, therefore points reflect the reduced number of public houses within smaller settlements and the wider distribution of public houses in larger settlements such as Huntingdon and St Neots.

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60 Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government Press Release [New funding boost to support rural pubs](#) - 25 March 2019



## Appendix 6 - Transport

### Step One - Identification of Criteria

**8.141** Climate change is now at the forefront of the world and government agenda. The NPPF encourages Local Authorities to reduce emissions through promoting a move towards public instead of private transport. Paragraph 105 of the NPPF in particular notes that:

“Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health.”

**8.142** The Climate Change Committee's<sup>(61)</sup> [Reducing UK emissions: 2020 Progress Report to Parliament](#) recommends that the country "seize the opportunity to turn the COVID-19 crisis into a defining moment in the fight against climate change". However, social distancing measures that were implemented in response to the COVID 19 pandemic reduced the ability and uptake of public transport (page 15). This does not mean that public transport provision should be discounted, or that uptake in public transport will not increase again in the future. In fact the Progress Report to Parliament 2020 (Page 37) recommends further investment in public transport and other measures to reduce car travel demand including car sharing and mobility as a service and improving infrastructure connectivity. It is therefore recommended that settlements are assessed on their public transport provision including bus and rail services. In addition some areas in Huntingdonshire may also benefit from enhanced provision through the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway and potential future projects such as [East West Rail](#).

**8.143** It must not be forgotten however that Huntingdonshire is a largely rural district and that cuts and reductions in public transport over the years may have resulted in limited public transport options for many settlements. As stated in Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 "even in the market towns public transport outside of weekday business hours can be limited. Therefore reliance on private cars as the main mode of travel is likely to continue."<sup>(62)</sup> As such, it is considered that access to principal road networks should also be assessed to reflect the economic sustainability of a settlement and the benefits that private motorised travel provides to residents in rural communities in terms of allowing more direct access to job and leisure opportunities in the wider area.

**8.144** In light of the information above the chosen criteria for assessment will focus on bus services, rail provision and access to the principal road network.

### Step Two and Three - Data Scoping, Data Elimination and Refinement

**8.145** This section looks at each of the criteria for assessment identified in Step One and reviews the potential indicators identified through a data scoping exercise. Preferred indicators are then refined based on available and suitable data sources to inform the final proposed indicator which can be found in 5 'Settlement Hierarchy Proposed Methodology'.

### Bus Services

61 ["The Climate Change Committee"](#) is an independent, statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008 to advise the UK and devolved governments on emissions targets, progress on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

62 Paragraph 5.53, page 78, [Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036](#)

**Table 27 Potential Indicators - Bus Services**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
T1	Bus Services	Number of weekday return journeys	Search of number of return bus journeys within settlement on weekdays.	Cambridgeshire County Council - <a href="#">Bus timetables</a> <a href="#">Stagecoach</a> <a href="#">Whippet</a> <a href="#">Traveline</a>
T2	Bus Services	Number of Saturday and Sunday return journeys	Search of number of return bus journeys within settlement on a Saturday.	Cambridgeshire County Council - <a href="#">Bus timetables</a> <a href="#">Stagecoach</a> <a href="#">Whippet</a> <a href="#">Traveline</a>
T3	Bus Services	Number of Bus Routes and Operating Days	Search number of bus routes and number of days each service operates within a settlement.	Cambridgeshire County Council - <a href="#">Bus timetables</a> <a href="#">Stagecoach</a> <a href="#">Whippet</a> <a href="#">Traveline</a>
T4	Bus Services	Frequency of Service	Identification of public transport stops in a settlement and frequency of the service	<a href="#">Place Based Carbon Calculator</a>

- 8.146** The RTPI Research Paper: [Settlement Patterns, Urban Form & Sustainability](#) - An Evidence Review (May 2018) describes one element of sustainable urban areas as places that can support growth though encouraging the use of public transport (page 9). It also notes that lower density settlements can make it difficult to provide frequent, accessible, comprehensive and affordable public transport (page 12). The report recommends that "In order to promote sustainable mobility and reduce congestion, any development outside of large existing settlements should be located alongside well-served bus corridors and in close proximity to rail stations and other transport interchanges, to encourage patronage and reduce the use of the strategic road network" (Page 18).
- 8.147** Indicators *T1: Number of weekday return journeys* and *T2: Number of Saturday and Sunday return journeys* would enable the Council to assess the how well-served a settlement is in terms of frequency of service. However the indicators provide a narrow assessment of service provision, as the destination and scheduling of these services are not taken into account.
- 8.148** Indicator *T3: Number of bus routes and operating days* would provide a more comprehensive indication of the scope of travel options available to a settlement and the frequency of services. However, bus services and operating days would have to be identified through a combination of sources including Cambridgeshire County Council's - [Bus timetables](#), and timetable and operating day information from [Stagecoach](#), [Whippet](#) (the two main bus service providers in the district) and [Traveline](#) (a partnership of transport companies, local authorities and passenger groups who compile routes and times for all travel in Great Britain by bus, rail, coach and ferry). The Council is aware that other [Community bus, car and minibuses schemes](#) are available such as Huntingdonshire Association for Community Transport (a pre-bookable service operating throughout Huntingdonshire five days a week) and the Ramsey and District Community Bus Association "Rural Hoppa" service from Ramsey and Huntingdon. However due to their intermittent nature and coverage, these would not be able to be included within the assessment. It is considered therefor that assessing this indicator across a variety of sources would be labour intensive and represent a snapshot in time.
- 8.149** **Instead indicator *T4: Frequency of service* should be taken forward as the preferred method of assessment.** This is because increases in frequency of bus routes indicate increased access to multiple destinations that can be reached by residents, expanding the leisure, social, health and employment opportunities that can be reached from a settlement. Indicator T4 also would allow for a more accurate assessment of service frequency by reducing the element of human error. This is because the [Place](#)

[Based Carbon Calculator](#) used to inform the indicator is based on Traveline data and converts timetable data from difficult to use formats to provide a map based assessment of settlements across the UK, meaning that the data is checked and verified externally prior to being used by the Council.

- 8.150** Officers will use the [Place Based Carbon Calculator](#) to assess the frequency of services. The Place Based Carbon Calculator takes a consumption based approach to carbon footprints. As part of their analysis a number of indicators are provided including an indicator on Transport Stops. The Transport Stops indicator shows all public transport stops and the frequency of the service. Bus and light rail timetables are provided by Traveline while the heavy rail timetables are published by the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC). Stops are coloured based on a graded system from A+ to F- with A+ representing the best 1% of all stops based on frequency (most frequent) to FF-, stops that are within the worst 1% of overall frequency in the UK (least frequent). Grade C represents an above average frequency whilst grade D depicts a below average frequency.
- 8.151** The data can be downloaded or viewed in map form; officers will identify the highest frequency stop in a settlement (removing reference to rail) and attribute the relative score. Ten points will be attributed to the stops classified as grade A reducing in value to grade E which will receive 2 points. Presence of a grade F will not be scored as it falls within lowest frequency of service (the bottom 10%).
- 8.152** This indicator assists in assessing settlements based on the principles of paragraph 105 or the NPPF which notes: "The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making."

## Rail Provision

**Table 28 Potential Indicators - Rail Provision**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
T5	Rail Provision	Presence of railway station	Identification of railway stations within settlements.	National Rail Enquiries - <a href="#">Stations</a>
T6	Rail Provision	Frequency of services including peak time travel	Identification of number of return rail journeys to major towns or cities for settlements and the frequency of services.	National Rail Enquiries - <a href="#">Live Departures and Arrivals</a>
T7	Rail Provision	Number of rail routes and operating days	Identification of rail routes and operating days.	National Rail Enquiries - <a href="#">Live Departures and Arrivals</a>

- 8.153** As discussed in 'Bus Services' (above) access to railway stations is a key element of sustainable settlements providing a more sustainable travel option for residents and allowing people to reduce their reliance on private motorised transport (which contributes towards climate change as a result of increased emissions). Unlike bus services across the district, Huntingdonshire only has two railway stations: Huntingdon and St Neots. Both stations are on the same rail route heading towards London in the South and Peterborough and beyond to the North<sup>(63)</sup>. These railway stations will therefore be subject to the similar timetables and route schedules. As such it is considered that there is little merit in going into further detailed assessment using indicators *T6: Frequency of services* including peak time travel and *T7: Number of rail routes and operating days* and that **indicator T5: Presence of railway station will be sufficient in this instance.**

63 National Rail Enquiries - [Rail Maps](#)

- 8.154** As there are only two railway stations in Huntingdonshire a simple scoring process of 10 points for the presence of a railway station was considered. The ten points reflects the additional social and economic benefits that rail can provide to a settlement including access to a wider employee market and networks for businesses, access to greater employment opportunities for residents, wider access to leisure and recreational opportunities and faster more sustainable travel options for residents<sup>(64)</sup>. Identification of railway stations within settlements will be conducted through a National Rail Enquiries - [Stations](#) search. This has been refined to add 5 points for settlements within 5 kms of a railway station to reflect enhanced accessibility to rail services this represents as being a reasonable cycling distance.
- 8.155** The indicator reflects paragraph 105 of the NPPF that asks that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.

## Principal Road Networks

**Table 29 Potential Indicators - Principal Road Networks**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
T8	Principle Road Networks	Distance to principle road network	Identification of nearest principle road to settlement and measure distance to in miles.  Routes could include A14 or A1, other A roads or B roads (in order of importance).	Google Maps
T9	Principle Road Networks	Time taken to principle road network	Identification of nearest principle road to settlement and measure time taken to reach in minutes.  Routes could include A14 or A1, other A roads or B roads (in order of importance).	Google Maps
T10	Principle Road Networks	Nearest principle road network	Identification of nearest principle road to settlement and score based on user hierarchy - A14 or A1, other A roads, B roads.	Google Maps

- 8.156** As a largely rural district, access to public transport in some settlements within Huntingdonshire may be limited or non-existent. Where public transport is not present within a settlement, easy access to a principal road network provides residents with more direct access to job and leisure opportunities in the wider area.
- 8.157** Proposed indicator *T8: Distance to principal road network* would allow the Council to assess the potential economic and social connections that could be easily achieved by residents of a settlement. For example if a settlement is within a mile of the A1, more direct access can be achieved to major centres such as Huntingdon, St Neots and Peterborough. Likewise indicator *T10: Nearest principal road network* will provide an indication of a settlement's direct accessibility to major centres i.e. settlements on B roads may indicate a more lengthy journey potentially discouraging attempts to access employment opportunities or reducing opportunities for social interaction.
- 8.158** The RTPI Research Paper: [Settlement Patterns, Urban Form & Sustainability](#) - An Evidence Review (May 2018) notes that congestion on the roads generates "negative externalities that undermine productivity" (Page 13). This is especially so where existing economies attract commuters from the wider geographical area causing congestion, delay, slower travel times and increased emissions. It is therefore considered

64 Source: [Williams Rail Review 2019](#) - The role of the railway in Great Britain Evidence paper

that indicator *T9: Time taken to Principal Road Network* would be the most appropriate indicator as it identifies a settlement's access to a principal road network yet is also reflective of the negative externalities of car travel by identifying travel times which are representative of congestion and the associated economic and climate change implications.

- 8.159** Huntingdonshire's commuting patterns are relatively contained with 67% (40,861) of employees commuting within the district<sup>(65)</sup>. However it must also be noted that as of 2011 Cambridge was not the biggest out-commuting destination as one may assume. The [Huntingdonshire Strategic Transport Study Baseline Report May 2017](#) (Page 11) identified the main commuter destinations for Huntingdonshire residents (after Huntingdonshire) as Peterborough (3,843 trips), followed by South Cambridgeshire (2,690 trips), Fenland (2,622 trips), Bedford (1,448 trips), with Cambridge further down the list at 855 trips.
- 8.160** It should also be noted that not all leisure and retail trips will take place within the district and although Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey are identified as popular retail and leisure destinations, additional destinations include Bedford, Cambridge, Peterborough, Serpentine Green (Peterborough), Bar Hill and Cambourne<sup>(66)</sup>.
- 8.161** Taking both employment and retail and leisure scenarios into account the main principal roads have been identified to reflect the main A roads that lead to the identified destinations:
- A1
  - A14
  - A428
  - A141
  - A421
  - A1307
- 8.162** Time taken to access the principal roads will be measured from the centre of a settlement to the junction of the nearest identified A road (above) and will be assessed based on a morning peak period to provide a worse case scenario reflective of potential capacity, congestion and the environmental impact associated with travelling by car. The Department for Transport (DfT) identifies the morning peak period as between 7am and 10am<sup>(67)</sup>. Further refinement through the DfT's National Travel Survey data, identifies that since 2002 the peak hour for morning car travel is between 08:00 and 08:59<sup>(68)</sup>, therefore it is considered that the indicator will be assessed based on travel times between 08:00 and 08:59 to reflect peak time travel.
- 8.163** The scoring range will be based on 3 minute intervals with a maximum cut off of 15 minutes, which is roughly reflective of the mid-point of the average time taken to commute to work by car in the East of England (27 minutes)<sup>(69)</sup>.
- 8.164** The indicator assists the Council in taking into account that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport will vary between urban and rural areas as highlighted in paragraph 105 of the NPPF.

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65 Source: Census 2011 in [Huntingdonshire Strategic Transport Study Baseline Report May 2017](#), page 9

66 Source: [Huntingdonshire Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Assessment Appendices](#) (February 2017)

67 Source: [Travel time measures for the Strategic Road Network and local 'A' roads: October 2019 to September 2020 tables](#)

68 Source: [Table NTS0501](#) Trips in progress by time of day and day of week

69 Source: [Table TSGB0111](#), Average time taken to travel to work by region of workplace and usual method of travel October to December 2018

## Appendix 7 - Communications

### Step One - Identification of Criteria

- 8.165** A reliable mobile and internet connection is now widely accepted as essential to facilitate a good standard of living. Fast, reliable mobile connections and broadband technology are important allowing residents access to online services, such as banking and retail, to promote home working and to facilitate essential contact with emergency services. The ability to use such facilities allows a more flexible quality of life and helps people reach services for whom mobility may be a barrier.
- 8.166** Economic success across the district also relies on employers and commercial operations having high quality connections to mobile and broadband infrastructure. A reliable service maximises opportunities for productivity, efficiency and increases access to markets. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority produced '[Connecting Cambridgeshire Delivering a Digital Connectivity Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough 2018 -2022](#)' (2018) which aims to capitalise on these benefits by providing more reliable infrastructure across the County.
- 8.167** In general, cities and large towns have more reliable and faster broadband capacity with many rural areas lagging behind due to lack of investment or cost benefit due to the smaller population sizes. However, as a rural district the benefits of improved mobile and broadband coverage are even more important to enable sustainable communities. This sentiment is echoed by the National Farmers Union in its document [NFU Spotlight on farm broadband & mobile networks report](#) and numerous Government documents and initiatives including 'House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [Committee An Update on Rural Connectivity Seventeenth Report of Session 2017–19](#). Having better access to fast, reliable mobile and broadband connections can improve capacity and enable communities to become more sustainable by increasing rural business opportunities and allowing residents to benefit from online services and connections. This is also supported through chapter 10 of the NPPF '[Supporting high quality communications](#)'. Therefore it is considered that the criteria for assessment should be broadband connectivity and mobile phone connectivity.

### Step Two and Three - Data Scoping, Data Elimination and Refinement

- 8.168** This section looks at each of the criteria for assessment identified in Step One and reviews the potential indicators identified through a data scoping exercise. Preferred indicators are then refined based on available and suitable data sources to inform the final proposed indicator which can be found in 5 'Settlement Hierarchy Proposed Methodology'.

### **Broadband Connectivity**

**Table 30 Potential Indicators - Broadband Connectivity**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
C1	Broadband Connectivity	Speed of broadband service in settlement	Identification of availability of broadband speeds by standard, superfast and ultrafast categories within a settlement.	Ofcom <a href="#">Mobile and Broadband Checker</a>
C2	Broadband Connectivity	Coverage of broadband service across a settlement	Identification of highest broadband category with full coverage across settlement.	Ofcom <a href="#">Mobile and Broadband Checker</a>
C3	Broadband Connectivity	Highest/lowest available upload speed in settlement	Identification of highest and lowest upload broadband speeds by standard, superfast and ultrafast categories within a settlement.	Ofcom <a href="#">Mobile and Broadband Checker</a>

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
C4	Broadband Connectivity	Highest/lowest available download speed in settlement	Identification of highest and lowest download broadband speeds by standard, superfast and ultrafast categories within a settlement.	Ofcom <a href="#">Mobile and Broadband Checker</a>

- 8.169** The ability of settlements to provide adequate broadband provision has become more important over the years due to increased homeworking, studying, use of TV streaming services and usage by multiple family members. Paragraph 114 of the NPPF notes that "advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being."
- 8.170** Proposed indicator C1 assesses the speed of broadband service in settlements through the availability of three broadband categories: standard, superfast and ultrafast; ultrafast being the optimal category. However, it is common in rural and less populated areas for the more central areas within a settlement to have better access to ultrafast broadband than the peripheral areas. This is corroborated by Ofcom's [Mobile and Broadband Checker](#) . As such it is considered that indicator C1 does not provide a comprehensive picture of broadband availability within a settlement as the presence of superfast broadband in a settlement does not mean that it is accessible to all in that settlement.
- 8.171** Indicators C3: *Highest/lowest available upload speed in settlement* and C4: *Highest/lowest available download speed in settlement* could be used to identify the quality of broadband speeds in a settlement. [Which?](#) notes that speed is important, but "the reality is that not all of us will get the average speeds that providers quote in their ads. That is because companies advertise average speeds available to at least 50% of customers at peak times - meaning the other 50% of customer could get lower speeds." It is therefore also considered that the download and upload speeds on Ofcom, although useful, will not provide any extra benefit to the assessment of broadband service provision.
- 8.172** Indicator **C2 - Coverage of broadband service across a settlement provides has been chosen as the preferred indicator** as it represents a more comprehensive assessment of broadband services. Ofcom's [Mobile and Broadband Checker](#) identifies the following coverage information via three icons.
- Green tick: broadband packages in this category are available
  - Amber triangle: broadband packages in this category are available to some, but not all premises in the selected postcode
  - Red cross: broadband packages in this category are not available
- 8.173** This system allows the settlement to be scored based on the broadband category e.g. Ultrafast or Superfast, which is available to all in the area (Green tick) as opposed to broadband services that are available to just some (Amber triangle). As such indicator C2 is considered the most appropriate method of assessment for 'Broadband Connectivity'.
- 8.174** Officers will use Ofcom's [Mobile and Broadband Checker](#) to assess broadband provision within settlements. Post codes will be identified for the centre of each settlement to undertake a search of coverage within the area based on the three broadband categories: standard, superfast and ultrafast.
- 8.175** In order to provide a scoring mechanism, the Council has looked at what can be achieved with a range of connection speeds. Connection speeds reflective of standard broadband speeds between 10Mb to 20Mb for uploads and downloads, for example would be sufficient for "two people who're looking to just send emails, browse social media and do some online shopping". However a large family who may be "simultaneously streaming and gaming across multiple devices will require a much faster fibre broadband package, which start at a superfast 24Mb and go all the way up to a premium ultrafast 350Mb offering" (Source: [Broadband Compared](#)). Therefore, standard broadband will be scored the lowest due to it's limited capacity and ultrafast broadband the highest to reflect the opportunities available for settlements to respond to modern day technological requirements and increased home working. Only categories that are available to all in the area (Green tick) as opposed to broadband services that are available to just some (Amber triangle) will be attributed points.

**8.176** The indicator allows the Council to assess settlements against Paragraph 114 of the NPPF which notes that "advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being."

### Mobile Connectivity

**Table 31 Potential Indicators - Mobile Connectivity**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
C5	Mobile Connectivity	Number of service providers that provide 'good' indoor 4G voice coverage in settlement	Count of service providers that provide 'good' indoor 4G voice coverage in settlement.	Ofcom <a href="#">Mobile and Broadband Checker</a>
C6	Mobile Connectivity	Number of service providers that provide 'good' indoor 4G data coverage in settlement	Count of service providers that provide 'good' indoor 4G data/ advanced data coverage in settlement	Ofcom <a href="#">Mobile and Broadband Checker</a>
C7	Mobile Connectivity	Number of service providers that provide 'good' outdoor 4G voice coverage in settlement	Count of service providers that provide 'good' outdoor 4G voice coverage in settlement	Ofcom <a href="#">Mobile and Broadband Checker</a>
C8	Mobile Connectivity	Number of service providers that provide 'good' outdoor 4G data/ advanced data coverage in settlement	Count of service providers that provide 'good' outdoor 4G data/ advanced data coverage in settlement	Ofcom <a href="#">Mobile and Broadband Checker</a>

- 8.177** Ofcom's [Communications Market 2019](#) report notes that people are now communicating differently. Although the total number of voice calls is falling, people are using their mobile phones more for calling as opposed to their landlines. "The volume of minutes originating from fixed-line connections fell again in 2019 (by 17%), while the volume of minutes originating from mobiles went up by 5%."<sup>(70)</sup>
- 8.178** The Government is working towards delivering more ambitious 4G indoor coverage, whilst a short survey conducted amongst a sample of businesses identified a negative financial impact of between £100 to £250 per month to those who experience poor mobile signals<sup>(71)</sup>.
- 8.179** Location searches using Ofcom's [Mobile and Broadband Checker](#) indicate that outdoor mobile voice and data provision is more evenly matched across settlements, whilst indoor coverage is more inequitable. The move towards more home working and studying requires greater reliance on indoor mobile phone service provision. For this reason indicators *C7: Number of service providers that provide 'good' outdoor 4G voice coverage in settlement* and *C8: Number of service providers that provide 'good' outdoor 4G data/ advanced data coverage in settlement* have been discounted as indicators.
- 8.180** Indicators *C5: Number of service providers that provide 'good' indoor 4G voice coverage in settlement* and *C6: Number of service providers that provide 'good' indoor 4G data coverage in settlement* are considered to provide a more comprehensive assessment of mobile phone service provision. The indicators reflect the quality of mobile service provision, but also the choice of available network providers in the area reflecting the possible financial packages available to those on varying incomes. However, as it is considered that most people will use their home broadband when using their mobile phone indoors it could be argued that indicator C6 is covered through the assessment of broadband coverage (above). With this in mind the **final proposed indicator is therefore indicator C5: Number of service providers that provide 'good' indoor 4G voice coverage in settlement**, the indicator will allow the Council to assess the sustainability of a settlement in line with paragraph 114 of the NPPF.

70 Ofcom: [Communications Market 2019](#) report, Page 4

71 [Department for Culture Media and Sport: Mobile Infrastructure Projects Impacts and Benefits Report \(July 2017\)](#), Pages 11 and 10



- 8.181** Officers will use Ofcom's [Mobile and Broadband Checker](#) to assess mobile provision within settlements. Post codes will be identified for the centre of each settlement to undertake a search of performance within the area. As provision can vary across settlements, officers will cross-refer to the Ofcom 'map of available services' to look at the general coverage across the whole settlement to ensure that the postcode search is reflective of general settlement provision. If this varies significantly adjustments may be made to reflect provision more reflective of the whole settlement.
- 8.182** Voice coverage is assessed across four mobile network providers: EE, O2, Vodafone and Three. There are other mobile service providers, however Ofcom confirms that these providers will all use one of the four identified networks via a wholesale arrangement. Therefore it is considered that assessment based on the four aforementioned providers is sufficient.
- 8.183** Ofcom's [Mobile and Broadband Checker](#) assesses the availability of the voice category (ability to make phone calls) based on the following measures:
- Green tick = You are likely to have good coverage
  - Amber triangle = You may experience some problems
  - Red cross = You should not expect to receive a signal
- 8.184** Although the Government is currently working towards rolling out 5G network services across the country (Department for Culture Media & Sport: Guidance: [Factsheet 6: 5G](#), 24 November 2020), Ofcom is not yet readily recording the availability of this network. In fact, in a recent speech by Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman noted that 4G coverage across 95% of the UK is not expected until the end of 2025<sup>(72)</sup>, therefore 4G coverage will be used for indicator C5. Scoring will be based on the number of service providers that provide good coverage; the more service providers that provide good coverage the higher the score. This will reflect the quality of mobile service provision, the choice of available network providers available and as such the cost options available to residents, reflecting the range of people on varying incomes that can access mobile service provision.

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72 [Matt Warman's Keynote Speech at Connected Britain 2020](#), 23 September 2020

## Appendix 8 - Employment

### Step One - Identification of Criteria

**8.185** A key objective of the role of planning in sustainable development is to enable and ensure that settlements are economically sustainable (paragraph 8b of the NPPF). A survey of 1,046 employers by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) found that "employers expect that the proportion of people working from home on a regular basis once the crisis is over will increase to 37% compared to 18% before the pandemic"<sup>(73)</sup>. The Institute of Directors survey of around 1,000 employers expands on these findings and notes that "nearly three quarters (74%) [of employers] said they would be keeping increased home-working after coronavirus. Furthermore, more than half of those polled said their organisation intended to reduce their long-term use of workplaces"<sup>(74)</sup>. In fact the Census 2021 estimates "that 8.7 million (31.2%) usual residents aged 16 years and over in employment in England and Wales worked mainly at or from home in the week before Census Day, 21 March 2021." In the Kimbolton, Great Staughton & Molesworth Middle Level Super Output Area this figure was 46.2%.<sup>(75)</sup>

**8.186** The impact of Brexit on business operations is currently unknown as businesses get to grips with new ways of operating, and although the face of employment is changing, it is still expected that there will still be a need for land requirements for new business units. This will of course depend on the particular sector and their specific requirements, for example industrial warehousing operations will still require adequate land for operations. The future need for land for business operations and expansion will be addressed at a later stage of Local Plan production through an Employment Land Study or similar research and therefore will not be addressed in this paper. It is however clear that for the purposes of sustainable development that "significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health" (paragraph 105, NPPF). This approach supports the governments definition of sustainable communities which requires sufficient access to services and employment opportunities (paragraph 73b, NPPF).

**8.187** This topic area will therefore attempt to reflect the requirements of the NPPF by looking at the current situation of settlements in relation to access to employment and distribution of businesses. Further indicator measures to reflect the economic health of a settlement will also be investigated to reflect potential employment/economic opportunities with the area as set out in paragraph 73b of the NPPF.

### Step Two and Three - Data Scoping, Data Elimination and Refinement

**8.188** This section looks at each of the criteria for assessment identified in Step One and reviews the potential indicators identified through a data scoping exercise. Preferred indicators are then refined based on available and suitable data sources to inform the final proposed indicator which can be found in 5 'Settlement Hierarchy Proposed Methodology'.

### Access to Employment

**Table 32 Potential Indicators - Access to Employment**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
EM1	Access to Employment	Distance to nearest Established Employment Area or market town / town / city.	Identification of Established Employment Areas (EEA), employment hubs and market towns in Huntingdonshire and surrounding districts. Distance measured from centre of settlement to the centre of nearest EEA or market town etc.	<a href="#">Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036</a> , <a href="#">Google Maps</a> , or other map-based software such as Arc GIS.

73 CIPD: [Home working set to more than double compared to pre-pandemic levels once crisis is over](#), 16 July 2020

74 Institute of Directors: [Home-working here to stay, new IoD figures suggest](#), 5 October 2020

75 Source: [Travel to work, England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
EM2	Access to Employment	Time taken to nearest Established Employment Area or market town by private motorised vehicle.	Identification of Established Employment Areas (EEA), employment hubs and market towns in Huntingdonshire and surrounding districts. Travel time derived from time taken to reach nearest EEA or market town from the centre of a settlement.	<a href="#">Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036</a> , <a href="#">Google Maps</a> , or other travel time software or web-based systems.
EM3	Access to Employment	Time taken to nearest Established Employment Area or market town by public transport.	Identification of Established Employment Areas (EEA), employment hubs and market towns in Huntingdonshire and surrounding districts. Travel time derived from time taken to reach nearest EEA or market town from the centre of a settlement.	<a href="#">Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036</a> , <a href="#">Google Maps</a> , or other travel time software or web-based systems.

**8.189** The RTPI's Research Paper - [Settlement Patterns, Urban Form & Sustainability Settlement Patterns, Urban Form & Sustainability: An Evidence Review \(May 2018\)](#) (pages 12 and 13) highlights the growing issue around road congestion (especially during peak hours) and emissions as a result of growing urban economies and labour markets. This in turn can impact upon business accessibility and productivity. In response to such issues the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Page 16 of [The Draft Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport Plan](#) (June 2019) set an objective to “connect all new and existing communities sustainably, so residents can easily access a good job within 30 minutes, spreading the region’s prosperity.” As such it is considered that proposed indicator *EM1: Distance to nearest Established Employment Area or market town / town / city* is not appropriate as it does not take into account the environmental and economic impacts of employment locations in terms of time taken to reach a destination, the effect on emissions and potential reduction in business accessibility and productivity.

**8.190** [The Draft Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport Plan](#) also identifies the social impact that commuting time has on the general population. Page 36 of the report notes that:

"Longer commuting times tend to generate negative impacts on personal wellbeing, with the worst effects resulting from journeys of between 61 and 90 minutes. When the method of travel is taken into account, bus and coach journeys lasting more than 30 minutes appear to have the most negative impacts on wellbeing. Journeys of under 30 minutes by train, underground, light rail or tram have no significant negative impacts on wellbeing, with anxiety increasing for longer journeys by these modes. The commuting options that appear to have positive impacts on wellbeing are short car and train journeys under 30 minutes, long walking journeys over 30 minutes, and bicycle journeys."

**8.191** The 2011 Census data for Huntingdonshire [QS701EW - Method of travel to work](#) identified that, although approximately<sup>(76)</sup> 65,659 working age Huntingdonshire residents travelled to work by motorcycle/scooter or were a driver or passenger in a car or van 5,658 residents still used public transport such as the underground, metro, light rail, tram, train, bus, minibus or coach. The percentage of people using public transport also varies across occupational classifications, residents in sales and customer services occupations are more likely to travel to work using public transport (9.89%) than process plant and machine operatives (0.19%). The table below highlights the percentage of Huntingdonshire residents within each occupational category that use public transport.

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<sup>76</sup> Figures in the dataset are rounded or on occasion swapped to prevent the identification of individuals and to protect against the disclosure of personal information.

**Table 33 Public Transport Commuting Method by Occupation**

Occupation (SOC 2010)	Train, underground, metro, light rail, tram, bus, minibus or coach
All Occupations	6.14%
7. Sales and customer service occupations	9.89%
3. Associate professional and technical occupations	8.27%
2. Professional occupations	7.99%
1. Managers, directors and senior officials	7.06%
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations	6.61%
9. Elementary occupations	4.36%
6. Caring, leisure and other service occupations	4.04%
5. Skilled trades occupations	2.52%
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	2.47%

Source: [Nomis](#) - LC7603EW - Method of travel to work (2001 specification) by occupation. Description of occupational categories can be found at [ONS](#).

**8.192** As the percentages are relatively low and public transport provision for commuting is already addressed in the Transport topic it is considered that indicator *EM3: Time taken to nearest Established Employment Area of market town by public transport*. should not be assessed and that **the most appropriate indicator for 'Access to Employment' is EM2:Time taken to nearest Established Employment Area or market town by private motorised vehicle.**

**8.193** The chosen indicator EM2 will assesses the time taken to the nearest Established Employment Area (EEA) or Market Town by private motorised vehicle. Huntingdonshire's EEAs are identified in Policy LP 18 of [Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036](#) (pages 81 to 84). The purpose of the designation of EEAs was to safeguard and enhance established employment uses across Huntingdonshire and to protect them from redevelopment to higher value uses. This enables the Council to maintain a thriving economy and support the economic diversity and vitality of the district and its settlements contributing to the balance of sustainable communities through local business and employment opportunities for local residents and to those in the surrounding areas. The EEAs are listed below. Additional employment areas may be included if they are of a size and nature similar to the current EEAs and have been built since the adoption of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

Location (parish)	Established Employment Areas
<b>Alconbury Hill</b>	Crossways Distribution Centre
<b>Alwalton</b>	Minerva Business Park
<b>Earith</b>	Earith Business Park
<b>Fenstanton</b>	Lakeside Technology Park

Location (parish)	Established Employment Areas
<b>Godmanchester</b>	Cardinal Park Chord Business Park/ Roman Way Centre
<b>Great Gransden</b>	Hardwicke Road Industrial Estate Sand Road Industrial Estate
<b>Great Paxton</b>	Harley Industrial Park
<b>Great Staughton</b>	Airfield Industrial Estate (Little Staughton)
<b>Houghton and Wyton</b>	Upland Industrial Estate Houghton Hill Industries
<b>Huntingdon</b>	Ermine Business Park Hinchingbrooke Business Park St Peter's Road Industrial Area Stukeley Meadows Industrial Estate
<b>Kimbolton</b>	Bicton Industrial Park/ Harvard Industrial Estate
<b>Needingworth</b>	Needingworth Industrial Estate
<b>Ramsey</b>	Highlode Industrial Estate, Upwood Air Park
<b>Sawtry</b>	Black Horse Business Park Brookside Industrial Estate
<b>Somersham</b>	West Newlands Industrial Estate
<b>St Ives</b>	Compass Point Business Park Marley Road Industrial Area Meadow Lane Business Park Parsons Green Business Park Somersham Road Industrial Area
<b>St Neots</b>	Colmworth Business Park Cromwell Road Industrial Estate Howard Road Industrial Estate Little End Road/ Alpha Drive Business Park Station Road Industrial Area
<b>The Stukeleys</b>	Alconbury Enterprise Zone
<b>Warboys</b>	Warboys Airfield Industrial Estate (N.B. <a href="#">Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Site Specific Proposals Plan</a> identifies an Area of Search for waste recycling and recovery in this location.)
<b>Yaxley</b>	Broadway Business Park Eagle Business Park

**8.194** Time taken to reach the centre of market towns of Huntingdon, Ramsey, St Ives and St Neots will also be included if this is a shorter option than access to one of the EEAs to reflect employment opportunities (such as in retail , services and leisure sectors) in the centre of the towns. In addition areas outside the

Huntingdonshire boundary will be included where employment hubs or town centres may be closer than those identified in Huntingdonshire e.g. Bythorn is closer to Thrapston than the EEAs of Bicton Industrial Park and Harvard Industrial Estate in Kimbolton, or Huntingdon, the nearest market town in Huntingdonshire.

- 8.195** Travel time will be determined by time taken to reach nearest EEA employment hub or market town from the centre of a settlement. Officers will use [Google Maps](#), or other travel time software or web-based systems to identify the time taken. Travel times will be taken from the morning peak period in order to represent the busiest time of the day when the majority of people are travelling to work to provide a more realistic measurement. The Department for Transport (DfT) identifies the morning peak period as between 7am and 10am<sup>(77)</sup>. Further refinement through the DfT's National Travel survey data, identifies that since 2002 the peak hour for morning car travel is between 08:00 and 08:59<sup>(78)</sup>, therefore it is considered that the indicator should measure time taken based on travel times between 08:00 and 08:59 to reflect peak time travel.
- 8.196** The [Draft Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport Plan](#) (June 2019) (Page 16) identifies an objective for residents to "easily access a good job within 30 minutes" to reduce the impact of commuting on emissions, to improve business accessibility and productivity and improve personal wellbeing through reduced journey times. As such the maximum journey time will be set at 30 minutes reducing in increments of 6 minutes, with the highest scoring travel time equating to 6 minutes or less. This measurement will also reflect the requirements in the NPPF which promotes accessible locations and limiting the need to travel (paragraph105).

### Distribution of Businesses

**Table 34 Potential Indicators - Distribution of Businesses**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
EM4	Distribution of Businesses	Number of businesses in settlement	Count of all available businesses within and surrounding settlement.	Site visits / search of NNDR / Business Rates: <a href="#">Find a Property Search</a> / search of economic development database / <a href="#">NOMIS</a> Business Register and Employment Survey/ or UK Business Counts
EM5	Distribution of Businesses	Business floorspace in settlement	Sum of all business floorspace within and surrounding settlement.	Site visits / search of NNDR / Business Rates: <a href="#">Find a Property Search</a> / search of economic development database.
EM6	Distribution of Businesses	Number of different types of businesses in a settlement	Count of the number of different business categories within a settlement	Site visits / search of NNDR / Business Rates: <a href="#">Find a Property Search</a> / search of economic development database.

- 8.197** The RTPI's Research Paper - [Settlement Patterns, Urban Form & Sustainability Settlement Patterns, Urban Form & Sustainability: An Evidence Review \(May 2018\)](#) notes that "concentrations of people, activities and resources in urban areas generate economic growth, innovation and resource efficiencies" (page 11). This can occur in two ways, through an agglomeration of fairly similar firms, or a diverse range of business, both of which benefit from complementary or shared supply chains, labour forces, research and development activities, infrastructure and networking opportunities. As benefits can be derived from businesses being in close proximity to firms that are fairly similar or diverse from themselves it is not

77 Source: [Travel time measures for the Strategic Road Network and local 'A' roads: October 2019 to September 2020 tables](#)

78 Source: [Table NTS0501](#) Trips in progress by time of day and day of week

considered that indicator *EM6: Number of different types of businesses in a settlement* would provide any benefit when assessing the distribution of businesses or benefit that this brings to the economy as both similar and diverse business clusters both bring their own benefits to the local economy.

**8.198** The type of businesses present within a local economy will also be dependent on a variety of external factors including location, available labour force, inward investment, local infrastructure and proximity to other labour markets and economies. Huntingdonshire's biggest employers are within the manufacturing sector (sectors based on [Standard Industrial Classifications](#)) which employs approximately 11,000 people (approximately 14.3% of all jobs in Huntingdonshire), Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles who employ approximately 11,000 (14.3%) and Human health and social work activities who employ around 8,000 (10.4%)<sup>(79)</sup>. As wholesale and manufacturing businesses require a large floorspace it is considered that indicator *EM5: Business floorspace in settlement* would not be reflective of the distribution or diversity of businesses within a settlement. **It is therefore proposed that indicator *EM4: Number of businesses in settlement* is applied to assess the distribution of businesses** to reflect the increased choice of employers and to reflect the benefits of business agglomeration and growth potential as identified in the RTPIs Research Paper.

**8.199** The chosen indicator EM4 for distribution of businesses counts the number of businesses within and surrounding a settlement. In order to acquire the data for this indicator a number of potential data sources were assessed. Of the available sources of data, [NOMIS](#) Business Register and Employment Survey and UK Business Counts data unfortunately only filter down to Lower Layer Super Output Level (LSOA). A LSOA is split in areas that contain up to 3,000 people or 1,200 households <sup>(80)</sup>. As a large rural authority, LSOAs in Huntingdonshire tend to cover more than one settlement unless located in the market towns of St Ives, Ramsey, St Neots or Huntingdonshire.

**8.200** In order to provide accurate data at settlement level, data at postcode area level would be best placed to provide a location specific assessment. The Valuation Office's [Find a Property Search](#) can identify all businesses that are required to pay business rates. However, certain buildings can be exempt from business rates, although this is dependent on specific legal requirements, these include:

- agricultural land and buildings, including fish farms,
- buildings used for training or welfare of disabled people,
- buildings registered for public religious worship or church halls,
- home-based businesses if they only use a small part their home for business use , for example a bedroom as an office or sell goods by post, or empty buildings

Source: Valuation Office: [Introduction to business rates](#)

**8.201** A more appropriate source of data was identified to enable the Council to count the number of businesses in Huntingdonshire, the [Inter-Departmental Business Register](#) (IDBR). The IDBR is "a comprehensive list of UK businesses used by government for statistical purposes. It is fully compliant with the European Union regulation on harmonisation of business registers for statistical purposes" ([Inter-Departmental Business Register](#) ). The two main sources of input into the IDBR are Value Added Tax (VAT) and Pay As You Earn (PAYE) records from HMRC. Additional information comes from Companies House, Dun and Bradstreet and ONS business surveys. It covers around 2.7 million businesses in all sectors of the economy, however, since the main two tax sources have thresholds, very small businesses operating below these levels are not, in most cases included. Regardless of limitations it is considered the most appropriate data source as businesses can be mapped using postcode data to specifically identify the location of businesses and which settlements they reside in.

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79 Source: Business Register and Employment Survey : open access. ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from [Nomis](#) on 19 January 2021

80 Source: ONS: [Census Geography](#)

- 8.202** The number of businesses once counted for each settlement will be arranged from lowest to highest. Settlements within the highest decile (10th) with regard to number of businesses will score a maximum of 10 points graduating down in increments of one to reflect the settlements with the lowest business distribution. This will allow the Council to 'grade' all settlements against each other to provide an accurate comparison of business distribution within the district.
- 8.203** The indicator helps to categorise settlements in line with paragraph 73b of the NPPF which notes that the supply of homes, new settlements or extensions to villages should be well located and ensure that their size and location will "support a sustainable community, with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself (without expecting an unrealistic level of self-containment)".

### Economic Opportunities

**Table 35 Potential Indicators - Economic Opportunities**

Ref	Criteria	Indicator	Method of Collection	Source
EM7	Economic Opportunities	Number of employees in settlement	Count of number of employees within a settlement.	<a href="#">NOMIS</a> Business Register and Employment Survey/ search of economic development database.
EM8	Employment Opportunities	Job density within settlement	The number of jobs per working age resident (aged 16-64 years).	<a href="#">NOMIS</a> Business Register and Employment Survey, Office of National Statistics annual population survey's 'population aged 16 to 64', or Jobs Density/ search of economic development database.
EM9	Employment Opportunities	Employment deprivation by settlement	Employment deprivation rank by settlement.	<a href="#">English Indices of Deprivation.</a>
EM10	Employment Opportunities	Economic Activity within settlement	Percentage of economically active residents of working age (aged 16-64 years).	<a href="#">Labour Force Survey</a> 'Labour Supply'

- 8.204** As previously stated part of the three pillars of sustainable development (social, environmental and economic) include adequate provision of jobs and employment opportunities for the working age population. When planning for large scale developments paragraph 73 of the NPPF asks planners to "ensure that their size and location will support a sustainable community, with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself (without expecting an unrealistic level of self-containment), or in larger towns to which there is good access"
- 8.205** The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 measures the level of employment deprivation by assessing the proportion of the working age population that is involuntarily excluded from the labour market. Although the data can be used to demonstrate the number of people that have access to employment opportunities, the data unfortunately only goes down to Lower Layer Super Output Level (LSOA). A LSOA is split into areas that contain up to 3,000 people or 1,200 households <sup>(81)</sup>. As a large rural authority, LSOAs in Huntingdonshire tend to cover more than one settlement unless located in the market towns of St Ives, Ramsey, St Neots or Huntingdonshire. As such it is considered that indicator *EM9: Employment deprivation by settlement* cannot be applied to assess economic opportunities within a settlement.
- 8.206** In Huntingdonshire jobs density is estimated to be 0.78<sup>(82)</sup> compared to 0.86 across Great Britain. As mentioned in paragraph 73 of the NPPF planners should not expect an unrealistic level of self-containment, meaning that a jobs to residents ratio should not necessarily be 1:1. This is because amongst other reasons, there will be members of the working age population who may be unable to work, may choose not to work, or have skills that may be suited to employment opportunities outside of their immediate

81 Source: ONS: [Census Geography](#)

82 Source: ONS [Jobs Density 2018](#)



location. Unfortunately job density figures, like English Indices of Deprivation measures, are only available down to LSOA level. As such it is considered that indicator *EM8: Job density within settlement* cannot be applied to assess economic opportunities within a settlement.

- 8.207** Indicator *EM10: Economic Activity within settlement* seeks to identify the number or percentage of all residents who are economically active through the ONS Annual Population Survey (found in [NOMIS](#)), however this measure also is not available at a small enough geographical area and as such cannot be considered an adequate measure for Huntingdonshire settlements.
- 8.208** Indicator ***EM7: Number of employees in settlement could be achieved*** using the Office of National Statistics [Inter-Departmental Business Register](#) (IDBR). which provides business addresses and number of employees that can then be linked to specific settlements across Huntingdonshire through postcode data. The indicator would allow the identification of settlements with a higher number of jobs, reflective of a larger economy, which in turn could represent a more sustainable economic settlement. As mentioned above the main two tax sources for data do have thresholds and therefore, very small businesses operating below these levels are not, in most cases included. Regardless of limitations it is considered the most appropriate data source as businesses and their number of employees can be mapped using postcode data to specifically identify the location of businesses and which settlements they reside in. As such it is considered that due to the geographical specificity that can be achieved using this dataset and its ability to identify more economically active settlements; the IDBR is the most appropriate data source to measure indicator EM7.
- 8.209** Once counted, each settlement will be arranged from lowest to highest. Settlements within the highest decile (10th) with regard to number of employees will score a maximum of 10 points graduating down in increments of one to reflect the settlements with the lowest number of employees. This will allow the Council to 'grade' all settlements against each other to provide an accurate comparison of employment opportunities within the district.
- 8.210** This meets paragraph 73 of the NPPF which asks planners to "ensure that their size and location will support a sustainable community, with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself (without expecting an unrealistic level of self-containment), or in larger towns to which there is good access"

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

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Title/Subject Matter:** Call for Sites  
**Meeting/Date:** Cabinet – 21 March 2023  
**Executive Portfolio:** Executive Councillor for Planning  
**Report by:** Chief Planning Officer  
**Ward(s) affected:** All Wards

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### **Executive Summary:**

Commencement of a Call for Sites engagement period is proposed to support the first stage of preparation of the Local Plan update. This report presents a Call for Sites form which will provide landowners, developers, agents, individuals and other interested parties with the opportunity to suggest sites for a wide variety of uses, and to indicate when they may be available. The Call for Sites form (online where possible), will ask specific questions to gather sufficiently detailed information on the suitability, availability and viability of proposed sites to allow for consistent and comparable assessments to be completed. The proposed Call for Sites form is set out in Appendix 1 and is supported by a short note summarising the information that people will be asked to submit including signposting to sources for elements such as map coordinates (Appendix 2).

The Call for Sites engagement is interconnected with the Land Availability Assessment Methodology presented in a separate report on this agenda. Together they form a key part of the evidence needed to prepare the next Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

Agreement is sought to commence a Call for Sites to facilitate submission of proposed sites that have the potential to be allocated in a new Local Plan and to help local communities, landowners and their representatives shape the contents of the Local Plan update.

### **Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet is

### **RECOMMENDED**

- To approve the structure of the Call for Sites engagement
- To agree that the Call for Sites engagement period starts after this meeting and its call-in period and should last for 10 weeks.



## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report sets out the Call for Sites form, which will enable site promoters and landowners to propose potential sites for development and a wide range of other uses. The form will enable collection of consistent information to aid in the comparison of sites. This form is primarily designed to be submitted online through the [Planning Policy Consultation Portal](#) but a paper form as attached at Appendix 1 has also been prepared. This report asks that Cabinet approve the contents of the form and agree that a Call for Sites starts providing public engagement opportunities for ten weeks after this meeting and its call-in period.

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

- 2.1 Paragraph 68 of the NPPF states that 'strategic policy-making authorities should have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing land availability assessment. From this, planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability....'
- 2.2 One of the main ways through which the Council can identify these sites is by initiating a 'Call for Sites'. This allows people to make the Council aware of their aspirations for land for uses ranging from new homes to green infrastructure. The local authority must ensure a consistent and appropriate approach to gather sufficiently detailed information on the suitability, availability and viability of proposed sites. It must also have a consistent methodology to assess all proposed or identified sites. Use of a structured form facilitates this. The identification of land availability forms a key part of the evidence shaping the next Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

## **3. CALL FOR SITES**

- 3.1 To proactively seek potential land available for development or allocation in a Local Plan, a Call for Sites engagement period is proposed. This will be conducted by providing an online form for landowners, developers, agents, individuals and other interested parties to complete to let us know what sites are available and when. This will be the primary opportunity for sites to be proposed. A paper version of the form will be available on request for use by those who cannot access the online submission system.
- 3.2 Widespread engagement on the Call for Sites is vital to its success. It is proposed that all people and organisations on the [Planning Policy Consultation Portal](#) (approximately 3,400) will be notified. Planning and Communications colleagues will collaborate to promote the call for sites through a wide range of methods, including social media. Members may also be encouraged to facilitate publicity on this through their own networks to maximise awareness raising of the engagement opportunity.
- 3.3 The form that site promoters will be required to complete when submitting their site is attached as Appendix 1 of this Cabinet report. It should be noted that the majority of people will not see it in this format but in the

online version. This appears shorter and simpler as it includes dropdown boxes to aid accurate completion of information such as parish names and takes the user directly to the next relevant question depending on previous answers submitted. It is possible for people to partially complete the online form and save it to return to if they need to.

3.4 The form has been developed using the Local Government Association and Planning Advisory Service joint guidance on the effective delivery of strategic sites toolkit and by reviewing other Local Authorities' call for sites documentation.

3.5 In summary the Call for Sites form contains the following sections:

- Current land status - includes questions relating to the site's name, location, size, land type, current use and planning history
- Land ownership and legal status - includes questions on the promoter's relationship with the site, site ownership, land control arrangements, legal restrictions and site visit contact information
- Proposed land use and delivery - includes questions on the intended use of the site, when it will be available for development and how long the site will take to build
- Assessment of site and constraints - includes questions on access and servicing, constraints and how constraints may be overcome
- Further evidence - asks for any supporting information, surveys or assessments to be submitted alongside a completed form

3.6 The Call for Sites is supported by a short note (Appendix 2) summarising the information that people will be asked to submit to assist people unfamiliar with the process to understand the range and level of information they are asked to submit. This includes signposting to sources for elements such as map coordinates.

3.7 People and organisations will be able to submit sites for a wide range of potential land uses such as residential, employment, recreation, green infrastructure, community uses, flood mitigation and renewable energy generation. To meet national guidance for residential and employment uses, such sites should be capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings or for economic development purposes be of at least 0.25 hectares (or capable of delivering at least 500 square metres of floor space).

3.8 By including sites that are potentially suitable for diverse uses and development types, the Call for Sites provides the opportunity to identify a wide range of potential sites that will help to support viable, mixed and sustainable communities.

#### **4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

4.1 The Panel discussed the Call For Sites at its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

4.2 The Panel heard, in response to a question from Councillor Gardener, that in relation to flood mitigation measures, the Council would take a steer from the owners of land on what they would like it to be considered for.

Should the land owner put forward a site for a particular use it would be assessed for that use. The only instance when an alternative use may be considered on a site would be if for instance someone put forward a site for a particular commercial use and in consultation with Economic Development colleagues it is revealed that there would be a better market for a slightly different commercial use.

- 4.3 Councillor Blackwell enquired how resources would be managed and ensure that accurate data is recorded, the Panel heard that the Call for Sites form asks the landowners/site promoters to submit a lot of the data themselves, which will be checked to ensure the consistency of sources, in some cases extra information regarding the source of the data may be requested so that it can be double checked. In terms of resources site assessments will be done primarily within the team but it is hoped that the wider planning team could assist with some assessments, this will partly depend on the number of sites received.
- 4.4 Councillor Blackwell stated her concerns over the form itself, observing that it appeared difficult to navigate and uninviting, she expressed concern that small landowners would be put off. The Panel were assured that the online version of the form was a lot more user friendly and that guidance notes were provided to assist in its completion however a further check of the form would be undertaken prior to its publication. It was anticipated that many sites would be presented across the district, and that landowners have the options to seek professional support and guidance which in turn would help manage the teams resources.
- 4.5 Following questions from Councillors Gray and Pickering, the Panel were advised that this form could be used to submit all types of sites including green spaces and renewable energy. A plan was being developed with the Communications team to help maximise this message.
- 4.6 The Panel heard, following a question from Councillor Gardener, that policies in neighbourhood plans could not be used to assess the sites. This will be a planning policy 'off' assessment of sites, so the technical assessment of site will disregard both the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan. The submitted sites will be consulted on however later as part of a further issues and options consultation, giving the opportunity for communities to put representations in on the sites in their area, whether they support or object or suggest alternative uses. This would include parishes with Neighbourhood Plans. This may also identify desirable sites to parishes which had been unavailable at the time of their neighbourhood plan's creation and could then be included if they wished in a future update of their plan.
- 4.7 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for the Cabinet to make a decision on the recommendations.

## **5. CONSULTATION AND TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 5.1 Subject to agreement from Cabinet, the Call for Sites will be promoted for public engagement running for 10 weeks. The extended period is to maximise the level of promotion that can be carried out on it and allow plenty of time for people to identify site opportunities and submit the details sought to enable accurate assessment. The sites submitted will then be reviewed, compiled into a consolidated interactive map and assessed using the Land Availability Assessment Methodology.

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

- 6.1 The Call for Sites form will assist in the delivery of the Council's objectives within the Corporate Plan (2022-2023):
- Tackling climate change and caring for the environment
  - Enhancing employment opportunities and supporting businesses
  - Supporting the needs of residents
  - Improving the housing situation
  - Strengthening our communities
- 6.2 Within the objective 'Improving the housing situation', the Call for Sites form specifically relates to key action 1: 'Commence an update of the Local Plan. This should ensure that local planning policies include a focus on sustainability of new developments, achieving the right mix of housing sizes, types and tenures to meet the needs of residents, the quality of the built environment, creating healthy spaces and communities, public transport and digital connectivity'.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 To be effective Local Plans need to be kept up to date. As set out in Regulation 10a of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating. Approval was received from Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023:
- 'To agree to the commencement of work to compile an updated local evidence base to inform and support preparation of the full update to the adopted Local Plan, working with partners and consultants as necessary'
- 7.2 The proposed Call for Sites is part of this process and will also ensure that the Council can evidence site allocation and development strategy decisions when the Local Plan is independently examined by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State.

## **8. SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The Call for Sites is a key element of collecting sites not previously known to the Council. It seeks submission of sites for a variety of purposes



relevant to the environment and climate change including land for green infrastructure, renewable energy generation, biodiversity improvements and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

- 8.2 The Call for Sites is the start of a process of identifying, assessing and appraising land to consider its future use. Submitted sites will initially be assessed through the Land Availability Assessment. It is proposed that those which are then demonstrated to be deliverable or developable for their proposed use will proceed to the more detailed Sustainability Appraisal. This will consider their contributions to and impacts on economic, social and environmental strands of sustainability to maximise the Local Plan's contribution to delivering a sustainable future for the district.
- 8.3 The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report approved for public consultation at HDC's Cabinet meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023 sets out a sustainability framework whereby a series of decision aiding questions have been devised in which to assess development strategy, sites and development management policy options and their alternatives. The outcomes of this will be presented in a Sustainability Appraisal document and cross referred to sites in the LAA.
- 8.4 Together the assessments/appraisals will help inform whether a site should be allocated in the next Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

## **9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 9.1 The Call for Sites is critical as a method by which to gather information on potential development opportunities across the district and to actively engage with site promoters and landowners. The Call for Sites will enable the Council to demonstrate that they are meeting the requirements as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.

## **10. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

Appendix 1 – Call for Sites Consultation Form  
Appendix 2 – Call for Sites Summary of Requirements

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- [National Planning Policy Framework](#)
- [National Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and economic land availability assessment](#)
- [HDC Cabinet - Tuesday, 24th January 2023](#)
- [Local Government Association and Planning Advisory Service – Effective delivery of Strategic Sites](#)

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

Name/Job Title: Clare Bond, Planning Policy Team Leader  
Tel No: 01480 387104  
Email: [clare.bond@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:clare.bond@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

# Call for Sites Form 2023

Huntingdonshire District Council

Questions marked with an \* are mandatory

## 1 Call for Sites Form 2023

### Section 1: Your details

Name \*

Company Name (if applicable)

Address Line 1 \*

Address Line 2

Address Line 3

Postal Town

Post Code \*

Email \*

Telephone number \*

## Section 2: Current land status

### Site name \*

Please provide a name for your site so that it can be consistently referenced

### Site location \*

Please describe the location of the site. Alternatively please provide the full postal address of the site, including the postcode if known, below

### Coordinates for the site

Please identify the coordinates at the centre of the site.

You can find GPS coordinates of your site on websites such as google maps or open source Grid Reference Finders such as [UK Grid Reference Finder](#) by hovering over the centre of the site and right clicking the mouse the coordinates will look similar to this: 52.328150 , -0.18143758 (number of decimal places may be larger than this example) and represent longitude and latitude respectively.

Alternatively Easting and Northing can be provided which will look similar to this 524026, 271563 (Easting, Northing).

**Location / Site plan \***

Please provide a map outlining the boundary of the site in red and any other adjoining land that you own in blue. The map should be at an identified standard metric scale (typically 1:1,250 or 1:2,500 for larger sites) and should show the direction north.

If possible, please also provide where possible a .zip file containing a shape file and associated files (.cpg, .dbf, .prj, .sbn, .sbx, .shp and .shx)

**Parish**

A map of Huntingdonshire District Council Parishes can be found here: [Election Maps \(ordnancesurvey.co.uk\)](http://electionmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk). Once open choose *Civil Parishes or Communities* in the left-hand navigation bar. Click on the area that you are interested in on the map (you can zoom in and out), the name of the town or parish will be displayed above the map.

**Is your site in a single parish? \***

*(please select one answer)*

Yes .....  No .....

**If yes, please state which parishes**

**Is the site wholly within the administrative District of Huntingdonshire District Council?**

Please select yes or no. If the site spans more than one local authority area please choose no and then use the tick boxes to select any of the Local Authority areas where the site is also located.

A map of Huntingdonshire District Council and adjoining Local Authorities can be found here: [Election Maps \(ordnancesurvey.co.uk\)](http://Election Maps (ordnancesurvey.co.uk)). Once open choose *Unitary Authorities* and *Districts* in the left-hand navigation bar. Click on the area that you are interested in on the map (you can zoom in and out), the name of the Local Authority will be displayed above the map.

**Is the site wholly within the administrative District of Huntingdonshire District Council? \***

(please select one answer)

Yes .....  No .....

**If no, please name the neighbouring authority that the site is also located in**

(please select all that apply)

- Bedford .....
- Central Bedfordshire .....
- East Cambridgeshire .....
- East Northamptonshire .....
- Fenland .....
- Peterborough .....
- South Cambridgeshire .....

**Size of site \***

Please type in the area of your site in hectares or square metres. If using hectares please specify to two decimal places. Site areas can be measured using a variety of tools such as Google or Bing maps or specialist software or programmes. Please also identify how you measured the site so that the Council can understand the accuracy of the measurement.

**Land type \***

**Is the site**

- Garden land .....
- Part previously developed land and part greenfield land .....
- Wholly greenfield land .....
- Wholly previously developed land .....

**Current use of the site \***

**Is the site**

*(please select all that apply)*

- Agricultural land* .....
- Commercial* .....
- Community uses* .....
- Industrial* .....
- Residential* .....
- Garden land only (no demolition involved)* .....
- Other* .....

**If your answer to the previous question was other, please specify below**



## Planning history

Please note down any previous planning applications associated with the site including planning reference numbers, description of application (e.g. what the application was for) and the result e.g. approved, pending decision, refused, withdrawn, allowed on appeal etc. This information can be found on our public access system using this weblink: [Simple Search \(huntingdonshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

Also please note down if the site has been submitted for consideration in a previous 'Call for Sites' and include, the site name, reference, previous proposed use and date it was submitted. Include any further information that may be relevant.

**Section 3: Land ownership and legal status**

**What is your relationship with the site? \***

**What is your relationship with the site?**

*(please select all that apply)*

- Landowner .....
- Planning consultant .....
- Land agent .....
- Registered social landlord .....
- Developer / housebuilder .....
- Parish / Town Council .....
- None / Other .....

**If your answer to the previous question was none / other, please specify below**

**Site ownership \***

**How many owners are there for the site?**

*(please select one answer)*

- Single individual / company .....
- Single family .....
- Multiple owners .....
- Don't know .....

**Land control arrangements \***

This information will help the Council to understand the complexity of the site in terms of site delivery.

**What land control arrangements are there on the site?**

*(please select all that apply)*

- Individual control .....
- Family control .....
- Multiple control with legal agreement .....
- Multiple control with no legal agreement .....
- Developer company .....
- Housebuilder interest with no legal agreement .....
- Optioned .....
- Investor controlled .....
- Other .....
- Don't know .....

**If your answer to the previous question was other, please specify below**

**Development supported by landowners \***

**Is development of the site supported by all landowners?**

- Yes .....
- No .....
- Don't know .....

**Legal restrictions \***

This could include any covenants that apply to the land. This can help the Council to understand how the site can be used most efficiently to guarantee successful delivery for example by ensuring the site can be developed for its proposed use. If there are legal restrictions on the site please provide as much detail as possible.

**Are there any legal restrictions on the site?**

Yes .....

No .....

Don't know .....

**Please specify the legal restrictions**

**Site visit \***

In most cases the appraisal of a site will require a site visit in order for the Council to appropriately assess the site

**Can the site be comprehensively seen from a public road, public footpath, bridleway other public land?  
(please select one answer)**

Yes .....  No .....

**Site visit contact \***

In some cases where the site cannot be comprehensively seen from an appropriate or safe location, the Council will need to make arrangements to visit the site via a suitable contact

**Please provide contact details (name, telephone and email) for a suitable person(s) to contact for a site visit**

### Section 4: Proposed land use and delivery

Proposals for mixed uses should complete all relevant boxes.

#### Intended Use - Residential

**Intended use - Residential**  
*(please select all that apply)*

- Market and/or affordable housing – please state the number of homes .....
- Specialist housing – please state the number of homes .....
- Custom and self-build housing – please state the number of plots .....
- Gypsy & Traveller – please state the number of pitches .....
- Travelling Showpeople accommodation – please state the number of plots .....
- Moorings – please state the number of berths .....
- Nursing and care homes – please state the number of bedspaces .....

**Number of homes**

**Number of homes**

**Number of plots**

**Number of pitches**

**Number of plots**

**Number of berths**

**Number of bedspaces**

**Intended Use - Commercial**

**Intended use - Commercial**  
*(please select all that apply)*

- Employment – please state the gross floorspace in sqm .....*
- Retail – please state the gross floorspace in sqm .....*
- Commercial leisure uses (hotels, gyms, cinemas etc.) – please state the gross floorspace in sqm .....*
- Logistics, distribution – please state the gross floorspace in sqm .....*

**Gross floorspace in square metres**

**Gross floorspace in square metres**

**Gross floorspace in square metres**

**Gross floorspace in square metres**

**Intended Use - Infrastructure**

**Intended Use - Infrastructure**  
*(please select all that apply)*

- Supporting infrastructure e.g. schools, community centres – please specify proposed use(s) .....*
- Health uses – please state the gross floorspace in sqm .....*
- Transport and parking/lorry parking - please state the number of hectares .....*
- Renewable energy - please state the type and amount of land .....*

**Please specify proposed use(s)**

**Please indicate the gross floorspace in square metres**

**Please indicate the number of hectares**

**Please state the type of renewable energy and indicate the number of hectares**

**Intended Use - Open Space Uses**

Please note that land should not be double counted, for example where land will be used for biodiversity and also safeguarding against flooding.

**Intended Use - Open Space Uses**

*(please select all that apply)*

*Natural, green or open spaces for a variety of uses e.g. woodland creation, parks, sports and recreation grounds, allotments etc. - please state the number of hectares .....*

*Biodiversity net gain opportunities - please state the number of hectares .....*

*Land to safeguard against flooding - please state the number of hectares .....*

**Please state the number of hectares**

**Please state the number of hectares**

**Please state the number of hectares**

**Intended Use - Other**

If the proposed land use is not listed above, please tick this box and provide details of the use and amount of land area below

**Intended Use - Other**

*Other .....*

**Please state the proposed land use and amount of land**

**Reasons for site submission**

**Reason for submitting the site for the proposed use(s)**

**Site delivery \***

**How will the site be delivered?**

*(please select one answer)*

- Directly delivered by land owner* .....
- Planning permission acquired and then sold to a third party for development* .....
- Allocation status acquired and then sold to a third party for obtaining planning permission and development* ....
- Delivered by a master developer* .....
- Delivered by house builder* .....
- Unknown* .....
- Other* .....

**If your answer to the previous question was other, please specify below**



**Availability for development \***

**When will land realistically become available for development? The land will be available for development from:**

*(please select one answer)*

- 2023 .....
- 2024 - 2028 .....
- 2029 - 2034 .....
- 2035 - 2039 .....
- 2040 onwards .....

**Issues to resolve before development \***

**Are there any issues that need to be resolved before the site is available for development?**

**Build out of the site \***

**How many years do you think the site will take to build out once planning permission has been granted?**

**Section 5: Assessment of site and constraints \***

**Access and servicing**

Please identify where possible the availability of the following infrastructure to the site.

This will enable the Council to identify issues with regards to viability e.g. how much infrastructure will be required to facilitate the delivery of the site or where pipelines running through the site may influence how the site can be developed.

*(please select all that apply)*

	Within site	Accessible from site boundary	Not immediately accessible	Unknown
<b>Gas supply</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Mains water supply mains</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Electricity supply</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Public highway</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Digital and telecommunications infrastructure</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Other constraints**

We will check many constraints such as flooding, heritage assets, nature conservation sites etc. However if you are aware of any of the following issues which could affect the site being developed please let us know. If the option is not available please provide further information in the free text field.

**Are you aware of any issues that could affect the site being developed? Please selected all that apply**  
*(please select all that apply)*

- Ransom strips (piece of land owned by someone else which may restrict access to the site) .....
- Pylons .....
- Contamination .....
- Wastewater treatment works within 400m .....
- Other .....
- Don't know .....
- None of the above .....

**If your answer to the previous question was other, please specify below**

**Overcoming constraints**

Please identify what can be done to overcome any constraints that have been identified above. This could include incorporating something into the design of the site like a public footpath, phasing delivery or acquiring extra funding from a (named) third party. Please provide as much detail as possible.

**Please identify what can be done to overcome any constraints that have been identified above**

## Section 6: Further evidence

### Further evidence

If you have already prepared any assessments or technical documents like the ones listed below to support the potential development of your site, please upload them here.

- Air Quality Assessment
- Biodiversity Reports
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation response
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Heritage/ Archaeological Assessment
- Landscape or Townscape Assessment
- Masterplan or Concept Design
- Sequential Test Assessment
- Transport Assessment / Transport Statement
- Tree, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows Survey
- Viability Assessment

**What further evidence has been undertaken to inform the development of the proposed site?**

## Submit

### Submission

By submitting this form I consent to receiving email notifications about future consultation events on planning issues.

I understand that Huntingdonshire District Council will use the information that I have provided for the purpose of producing planning policy for Huntingdonshire. I consent to Huntingdonshire District Council disclosing my comments to third parties for this purpose.

I understand that I have the right to ask for a copy of the information held about me and which is the subject of Data Protection Act 2018 (for which there may be a charge) and to correct any inaccuracies in my information. Data Protection Act 2018: Any information provided will be treated in strict confidence and will be held on and processed by computer.

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## Call for Sites Summary of Requirements (2023)

### Call for Sites Consultation

The Council are looking for sites for a variety of uses to meet development needs for the next Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

We are looking for a variety of sites capable of accommodating various uses such as residential, employment, commercial, retail, green infrastructure, renewable energy, flood mitigation and infrastructure development.

For residential and employment uses, please submit sites that are capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings or economic development on sites of 0.25 hectares (or 500 square metres of floor space) and above in line with the thresholds in the National Planning Practice Guidance.

This is the primary Call for Sites consultation for this Local Plan. It is imperative that if you wish to have a site considered for allocation in the Local Plan that you submit it during this consultation.

Please note that the submission of a site only means that the site will be considered and assessed as to whether it has potential to be suitable for future development. This does not guarantee that it will be allocated for development in the Local Plan, or that planning permission can be obtained for the proposed development.

### How to respond

It is preferred that a site be submitted online using our [online consultation portal](#). There are six sections to the form, progress can be saved and returned to later before it is submitted.

Please submit one form for each site that is being proposed.

Questions marked with an \* are required and have to be completed in order to successfully submit a response.

The survey includes a range of questions including free text options to tick boxes and multiple choice questions. Questions that are accompanied by circle icons are single option tick boxes. Questions that are accompanied with square boxes are multiple choice questions.

To submit your site, you must first log in on the [online consultation portal](#) (if you do not already have an account, you will need to register for one). Next click on the Call for Sites consultation event. There will be three 'tabs' at the top of the page:

- **'Survey Details'** – this provides more detail on the consultation and is where copies of any documents that may be relevant can be found
- **'Survey'** – this is where all details relating to the site that is being submitted for consideration can be entered
- **'What People Say'** – this is where other submissions can be viewed

A paper copy of the form can be found on the Council's [Call for Sites webpage](#). Please return it to [local.plan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:local.plan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk) or return via post to:

Planning Policy,  
Huntingdonshire District Council,  
Pathfinder House,  
St Marys Street  
Huntingdon,  
PE29 3TN

The consultation runs from: **XX March to 23:59 on X June 2023**

## Section 1: Your details

In this section we will ask for details regarding your:

- Name
- Address
- Email
- Telephone number

## Section 2: Current Land Status

In this section we will ask for details regarding:

- Site name
- Site location
- Coordinates for the site – see below for details
- Location / site plan - typically 1:1,250 or 1:2,500 scale for larger sites
- Parish(s) the site is located in
- Whether the site is wholly within the administrative boundary of Huntingdonshire
- Size of site – in hectares or square metres
- Land type
- Current use of the site
- Planning history / status – see below for details

**Coordinates for the site** - you can find GPS coordinates of your site on websites such as google maps or open source Grid Reference Finders such as [UK Grid Reference Finder](#) by hovering over the centre of the site and right clicking the mouse the coordinates will look



similar to this: 52.328150 , -0.18143758 (number of decimal places may be larger than this example) and represent longitude and latitude respectively.

Alternatively Easting and Northing can be provided which will look similar to this 524026, 271563 (Easting, Northing).

**Planning history / status** - please note down any previous planning applications associated with the site including planning reference numbers, description of application (e.g. what the application was for) and the result e.g. approved, pending decision, refused, withdrawn, allowed on appeal etc.

Also please note down if the site has been submitted for consideration in a previous 'Call for Sites' and include, the site name, reference, previous proposed use and date it was submitted. Include any further information that may be relevant.

### Section 3: Landownership and Legal Status

In this section we will ask for details regarding:

- Your relationship with site
- Site ownership
- Land control arrangements
- Whether development is supported by landowners
- Legal restrictions – see below for details
- Site visit
- Site visit contact

**Legal restrictions** - this could include any covenants that apply to the land. This can help the Council to understand how the site can be used most efficiently to guarantee successful delivery for example by ensuring the site can be developed for its proposed use. If there are legal restrictions on the site please provide as much detail as possible.

### Section 4: Proposed Land Use & Delivery

In this section we will ask for details regarding:

- **Intended Use:** We are looking for a variety of sites and uses including but not limited to those set out in the list below. Tick all that apply and also provide the quantum of the proposed use:
  - **Residential**
    - Market and/or affordable housing – stating the number of homes
    - Specialist housing – stating the number of homes
    - Custom and self-build housing – stating the number of plots
    - Gypsy & Traveller – stating the number of pitches
    - Travelling Showpeople accommodation – stating the number of plots
    - Moorings – stating the number of berths

- Nursing and care homes – stating the number of bedspaces
  - **Commercial**
    - Employment – stating the gross floorspace in sqm
    - Retail – stating the gross floorspace in sqm
    - Commercial leisure uses (hotels, gyms, cinemas etc.) – stating the gross floorspace in sqm
    - Logistics, distribution – stating the gross floorspace in sqm
  - **Infrastructure**
    - Supporting infrastructure e.g., schools, community centres – specify the proposed use(s)
    - Health uses – please indicate the gross floorspace in sqm
    - Transport and parking/lorry parking – please indicate the number of hectares
    - Renewable energy – state the type of renewable energy and indicate the number of hectares
  - **Open Space Uses**
    - Natural, green or open spaces for a variety of uses e.g., woodland creation, parks, sports and recreation grounds, allotments etc. - stating the number of hectares
    - Biodiversity net gain opportunities – stating state the number of hectares
    - Land to safeguard against flooding - stating the number of hectares
  - **Other uses**
    - Other intended uses - stating the proposed land use and amount of land
- Reason for submitting the site for the proposed use(s)
  - How the site will be delivered
  - Availability of the site
  - Issues to resolve before development
  - Build out of site

## Section 5: Assessment of Site and Constraints

In this section we will ask for details regarding:

- **Access and Servicing**, please identify where possible the availability of the following infrastructure to the site:
  - Gas pipes
  - Mains Water Supply mains
  - Electricity Supply
  - Public highway
  - Digital and telecommunications infrastructure
- **Other constraints**: We will check many constraints such as flooding, heritage assets, nature conservation sites etc. However, if you are aware of any of the following issues which could affect the site being developed please let us know, constraints include:
  - Ransom strips (piece of land owned by someone else which may restrict access to the site)
  - Pylons – on or crossing
  - Contamination

- Lack of Utilities provision
  - Other / Additional information
- **Overcoming constraints:** Please identify what can be done to overcome any constraints that have been identified. Please provide as much detail as possible.

## Section 6: Further Evidence

You are welcome to provide any further evidence or technical reports that may have been undertaken to inform the development of the proposed site. This is not obligatory but will help the Council to understand your intentions for development of the site, these could be:

- Air Quality Assessment
- Biodiversity Reports
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation response
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Heritage/ Archaeological Assessment
- Landscape or Townscape Assessment
- Masterplan or Concept Design
- Sequential Test Assessment
- Transport Assessment / Transport Statement
- Tree, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows Survey
- Viability Assessment

**Once we have completed an initial consideration of your site, we may ask you for further information where this would help with the assessments.**

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

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Title/Subject Matter:** Draft Land Availability Assessment Methodology

**Meeting/Date:** Cabinet – 21 March 2023

**Executive Portfolio:** Executive Councillor for Planning

**Report by:** Chief Planning Officer

**Ward(s) affected:** All Wards

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### **Executive Summary:**

A Local Plan must be supported by an assessment of land that can meet the development needs across its plan period. National policy requires local authorities to have a clear understanding of the land available for development in their area and notes that they should identify from this a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability.

This report presents the draft Land Availability Assessment Methodology which will build on the Call for Sites to enable the Council to commence this process and meet the requirements as set out the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.

The primary purpose of the Land Availability Assessment (LAA) is to set out a clear methodology by which to assess potential development sites and provide a consistent way in which to assess their suitability, availability, achievability, deliverability and potential capacity. It will help the Council to establish approximately what development sites could be available to meet Huntingdonshire's growth needs, what their capacity is, the constraints that would need to be overcome to deliver them and when they may be completed.

This assessment of sites will help to identify a future supply of land for housing and economic development uses over the plan period and has the potential to identify other uses such as sites for recreation, green infrastructure, flood mitigation and renewable energy generation. It is proposed that public consultation is undertaken to enable people and organisations to contribute towards the development of the land availability assessment methodology.

Both the Call for Sites engagement and the Land Availability Assessment Methodology form a key part of the evidence to prepare the next Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

Agreement is also sought to conduct public consultation to seek input on the draft Land Availability Assessment Methodology to help finalise an agreed Methodology by which potential Local Plan site allocations will be assessed.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet is

**RECOMMENDED**

- To approve the contents of the draft Land Availability Assessment Methodology.
- To agree that the draft Land Availability Assessment Methodology can be published for public engagement for six weeks after this meeting and its call-in period.

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report presents the Land Availability Assessment (LAA) Methodology (Appendix 1) for consideration and asks that Cabinet approve the contents and agree that it can be published for public engagement for six weeks after this meeting and its call-in period.

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

- 2.1 Paragraph 68 of the NPPF states that 'strategic policy-making authorities should have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing land availability assessment. From this, planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability....'
- 2.2 The Council must have a consistent methodology to assess all proposed or identified sites. This is achieved through a Land Availability Assessment. The identification and assessment of land availability forms a key part of the evidence shaping the next Huntingdonshire Local Plan and provides a consistent way in which to assess potential development sites as required through paragraph 68 of the NPPF.

## **3. LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1 The role of the LAA is to provide a consistent approach to the consideration of potential sites available for development or allocation in a Local Plan. This draft LAA Methodology document sets out how land will be assessed and presented and contains a series of questions throughout the methodology asking consultees if they agree with the approach proposed, providing an opportunity for the public to influence the scope of the assessment.
- 3.2 The proposed assessment methodology is broken down into five stages.
- Stage 1 – Site/Broad Location Assessment (Appendix 1 pages 4 to 7)
  - Stage 2 – Sites Assessment (Appendix 1 pages 8 to 41)
  - Stage 3 – Windfall Assessment (Appendix 1 page 42)
  - Stage 4 - Assessment Review (Appendix 1 page 43)
  - Stage 5 – Production of a Final Evidence Base (Appendix 1 page 43)
- 3.3 It is important to note that the assessment does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development. It is the role of the assessment to provide information on the range of sites which are potentially available to meet the Council's requirements. It is for the development plan itself to determine which of those sites are the most suitable to meet those requirements. A summary of the draft LAA Methodology is provided below.

- 3.4 As set out in Stage 1 of the draft LAA Methodology, the document proposes to broadly follow the methodology for land availability assessment as set out in national guidance (shown on page 3 of Appendix 1). It proposes to identify a potential future supply of land and assess whether it is suitable, available and achievable for a variety of uses such as housing and economic development over the plan period. This requires sites to be assessed without consideration of existing local policies to avoid predetermining their suitability. Where there have been differences or adaptations to the national guidance, these have been identified and justified within the methodology document.
- 3.5 National guidance focuses primarily on sites for residential and employment uses although other uses can be incorporated. It is proposed that the LAA should also identify potential sites for other uses such as recreation, green infrastructure, flood mitigation and renewable energy generation. It is proposed that Huntingdonshire's LAA considers all potential land uses together so that a full picture of the development opportunities across the district can be identified.
- 3.6 National guidance states that it may be appropriate to consider all sites and broad locations capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings, or economic development on sites of 0.25 hectares (or 500 square metres of floor space) and above. The Council can also consider alternative site size thresholds. In the draft LAA Methodology, it is proposed to follow the site threshold set out in national guidance.
- 3.7 To gather as many potential sites as possible, the draft LAA Methodology proposes a call for sites consultation (as detailed in a separate report on this agenda) complemented by a desktop review of other known sites identified from the following sources (Appendix 1, page 6):
- Sites that were assessed in detail in the last iteration of the Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) published in October 2017
  - Currently undecided planning applications for major development
  - Recently refused or withdrawn planning applications for major development
  - Currently undeveloped allocated sites from the Local Plan to 2036
  - Redevelopment opportunities identified within the Market Towns Programme
  - Permission in principle and brownfield register sites that are above the site threshold
  - Council owned sites that are not currently effectively used
- 3.8 Stage 2 of the draft LAA Methodology sets out that after the desktop review and the Call for Sites consultation, it is proposed that potential sites will be inputted into a GIS database. This will show the spatial distribution of potential sites across the district and also store key information in a single place that will be made viewable via an interactive map.
- 3.9 Once a site has been recorded, an initial filter based on fundamental constraints is proposed to determine if a detailed assessment of the site



should be undertaken or not. If fundamental constraints are identified, then the site would be discounted. The relevance of different constraints will vary according to the proposed use of the site.

3.10 A site passing the fundamental constraints would then progress to a detailed assessment in order to assess it for its suitability, availability, achievability and deliverability or developability. These terms are all defined nationally in the Planning Practice Guidance and explained with in the draft LAA Methodology. They are summarised as:

- **Suitable** – a high level assumption on whether a site would provide an appropriate location for development when considered against relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated
- **Available** – no legal or ownership impediments exist to inhibit development which can come forward in the short term
- **Achievable** - there is a reasonable prospect that viable development will be built on the site at a particular point in time
- **Deliverable** – a housing site should be available, in a suitable location and have a realistic prospect of homes being built within 5 years
- **Developable** – a housing site should be suitable and have a reasonable prospect of being built at a specified time

3.11 As part of the assessment, the Council also proposes to identify an indicative potential capacity for each site to inform how many homes or the amount of non-residential floorspace could be achieved on potentially suitable economic development or residential sites during the plan period (Appendix 1, commencing on page 14). The potential capacity of sites is based on a series of categories. These have been devised using guidance documents relating to net developable areas and density, local examples of characteristic areas and monitoring data of more recent planning permissions. This has resulted in a series of residential and economic development categories ensuring a localised approach towards capacity calculations. For some land uses like renewable energy or green infrastructure, creating categories is inappropriate due to their individual natures, so these are proposed to be assessed on a site by site basis.

3.12 The categories are expected to form a starting point for the calculation of the potential capacity for growth which will be adjusted to reflect site specific circumstances. Capacity may be subject to further refinement once detailed development proposals are under consideration and more detailed site specific evidence is available.

3.13 By including sites that are potentially suitable for a wide range of development types, the LAA provides the opportunity to consider both the potential benefits and impacts of development as a whole on the surrounding area and acknowledges the range of uses that are necessary to maintain viable, mixed and sustainable communities. This approach ensures that all land is assessed together as part of plan preparation to identify which sites are the most suitable and deliverable for particular uses.

#### **4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

- 4.1 The Panel discussed the Draft Land Availability Assessment Methodology at its meeting on 1st March 2023.
- 4.2 Following observations from Councillor Gray, the Panel heard that an update to Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2017 in the form of Integrated Water Management Studies was underway which would address all aspects of flooding from recent years such as surface water run off from new developments.
- 4.3 The Panel heard, after a further question from Councillor Gray, that the approach to windfall sites has changed. The team were currently using available data for sites of less than 10 houses to formulate predictions for the future. It was acknowledged the wording would be adapted to clarify the windfall definition and the methodology.
- 4.4 Councillor Wells queried why recently refused applications appeared in the list of sites to review at 2.10, the Panel heard that under the methodology current planning policy cannot be taken into account, therefore these sites would be reviewed however may be refused again in the future once the planning policy has been reapplied.
- 4.5 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for the Cabinet to make a decision on the recommendations.

#### **5. CONSULTATION AND TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 5.1 Subject to agreement from Cabinet, the LAA Methodology will be published for public engagement. It is proposed that this will commence following this meeting and its call-in period and run for six weeks. This is not a statutory requirement. However, it is considered to be best practise and provides an opportunity for the community to start shaping the replacement Local Plan and the way potential sites are assessed from its earliest stage. Comments received from the public engagement period will be used to amend the LAA Methodology where it is necessary to do so.

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

- 6.1 The production of the LAA will assist in the delivery of the Council's objectives within the Corporate Plan (2022-2023):
- Tackling climate change and caring for the environment
  - Enhancing employment opportunities and supporting businesses
  - Supporting the needs of residents
  - Improving the housing situation
  - Strengthening our communities

- 6.2 Within the objective 'Improving the housing situation', the LAA specifically relates to key action 1: 'Commence an update of the Local Plan. This should ensure that local planning policies include a focus on sustainability of new developments, achieving the right mix of housing sizes, types and tenures to meet the needs of residents, the quality of the built environment, creating healthy spaces and communities, public transport and digital connectivity'.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 To be effective Local Plans need to be kept up to date. As set out in Regulation 10a of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating. Approval was received from Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023:

'To agree to the commencement of work to compile an updated local evidence base to inform and support preparation of the full update to the adopted Local Plan, working with partners and consultants as necessary'

- 7.2 The draft LAA Methodology is part of this process and will also ensure that the Council can evidence their decisions when the Local Plan is independently examined by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State.

## **8. SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The LAA Methodology provides a means by which to consistently assess whether potential sites are suitable, available, achievable and deliverable to meet Huntingdonshire's future needs throughout the plan period.
- 8.2 The development strategy and Local Plan more widely are required to be appraised through the sustainability appraisal process for their impacts on economic, social and environmental strands of sustainability ensuring that a sustainable direction of growth is achieved.
- 8.3 The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report approved for public consultation at HDC's Cabinet meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023 sets out a sustainability framework whereby a series of decision aiding questions have been devised by which to assess the development strategy, sites and development management policy options and their alternatives. Sites judged to be deliverable or developable through the LAA will also be subject to this assessment. The outcomes of this will be presented in a Sustainability Appraisal document and cross referred to sites in the LAA.
- 8.4 Together both assessments/appraisals will help inform whether a site should be allocated in the next Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

## **9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 9.1 The LAA Methodology forms a critical part of the preparation of the next Huntingdonshire Local Plan by providing a consistent way in which to assess potential sites to meet growth needs across the plan period. It builds on information gathered through the Call for Sites process which seeks to identify potential opportunities across the district and actively engages with site promoters and landowners. The LAA will enable the Council to demonstrate that they are meeting the requirements as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.

## **10. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

Appendix 1 – Draft Land Availability Assessment Methodology

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- [National Planning Policy Framework](#)
- [National Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and economic land availability assessment](#)
- [HDC Cabinet - Tuesday, 24 January 2023](#)

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## **Draft Land Availability Assessment Methodology**

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## Document Information

**Title:** Draft Land Availability Assessment Methodology: January 2023.

**Status:** Consultation paper to establish a methodology to assess sites submitted for potential allocation within the Huntingdonshire Local Plan update to aid in the consistent and equitable consideration of potential sites, the results of which will inform Huntingdonshire District Council's Local Plan Review.

**Date of approval for consultation:** Overview and Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) Panel, 1 March 2023. Cabinet, 21 March 2023.

**Document availability:** The Draft Huntingdonshire Land Availability Assessment Methodology 2023 can be found on the Council's [consultation portal](#). Copies can be downloaded from the portal and responses to the consultation may be entered directly into the portal. A hard copy can be viewed at Customer Services Reception, Huntingdonshire District Council, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon. This office is open from 8:45 to 17:00 Mondays to Thursdays and 8:45 to 16:30 on Fridays.

**Please note:** This document may be available in alternative formats on request.

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## Document Information



## 1 Introduction

- 1.1** The primary objective of this Land Availability Assessment (LAA) Methodology is to establish how sites promoted to the Council for some form of allocation in the Local Plan update will be systematically assessed. The outcomes of the assessments will indicate approximately what development sites could be available to meet Huntingdonshire's growth needs, what their capacity is, the constraints which would need to be overcome to deliver them and when they could be completed. This is to show whether it is possible to accommodate the development and other land use needs of Huntingdonshire during the next Local Plan period. It is proposed to provide an assessment of sites promoted uses beyond the traditional assessment of residential and employment proposals and include those such as sites for open space uses, flood mitigation or renewable energy.
- 1.2** An assessment of land availability identifies a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the plan period. It can also identify other uses such as sites for recreation, green infrastructure, flood mitigation or renewable energy generation. The assessment of land availability includes the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment requirement as set out in paragraph 68 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The assessment of land availability will form a key part of the evidence being used to prepare the next Huntingdonshire Local Plan.
- 1.3** The role of the Land Availability Assessment Methodology is to provide a consistent approach to the consideration of sites put forward for development. This document sets out how the Council proposes to assess land and present the outcomes of these assessments. This is a consultation version published for the purpose of seeking input from individuals and organisations on the approaches proposed; it will be available for comment for six weeks between March and May 2023. All comments received will be reviewed and proposed changes balanced against each other as it is recognised that conflicting views may be put forward. Where appropriate amendments will be made to the Methodology to finalise it for use.
- 1.4** By including sites that are potentially suitable for a wide range of development types the proposed LAA Methodology provides the opportunity to consider both the potential benefits and impacts of development as a whole on the surrounding area and acknowledges the range of uses that are necessary to maintain viable, mixed and sustainable communities. This approach ensures that all land is assessed together as part of plan preparation to identify which sites are the most suitable and deliverable for a particular use.
- 1.5** This proposed LAA Methodology includes all potential land uses in one comprehensive document so that a full picture of the development opportunities across the district can be identified. It is acknowledged that this may become unwieldy if very high numbers of sites are put forward and so the final format will remain flexible to maximise its accessibility to users.

### What is a Land Availability Assessment?

- 1.6** Paragraph 68 of the NPPF states that '*strategic policy-making authorities should have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing land availability assessment. From this, planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability....*'
- 1.7** To fulfill this requirement, an assessment of land availability needs to be undertaken. The purpose of this is to identify a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the plan period. These terms are defined in national guidance and are set out in Chapter 2 under the 'Detailed assessment' information. It can also identify other uses such as sites for recreation, green infrastructure, flood mitigation and renewable energy generation.
- 1.8** It is important to note that the assessment does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development. It is the role of the assessment to provide information on the range of sites which are potentially available to meet the Council's requirements, it is for the development plan itself to determine which of those sites are the most suitable to meet those requirements.

## Introduction

**1.9** The three main purposes of the assessment are to:

1. establish the approximate deliverable capacity of potential development sites;
2. determine whether it is possible to accommodate in full the development needs of Huntingdonshire;  
and
3. appraise the suitability, availability and achievability of potential development sites and consider how they can contribute to a sustainable development strategy in the next Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

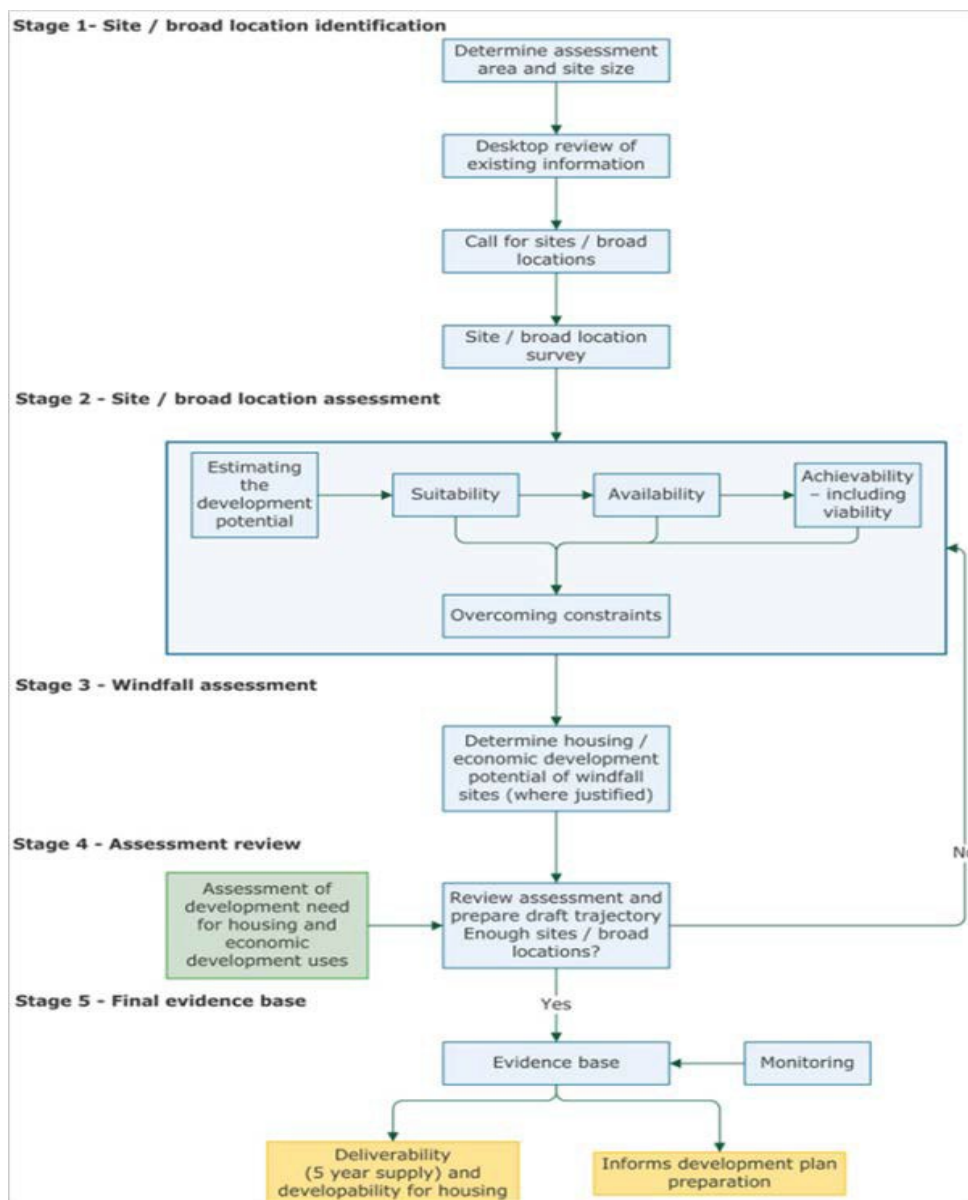
## 2 Methodology

2.1 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) sets out a methodology for land availability assessments, it consists of five stages (also shown in the flowchart in Figure 2.1):

- Stage 1 – Site / broad location identification
- Stage 2 – Site / broad location assessment
- Stage 3 – Windfall assessment
- Stage 4 – Assessment review
- Stage 5 – Final evidence base

2.2 Huntingdonshire's proposed methodology follows the steps identified in the NPPG. Where there have been alterations to the national methodology, these have been highlighted and reasons for the differences between them set out.

Figure 2.1 Land Availability Assessment



## 2 Methodology

### Stage 1 - Site / broad location identification

#### What geographical area is the assessment covering?

- 2.3** This assessment is proposed to cover the whole administrative area of Huntingdonshire. Huntingdonshire is a large district covering some 913km<sup>2</sup> with four market towns providing core services, one other town, almost 100 villages and a scattering of hamlets and properties in the countryside. The population for Huntingdonshire at the 2021 Census was 180,800, there is approximately 80,020 dwellings.
- 2.4** The district has long pursued a strategy of focusing development in the larger, more sustainable settlements and carefully limiting growth within small villages and the countryside. This was continued in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 whereby the vast majority of the plan's growth were focused within the larger settlements in the district and their immediate environs defined as spatial planning areas (these were Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey) or key service centres (these were Buckden, Fenstanton, Kimbolton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys and Yaxley). No allocations were made in the remaining settlements due to their more limited levels of sustainability and access to services and facilities. The growth strategy did however set out a role for a limited amount of sustainable development in contributing to the social and economic sustainability of these settlements and in supporting a thriving rural economy. A proposed Settlement Hierarchy Methodology for assessing the sustainability of settlements throughout the district is published for consultation concurrently with this document. Together the finalised methodologies will provide assessments to help shape the future development strategy for Huntingdonshire.
- 2.5** The proposed LAA Methodology looks to work in conjunction with the Call for Sites to seek proposals throughout the district. This is considered appropriate to allow for comprehensive assessment of the sustainability of different locations, the changes to people's lifestyles and aspirations arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and the wide scope of site types and uses this methodology proposes may be considered. It is acknowledged that there is the possibility that sites maybe put forward that include land beyond Huntingdonshire in adjoining districts. As it is outside the scope of a single district Local Plan to allocate sites that span district boundaries assessments will only be carried out in detail for the portion of any such site within Huntingdonshire. The Council will, however, liaise with neighbouring authorities to raise awareness of any cross-boundary proposals.

#### Question 1

##### Geographical Scope

Do you agree that sites throughout the whole district should be considered within the Land Availability Assessment?

If not, how do you think the scope should be refined?

#### What types of sites should be considered in the assessment?

- 2.6** National guidance requires assessment to be undertaken of potential land for residential and economic development uses. However, a Local Plan covers a far wider range of issues than this to promote overall sustainable development and seeks to facilitate strong, healthy communities that will meet the needs of current and future residents. This methodology proposes to include assessments for:
- residential uses across many tenures and types of homes
  - commercial uses including employment, retail, commercial leisure, logistics and distribution

- infrastructure uses including community uses such as schools and community centres, health care uses, transport and parking and renewable energy production facilities
- open space uses including green spaces such as woodland planting, sports and recreation grounds and allotments, land for biodiversity net gain facilitation and land to safeguard against flooding

### Question 2

#### Types of Sites

Do you agree with the list of types of sites that should be considered in the Land Availability Assessment?

If not, please suggest any extra types of sites you think should be included, or any of those suggested that you think should be excluded.

### What size of sites should be considered in the assessment?

- 2.7** National guidance states that it may be appropriate to consider all sites and broad locations capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings, or economic development on sites of 0.25 hectares (or 500 square metres of floor space) and above. The Council can also consider alternative site size thresholds.
- 2.8** For this land availability assessment, the site size threshold stated in national guidance is proposed to be used for residential and economic development. Any development sites that could accommodate fewer than five dwellings or fewer than 500 square metres of business floor space would not be included. For proposed housing developments, sites below the threshold would instead be accounted for under the windfall assessment shown in stage 3 of Figure 2.1 and provide additional diversity to supply. Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 used a housing threshold of at least 0.2 hectares of land and provision of 10 or more new homes so the proposed threshold could allow for consideration of significantly more sites but could include small-scale sensitively designed sites in locations which may not have been suitable using the previous threshold. For economic development uses 0.25 hectares or 500 square metres of floor space is considered small enough to cover sites at a scale capable of supporting small/ medium size enterprises but large enough to allow for create of jobs opportunities on site should development take place.
- 2.9** Sites promoted for other uses such as green infrastructure, renewable energy generation, community uses or flood mitigation will also be assessed. It is suggested that 0.25 hectares will be the minimum threshold appropriate for these uses too. For instance, for renewable energy schemes it is proposed that only sites suitable large scale standalone renewable and low carbon energy projects are appropriate rather than those attached to an existing building many of which do not require planning permission.

### Question 3

#### Site Sizes

Do you agree with the proposed site size thresholds for residential and economic development uses?

Do you agree with the proposed 0.25 hectare minimum site size for other uses?

If not, please suggest your preferred site size(s) and which use(s) it should be applied to.

## 2 Methodology

### Desktop review of existing information

- 2.10** In accordance with national guidance, use of a comprehensive range of sources is proposed in order to identify and assess as many potential sites as possible. It is proposed that sites be identified from:
- sites that were assessed in detail and thought potentially suitable for development in the last iteration of the Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) published in December 2017
  - currently undecided planning applications for major development <sup>(1)</sup>
  - recently refused or withdrawn planning applications for major development
  - currently undeveloped allocated sites from the Local Plan to 2036
  - redevelopment opportunities identified within the Markets Town Programme
  - permission in principle and brownfield register sites that are above the site threshold
  - council owned sites that are not currently being effectively used
- 2.11** As well as a desktop review to identify land, a Call for Sites will also be undertaken. This is an opportunity for landowners, developers, agents, individuals and other interested parties to suggest sites for development, and to let us know when they may be available for development. To ensure equitable assessments, those who promoted their site(s) previously would be required to resubmit using the revised call for sites form if they wish for the site to be reconsidered. The Council will endeavour to contact known sites owners and agents.
- 2.12** To avoid duplication of sites identified through more than one source (such as a recently withdrawn major application also put forward during a call for sites consultation), a cross checking exercise will be undertaken.

#### Question 4

##### Identifying Sites

Do you think that the list of desktop sources coupled with a call for sites will be sufficient to identify the number and range of sites required?

If not, please suggest any additional sources that could be used.

### Call for sites consultation and survey

- 2.13** It is anticipated that the Call for Sites consultation will run for 10 weeks during March to June 2023 on our [online consultation portal](#). Further details on this will be able to be found on our website where a document summarising the requirements will also be provided setting out what information will be ask for in the call for sites form. The form will be finalised once the outcomes of this LAA Methodology consultation are analysed and an appropriate changes made to the methodology that may have consequential impacts on the form.
- 2.14** The Call for Sites consultation is an opportunity for the Council to gather evidence on a wider range of potential development opportunities located across the district to assess whether needs can be met and where they can be met. It is an opportunity to gather up to date information and evidence on potential sites and identify previously unknown development sites.

1 Defined in the NPPF as being for housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

- 2.15** To assess whether needs can be met over the plan period, the Council requires evidence on the suitability, availability, achievability and deliverability of each potential site. To gather this information, a form has been created whereby landowners, developers, agents, individuals and other interested parties can provide us with this information. The form has the following sections:
- **Current land status** - includes questions relating to the site's name, location, size, land type, current use and planning history
  - **Land ownership and legal status** - includes questions on the promoter's relationship with the site, site ownership, land control arrangements, legal restrictions and site visit contact information
  - **Proposed land use and delivery** - includes questions on the intended use of the site, when it will be available for development and how long the site will take to build
  - **Assessment of site and constraints** - includes questions on access and servicing, constraints and how constraints may be overcome
  - **Further evidence** - asks for any supporting information, surveys or assessments to be submitted alongside a completed form
- 2.16** The consultation form asks for location plans and where possible for respondents to provide a shapefile of the boundary of the site. This is so that each site can be accurately mapped onto our GIS database and compiled onto an interactive map of sites. It will also assist with site visits.

## 2 Methodology

### Stage 2 - Sites assessment

- 2.17** Following the desktop review and the call for sites consultation, it is proposed that all potential sites will be inputted into a GIS database using the location plans and shapefiles provided. This will show their spatial distribution across the district and also store key information in a single place that will be made viewable via an interactive map published on our website.
- 2.18** Parish/settlement maps will also be created and be made available in the LAA to show the spatial distribution of potential sites across each parish area. These will include all proposed land uses in order to provide a comprehensive review of potential opportunities for each parish. Detailed settlement assessments detailing the sustainability of each settlement will also be available in a series of profiles which will be completed following finalisation of the settlement hierarchy methodology and evidence gathering.

#### Question 5

##### Mapping of Sites

Do you agree that sites involving all proposed uses in a parish/ settlement is an appropriate way of showing the location of sites?

How do you think larger sites that cross parish boundaries should be shown?

- 2.19** Following identification of a site, an initial filter based on fundamental constraints is proposed to determine if a detailed assessment of the site should be undertaken or not. If fundamental constraints are identified then the site would be discounted. The relevance of different constraints will vary according to the proposed use of the site. Otherwise, the site would progress to a detailed assessment.

### Identification of fundamental constraints

- 2.20** For step one of the proposed site assessment methodology, it is suggested that the following significant environmental and policy constraints be considered, if any of these apply to a site, then it will be discounted and not taken forward for detailed assessment:
- the land is classed as Grade 1 agricultural land unless the proposed use is compatible with this such as being for community orchard / garden or flood mitigation purposes
  - more than half the site is within flood zone 3b (functional floodplain) determined by consideration of the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and the Environment Agency's flood zone maps unless the site is proposed for water compatible development or flood mitigation purposes
  - the site is a local green space as designated via a neighbourhood plan
  - the land is designated as being a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or other important nature designation such as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a Special Protection Area (SPA) or Ramsar Site
  - development of the site would involve the loss of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland or veteran trees
  - as per the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Plan (July 2021), unless proposing a compatible use, the site lies within a:
    - Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA) or within 250m of one – see policy 5
    - Mineral Development Area (MDA) or within 250m of one - see policy 6
    - Mineral Allocation Area (MAA) and the proposed development does not meet the criteria for which it is allocated - see policy 6
    - Waste Management Area (WMA) or within 250m of its boundary – see policy 10
    - Water Recycling Area (WRA) or within 400m of its boundary – see policy 11



- Transport Infrastructure Area (TIA) or within 400m of its boundary – see policy 15
- Consultation Area (MAAs, MDAs, WMA, TIA or WRAs) or within 250m of one or 400m for WRAs, and does not meet the criteria for which it is allocated – see policy 16
- the site is below the stated site threshold

**2.21** If fundamental constraints are identified, the site would be discounted from further detailed assessment. If a site does not have any fundamental constraints environmental or policy constraints, then it progresses to detailed assessment. Tables will be prepared ordered by parish listing all sites identified and to clearly show whether the site has been discounted or not and what the relevant fundamental constraints were for any decision to discount a site from the detailed assessment stage. An example of how this will be presented is shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 Outcomes of assessment of fundamental constraints**

Site reference	Site name and address	Proposed use	Fundamental constraints identified?	Continue to detailed assessment?
HLAAXXXX	XXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXX	Green infrastructure	None	Yes
HLAAXXXX	XXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXX	Employment	Over half the site is situated in Flood Zone 3b	No
HLAAXXXX	XXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXX	Housing	There are two veteran trees within the site but the site is of sufficient size that these could be incorporated into a landscaping scheme	Yes
HLAAXXXX	XXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXX	Housing	The site is within 400m of a water recycling centre	No
HLAAXXXX	XXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXX	Biodiversity net gain	SSSI within the site but the proposed use could support this	Yes

### Question 6

#### Fundamental Constraints

Do you agree with the list of fundamental constraints identified based on which sites would be eliminated from progressing to a detailed assessment?

If not, what constraints do you think should be added to or removed from the list?

### Detailed assessment

**2.22** Once it has been decided that a site shall progress to a detailed assessment, to accord with government guidance the site will then be assessed for their **suitability** (can the site be physically developed for the proposed use); **availability** (is the site available for development); and **achievability** (is there a reasonable

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prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site) for future development as whether it is **deliverable** (is suitable, available and achievable and can be delivered within five years) or is **developable** (is in a suitable location with a reasonable prospect of its availability and achievability).

- 2.23** These terms are explained further alongside how they will be assessed in the following subsections.
- 2.24** Also set out below are the proposed capacity assumptions that will be made when estimating the potential capacity for each development site. These in combination with the site promoter's own anticipated capacity figures (depending on the nature of the use proposed) will be displayed in the final assessment.
- 2.25** At the end of this section is a template setting out how all the above is expected to be presented in a future Land Availability Assessment document.

### Suitability assessment

- 2.26** National guidance states that a site can be considered **suitable** if it would provide an appropriate location for development when considered against relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated. Thus, the assessment of a site's suitability for development is a high-level assumption about whether the site physically could be developed, rather than whether the site should or would be developed. While the assessment of a site's suitability is only one aspect of the land availability assessment, it is a critical aspect of the assessment.
- 2.27** Just because a site is considered potentially suitable for development or its proposed use does not mean it will necessarily come forward for allocation as it is the role of the Local Plan to determine a sustainable strategy for growth based on a settlement hierarchy supported by proposals for complementary uses such as green infrastructure and community uses. The land availability assessment serves to inform that, and to assess whether the development needs of the district can be accommodated in the plan period.
- 2.28** A site that has been discounted is not considered suitable for development. A site that has progressed to a detailed assessment may still be considered unsuitable for development particularly if any physical or environmental constraints present cannot be mitigated. Within the assessment for suitability, there will be a statement of whether or not the site is considered to be potentially suitable for development, and if so for what form and quantity of development, including an overview of measures that would be necessary as part of the development to overcome constraints. Details on how capacity will be calculated can be found in the 'Calculating capacity' subsection to this methodology.
- 2.29** When assessing the suitability of a site against constraints, national guidance states that information collected as part of a call for sites survey, as well as other relevant information should be utilised, such as:
- existing national policy;
  - appropriateness and likely market attractiveness for the type of development proposed;
  - contribution to regeneration priority areas;
  - potential impacts including the effect upon landscapes including landscape features, nature and heritage conservation.
- 2.30** The suitability assessment is free from assessment against current local planning policies to allow for consideration of a new growth strategy and settlement hierarchy.
- 2.31** Where a site is already allocated or has planning permission, it is generally considered suitable for development although it may be necessary to assess whether circumstances have changed which would alter the site's suitability particularly if the permission has been extant for several years or a planning application has not come forward on an allocated site at all or for the originally identified use.
- 2.32** Following a review of a site's potential suitability for development, it will be categorised into one of three groups as set out in Table 2 below:

**Table 2 Suitability categorisation**

Potentially suitable for development	+
Potentially suitable although constraints to overcome	~
Not suitable for development	-

**Question 7****Suitability Assessment**

Do you agree with the proposed suitability categorisation?

If not, please suggest your preferred form of categorisation for assessment of the suitability of a site.

**Availability assessment**

- 2.33** The Council needs to ensure that there is a supply of sites that will contribute towards meeting the identified needs of the area and enabling a robust land supply for future development during the plan period. If a site has been assessed as being potentially suitable for development, then an **availability** assessment will be undertaken.
- 2.34** Using the information available through the call for sites submission, a judgement on a site's availability will be made based on whether there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership impediments to development, and when it is likely to deliver the proposed development. Where further information is needed or clarification required, we will get in touch with the site promoters and other stakeholders as appropriate. This could include details on legal or ownership impediments or the programme for known infrastructure needed for development of the site.
- 2.35** In submitting sites for consideration, site promoters will be asked to indicate the following on the call for sites submission form:
- Details of land ownership and legal constraints;
  - What the current and proposed land uses are for the site;
  - Reasons for the site promoter submitting the site for the proposed use(s);
  - When the site is expected to become available for development;
  - Issues to resolve before development; and
  - Whether there are any known constraints that could restrict the development of the land.
- 2.36** If there is no reasonable prospect that the site will become available for development over the lifetime of the plan, then it will not be included as a realistic option for development.
- 2.37** For residential and employment use proposals national guidance states that the existence of planning permission can be a good indication of the availability of sites. Sites without permission may be considered available within the first five years depending on site specific circumstances; further guidance to this is contained in the government's 5 year housing land supply guidance. Sites meeting the definition of deliverable should be considered available unless evidence indicates otherwise. Consideration can also be given to the delivery record of the developers or landowners putting forward sites, and whether the planning background of a site shows a history of unimplemented permissions. A similar principle of considering the existence of planning permission and development history of the site may be applied to other proposals for built development. For community, open space, infrastructure and other similar uses the assessment of availability will be based on the details provided.

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- 2.38** Following a review of a site's potential availability for development, it will be categorised into one of three groups as set out in Table 3 below:

**Table 3 Availability categorisation**

Available for development	+
Potentially available for development although constraints to overcome	~
Not available for development	-

### Question 8

#### Availability Assessment

Do you agree with the proposed availability categorisation?

If not, please suggest your preferred form of categorisation for assessment of the availability of a site.

### Achievability assessment

- 2.39** For sites considered potentially suitable, a statement of the **achievability** of development including consideration of viability and any infrastructure dependencies will be made.
- 2.40** National guidance states that a site for residential or employment use is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time. This is essentially a judgement about the economic viability of a site, and the capacity of the developer to complete and let or sell the development over a certain period. Similar judgements about achievability will be made on other proposals for built development regarding likely viability and market attractiveness to assess their potential achievability. For community, open space, infrastructure and other similar uses the assessment of achievability will be based on the details provided.
- 2.41** To assist us in this assessment, site promoters will be asked to indicate the following on the call for sites submission form:
- Details on land ownership, legal restrictions and land control arrangements
  - Details on access and servicing constraints
  - Identification of any issues that could affect the site being developed
  - Details on how constraints can be overcome
- 2.42** Following a review of a site's potential achievability for development, it will be categorised into one of three groups as set out in Table 4 below:

**Table 4 Achievability categorisation**

Development is considered to be achievable	+
Development is potentially achievable although there are constraints to overcome and / or infrastructure requirements	~
Development is not considered to be achievable	-

### Question 9

#### Achievability Assessment

Do you agree with the proposed achievability categorisation?

If not, please suggest your preferred form of categorisation for assessment of the achievability of a site.

### Deliverability / developability assessment

**2.43** National guidance states that information on suitability, availability, achievability and constraints can be used to assess the timescale within which each site is capable of development. This may include indicative lead-in times and build-out rates for the development of different scales of sites. On the largest sites allowance should be made for several developers to be involved in housebuilding elements. The advice of developers and local agents will be important in assessing lead-in times and build-out rates by year. Assessment of local lead-in times and build-out rates will also be used to reflect local market circumstances.

**2.44** Relating to residential development, paragraph 68 of the NPPF states that planning policies should identify a supply of:

- a. specific, deliverable sites for years one to five of the plan period; and
- b. specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15 of the plan.

**2.45** The NPPF also provides a definition of **deliverable**:

*To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. In particular:*

- a. *sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans).*
- b. *where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.*

**2.46** The NPPF states that to be considered **developable**, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.

**2.47** Sites that are considered to be suitable, available and achievable and also meet the tests set out in the NPPF will be considered to be deliverable.

**2.48** Sites that are considered to be suitable, available and achievable but do not meet the tests set out in the NPPF will be considered to be developable over the plan period.

**2.49** The call for sites form asks how many years that the site promoter considers it will take to build out the site once planning permission has been granted. For both deliverable and developable sites, where appropriate, we will get in touch with a site promoter if we need to discuss the expected delivery rate and timings.

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- 2.50** National guidance on deliverability and developability focuses on residential development. However, it is proposed that the LAA will consider potential sites for a far wider range of uses. Insofar as it is practicable similar principles will be applied to proposals for other uses, particularly those for built development, to provide a consistent form of assessment. This is proposed to assist in understanding the potential timescales of potential proposals coming forward to help in providing certainty to local communities when being asked to consider possible options for the next Local Plan.

### Question 10

#### Deliverability/ Developability Assessment

Do you agree with use of the national definitions of deliverability and developability for non-residential uses as well as for proposals for residential use?

If not, please suggest your preferred form of assessment of the deliverability and developability of non-residential uses.

### Calculating capacity

- 2.51** In accordance with national policy, plan makers should seek to make the most efficient use of land and plan for sustainable forms of development.
- 2.52** National guidance does not set out a specific methodology for undertaking capacity studies. It does state that the estimation of the development potential of each identified site can be guided by the existing or emerging plan policy including locally determined policies on density. Therefore, calculating the potential capacity of sites should not solely rely on rigid calculations to maximise density and development potential but should balance this development potential with ensuring capacities respond to their context and incorporate appropriate amounts of landscaping, infrastructure and any flood mitigations where necessary.
- 2.53** The guidance produced by the Urban and Economic Development Group (URBED) in their 1999 report 'Tapping the Potential: best capacity' is still considered a best practice source. This guide informed the approach taken in the capacity study for Huntingdonshire's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (December 2017) which applied the guidance locally. An assessment has also been undertaken of recently completed development schemes within Huntingdonshire to compare actual capacities delivered to those based on 'Tapping the Potential'. The approach taken in the last HELAA has been reviewed and although has formed a starting point, it is proposed to update this based on locally specific information where feasible.
- 2.54** Huntingdonshire's proposed LAA Methodology will seek to quantify deliverable capacity on sites as relevant to the proposed use to help inform preparation of options for the next Local Plan. This is a high level estimate of potential capacity to provide a guide to the existence of sufficient capacity to ensure there is enough land to meet future needs in the Local Plan update and enable exploration of alternative growth strategies. The capacity figures calculated are indicative only and will be subject to variation dependent upon the precise details of proposed development schemes. Where appropriate these calculations have been influenced by detailed site specific knowledge of Development Management and Urban Design Officers and planning permissions that have already been granted and any initial site assessment / masterplanning undertaken by the site promoter. The character of the surrounding area as well as the site's location and context in terms of the natural, historic and built environment will also be taken into account when considering an appropriate capacity. Guidance from Huntingdonshire's [Landscape and Townscape SPD](#) and [Design Guide SPD](#) will also be applied.

- 2.55** The potential capacity figures arise from a combination of the developable area of a site and the density of development appropriate in the site's specific location. Density means the intensity of land use, that is, how much development is built on a site or area. Density can be calculated using the net site or gross site area. Both net and gross densities are calculated using the basic formula: the number of dwellings or building floor space divided by the area of land that they occupy.
- 2.56** The developable area for the purposes of calculating capacity includes only the area which will be used for housing, employment, retail and other built development and directly related uses (the net area). Table 5 below summarises what is included within the net developable area and what is excluded:

**Table 5 Net developable areas**

Net developable area includes	Net developable area excludes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access roads within the site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major distribution roads</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private garden space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary schools</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Car/ lorry parking areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sports pitches or open spaces serving a wider area</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incidental open space and landscaping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant landscape buffers including sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's play areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas within flood zone 3b <sup>(2)</sup></li> </ul>

- 2.57** Where some or all of a site lies within flood zone 2 or 3a the capacity will be modified to reflect the potential need to allow additional land for flood mitigation.
- 2.58** The following developable area percentages in Table 6 are proposed as the starting point for assessment of a site's capacity although they are always subject to the individual site specific circumstances and detailed design proposals may reflect differing proportions if the site is brought forward for development. These have been derived from page 21 of 'Tapping the Potential' and adapted to take into account local examples of development within Huntingdonshire.

2 unless the development proposed is water compatible

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**Table 6 Developable areas**

Site size	Developable areas
0.2 - 0.4ha	100%
0.41 - 1.99ha	80-95% depending on the nature of surrounding uses and anticipated site specific requirements
2 - 5.99ha	70-80% depending on the nature of surrounding uses and anticipated site specific requirements
6 - 9.99ha	60-70% depending on the nature of surrounding uses, anticipated site specific requirements and the potentially higher infrastructure requirements of the development
10 - 49.99ha	50-60% reflecting the need for substantial landscaping and the potentially higher infrastructure requirements of the development. On sites towards the larger end of this range, there is likely to be a range of developable areas across the site reflecting the need to accommodate a mix of sustainable uses and densities.
Over 50ha	For sites at this strategic scale, it is anticipated that there will be a range of developable areas across the whole site to accommodate a sustainable mix of uses and densities, local centres and supporting infrastructure. For these sites, the developable area will be calculated on a site by site basis taking into account the proposed uses and any environmental constraints and site specific considerations.

- 2.59** We will consider the use or uses being proposed and calculate the capacity of different types of development accordingly. Typically, in larger sites the proportion of developable land is lower, as there is greater need for land for uses such as landscape buffers and schools.
- 2.60** In this methodology details on how density calculations will be applied for residential and employment developments have been provided. These will also be applied accordingly for mixed use developments. It is important to note that densities and net developable area will also be dependent on the context and site specific considerations for each site.
- 2.61** For other land uses such as those relating to renewable energy, flood mitigation, infrastructure and green infrastructure will be calculated on a case by case considering the specifics of the site and proposal taking into account the nature of the potential use and the individual site characteristics and physical constraints.

### Question 11

#### Developable Area

Do you agree with the proposed approach for calculating the net developable area of a site?

If not, please suggest your preferred approach.

### Residential development

- 2.62** Within Huntingdonshire the highest building densities are typically located at the centres of the market towns and larger villages, while rural areas and development nearer the edges of settlements are typically built to lower densities.







- 2.63** Examples of existing residential areas commonly found across Huntingdonshire have been identified and assessed to inform potential densities of the number of dwellings per hectare (dph) that may be appropriate in different types of location. These have informed a series of categories of residential densities found across the district:
- Very high - 145 dph
  - High - 85 dph
  - Moderate - 50 dph
  - Low - 35 dph
  - Very low - 25 dph
- 2.64** These residential density categories are set out in detail in the following tables. These have been identified as being an appropriate way of estimating potential capacity for sites in Huntingdonshire. Alongside each category are a series of examples of residential developments across the district. Emphasis has been placed on examples of recently completed developments, to indicate what has actually been achieved and has potential to be replicated elsewhere in the district.
- 2.65** These provide an illustration of the densities achieved and the potential capacity of sites when also applying their developable area. However, it is important to note that when applying these categories a degree of flexibility is required to reflect the characteristics of the individual site and its context. Densities used for each site are guided by many factors such as the characteristics of the area, the site location, surrounding context, potential flood risk, landscape and heritage constraints, biodiversity / ecology and the site's market potential.
- 2.66** Also, it is important to note that this LAA Methodology only provides an indicative capacity for a site, it does not establish an appropriate mix of homes for a particular site. It is the role of the Housing Needs of Specific Groups study, other policy requirements, and information regarding potential site constraints that will inform the mix of any future development. The identified site capacities therefore represent an estimate of an appropriate amount of development for a particular based on the best available information in order to assess whether development needs over the plan period can be met.
- 2.67** Where mixed use developments are proposed regard will be had to the potential reduction resulting from a mix of uses on the developable area available for new homes. These will be considered on a case by case basis. In town centre locations it is assumed that the mixed use element would be incorporated as an integral part of the development. For strategic scale sites like new settlements, it will be anticipated that there will be a range of densities and developable areas across the whole site to accommodate a sustainable mix of homes, employment opportunities, local centres, leisure, green infrastructure and supporting infrastructure. For such sites, a appropriate capacity for the various proposed uses will be calculated on a site by site basis taking into account the proposed uses and any environmental constraints and site specific considerations.

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### Very high - 145 dwellings per hectare

Typical locations where this may be found	Characteristics
<p>Generally very high densities will be found on sites in close proximity to town centres maximising their sustainable location. In most cases these will be opportunities for regeneration. Examples include retirement or sheltered apartments or care homes where the individual dwellings typically have 1 or 2 bedrooms, there are some communal facilities and limited car parking provision and the scheme comprises at least 3 storeys overall. May also be general market apartment blocks where undercroft car parking can be accommodated.</p>	<p><b>Development form</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apartments or residential homes, typically of 3-5 storeys.</li> <li>• Provision of predominantly 1-2 bedroom units where some communal facilities may be incorporated.</li> </ul> <p><b>Parking provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of undercroft parking for cars and bicycles avoids dominance by surface level parking.</li> <li>• Limited car and bicycle parking may suffice for residential homes provided adequate space is allowed for carers and support workers. Provision should be made to accommodate ambulances and other patient transport vehicles.</li> </ul> <p><b>Open space</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly dependent on the site's context; landscaping may be necessary to integrate or screen development from its surroundings.</li> <li>• Limited usable open space may suffice where the site is in close proximity to existing public open space.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Examples</u></b></p> <p><b>Walden Road/ Princes Street, Huntingdon</b></p> <p>This is a town centre, previously developed site where a very high density, high quality scheme incorporated 110 apartments adjacent to the replacement library and the grade II listed Lawrence Court. There are 27 1-bedroom apartments and 83 2-bedroom apartments. The density is achieved by provision of undercroft car parking at ground floor level beneath the apartments with security fencing screened by limited soft landscaping. There is limited soft landscaping with preference given to the provision of interconnecting footpaths to help integrate the development into the town centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 110 homes</li> <li>• 0.73ha land (residential element only)</li> <li>• density of 150 dwellings per hectare</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>	

Typical locations where this may be found	Characteristics
	<p><b>Osier House, New Road, St Ives</b></p> <p>Located on the edge of St Ives town centre, this was formerly an office unit that was demolished to provide 14 one and two bedroomed apartments. The scheme was completed in 2021. The site's sustainable location being in close proximity to the town centre provided an opportunity to maximise density on the site. Its redevelopment also provided a modest scale regeneration opportunity that enhanced the local built environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 14 apartments</li><li>• 0.1ha net site area (0.1 gross) giving a net developable area of 100%</li><li>• density of 140 dwellings per hectare</li></ul> 

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### High - 85 dwellings per hectare

Typical locations where this may be found	Characteristics
<p>Sites within towns for general market apartments with surface level car parking or mixed schemes with some apartments and some houses typically of 2.5 or three storeys. Also, sheltered schemes with substantial communal facilities.</p>	<p><b>Development form</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Predominantly apartments but may involve mixed schemes with some apartments and some houses of 2.5 or 3 storeys.</li> <li>Sheltered housing schemes comprising apartments or smaller houses with substantial communal facilities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Parking provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surface level car parking for at least one space per dwelling and some visitor spaces may be accommodated.</li> <li>Communal covered cycle parking may be provided adjacent to clusters of properties to avoid the need for individual storage facilities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Open space</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apartments and sheltered housing schemes will have some usable communal open space, the amount depending on the nature of the scheme and level of accessibility to public open space.</li> <li>Mixed schemes will include some properties with private open space.</li> </ul>

#### Examples

##### **Drovers Place, Huntingdon**

Drovers Place is a high density edge of town centre redevelopment of a previously developed site in Huntingdon. The general arrangement sees groups of 2.5, 3 and 4-storey units incorporating a mixture of houses and flats. The site incorporates a mixture of parking courts, parking bays and integral car ports for residents, accessed via a central spine road. The site's redevelopment has provided an improved gateway into the town centre and conservation area and is part of a wider regeneration of the Huntingdon West area. The site was completed in 2020.

- 79 houses and apartments
- 0.8ha net site area (1ha gross) giving a net developable area of 80%
- density of 99 dwellings per hectare



##### **Former Police Station, Ramsey**

Located within a residential area, the former police station offices have now been converted to flats. There is one parking space for each flat. Under a separate application, two semi-detached homes were built to the rear of the building. The whole site was completed in 2021. The existing building was built in 1910 and has not been altered externally.

- 13 flats within the former police station and two houses to the rear
- 0.2ha net site area (0.2 gross) giving a net developable area of 100%
- density of 75 dwellings per hectare



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### Moderate - 50 dwellings per hectare

Typical locations where this may be found	Characteristics
<p>Sites within an existing built up area either a town or larger village for housing, or a mixture of housing with some apartments. Housing is likely to be predominantly in terraced form, including a proportion of smaller properties to meet the needs of older people wishing to downsize or of smaller households.</p>	<p><b>Development form</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing, predominantly in terraced form, or a mixture of houses and apartments. May include a mixture of mainly 2 and 3 storey properties with a substantial proportion of smaller properties to meet the needs of older people wishing to downsize or smaller households.</li> </ul> <p><b>Parking provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surface level car parking for all properties may be accommodated. Cycle parking may be communal or some provided with individual properties.</li> </ul> <p><b>Open space</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private open space will be included for the majority of properties; apartments may include terraces. Larger schemes will include on site children's play space.</li> </ul>

#### Examples

##### **Huntingdon Street, St Neots**

Located to the north of St Neots town centre. The site formerly consisted of a former petrol filling station, commercial buildings and a significant amount of hardstanding before it was redevelopment for affordable housing consisting of 24 homes and 15 apartments. Building heights range from two to three storeys. The site was completed in 2021.

- 39 homes
- 0.72ha net site area (0.76 gross) giving a net developable area of 95%
- density of 54 dwellings per hectare



##### **Cades Close, Ramsey**

This site was completed in 2022. The site was formerly a storage/warehousing site that has been cleared and redeveloped for 32 homes in the centre of Ramsey. The properties are arranged in terraces and semi-detached pairs with some flats over garages. Parking provision are two spaces per dwelling.

- 32 homes

- 0.6ha net site area (0.7 gross) giving net developable area of 85%
- density of 53 dwellings per hectare



### Victorian terraced housing

These traditional terraces are typically of four to eight homes, predominantly two storey with occasional use of attic rooms creating a third storey. Generally properties have a small set-back from the road and can have substantial rear gardens and usually on street parking only. Victorian terraced housing is found across the district in towns and villages but in greatest quantities in the market towns. Two examples are provided below:

#### Cambridge Road, Godmanchester

- 12 homes
- 0.25ha of land
- density of 48 dwellings per hectare of built form





#### Hartford Road, Huntingdon

- 8 homes
- 0.14ha of land
- density of 57 dwellings per hectare of built form



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### Low - 35 dwellings per hectare

Typical locations where this may be found	Characteristics
<p>Sites in larger villages which need to reflect the lower density context provided by surrounding housing. The development form is likely to be detached or semi-detached housing.</p>	<p><b>Development form</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing will typically comprise detached and semi-detached properties with some short terraces. Two storey properties will predominate.</li> </ul> <p><b>Parking provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surface level car parking throughout the development; many properties may have garaging. Cycle parking provided for individual properties.</li> </ul> <p><b>Open space</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual garden space for each property will be normal. Some communal open space/ play space will be incorporated to meet the needs of residents depending on the scale of the development.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples</b></p> <p><b>Lucks Lane, Buckden</b></p> <p>Greenfield site located on the edge of Buckden village adjoining the A1(M). The development provides a mix of one to four bedroomed dwellings designed to reflect local character and the density is consistent with the lower densities found across the village. The site's location in proximity to the strategic transport network and within the wider landscape has resulted in a lower net developable area (50%) which increased the density. The site is anticipated to complete in 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>180 homes</li> <li>5.3 net site area (10.7 gross) giving a net developable area of 50%</li> <li>density of 34 dwellings per hectare</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <p><b>North of Glatton Road, Sawtry</b></p> <p>80 new homes on a triangular greenfield site located at the edge of the village of Sawtry. Homes range from one to four bedroomed homes arranged within five distinct islands within the site. There are a mixture of terraces with parking to the front of these properties and larger detached homes. All have modest gardens. The site completed in 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>80 homes</li> </ul>	



- 2.75ha net site area (3.8 gross) giving a net developable area of 72%
- density of 29 dwellings per hectare



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### Very low - 25 dwellings per hectare

Typical locations where this may be found	Characteristics
<p>Sites in the more sustainable smaller settlements which need to reflect the lower density context provided by surrounding housing. The development form is likely to be detached or semi-detached housing.</p>	<p><b>Development form</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing will typically comprise detached and semi-detached properties with some short terraces. Two storey properties will predominate.</li> </ul> <p><b>Parking provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surface level car parking throughout the development; many properties may have garaging. Cycle parking provided for individual properties.</li> </ul> <p><b>Open space</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual garden space for each property will be normal. Some communal open space/ play space will be incorporated to meet the needs of residents depending on the scale of the development.</li> </ul>

#### Examples

##### **Dutton Gardens, Great Gransden**

Greenfield site located on the edge of Great Gransden providing 40 new homes ranging from one to four bedrooms with modest gardens. Parking is either on plot or for terraced homes are located to the front of the property. The density is reflective of the generally low densities found across the village. The site completed in 2022.

- 40 homes
- 1.26ha net site area (1.8 gross) giving a net developable area of 70%
- density of 29 dwellings per hectare



##### **The Green, Great Staughton**

12 homes consisting of a mixture of one to three bedroomed affordable flats, houses and bungalows. All dwellings have two parking spaces and well proportioned garden space. The site was brought forward by the Great Staughton Community Land Trust with development of the site by Chorus Homes and home builders Aspen Homes. The site is anticipated to complete in 2023.

- 12 homes

- 0.45 net site area (0.6 gross) giving a net developable area of 75%
- density of 27 dwellings per hectare



### Kym View Close, Kimbolton

This is a triangular greenfield site comprising of 21 homes (13 four and five bedroom detached homes with generous garden space and eight affordable semi-detached homes for social rent and shared ownership). Due to the site shape, plots are an irregular size and shape. There is some public open space provided within the development.

- 21 homes
- 1.37 net site area (1.4 gross) giving a net developable area of 98%
- density of 15 dwellings per hectare



### Question 12

#### Residential Development Capacity Estimates

Do you agree with the residential development density categories proposed?

If not, please suggest your preferred residential development density categories.

## 2 Methodology

### Economic development

- 2.68** Following the approach taken for residential developments, several categories have been devised relating to economic forms of development. Again, these have utilised examples of recently completed and under construction employment development to guide an appropriate range of plot ratios (gross floorspace to site area) for various locations across the district.
- 2.69** There are limited up to date national guides on calculating economic development capacities. The HELAA (2017) referred to plot ratios for employment use based on the now somewhat aged publications by Roger Tym (1997), the national guidance note on Employment Land Reviews (2004) and from other local authorities. The categories used are shown below in Table 7:

**Table 7 Examples of plot ratios for employment use (gross floorspace to site area)**

Employment use	Roger Tym (1997)	Other studies
Business park	0.25 to 0.30	0.25 to 0.40
Industrial	0.42	0.35 to 0.45
Warehouse	-	0.40 to 0.60
Town centre office	0.41	0.75 to 2.00

- 2.70** In the HELAA (2017), it was recognised that the range of plot ratios can vary significantly depending upon the site specific circumstances of an individual site and specific employment use. This can lead to significant variations in the number of jobs created and proportion of parking required. Additionally, since then, on 1 September 2020 amendments to the Use Classes Order have come into effect with the introduction of Class E which encompasses commercial, business and services as well as uses formerly covered under A and D. This allows for the change of use of a building to another use within class E without necessarily the need for planning permission.
- 2.71** To reflect recent permissions, an assessment of the delivered floorspace on sites providing employment uses has been undertaken to provide categories of:
- Business parks - 0.35 plot ratio
  - Industrial areas - 0.40 plot ratio
  - Retail (food stores) - 0.25 plot ratio
  - Retail parks - 0.20 plot ratio
- 2.72** These economic development categories are set out in detail in the following tables. When calculating the percentage of land taken with the built form, the gross site area has been used. This is due to there usually being minimal differences between net and gross site areas in schemes providing purely employment uses due to the need for large amounts of hardstanding for parking, manoeuvring and deliveries and more incidental landscaping.
- 2.73** The review of recent permissions also highlighted that many proposals for business uses falling under B1, B2 or B8 include all three uses within the description to enable a flexible approach to lettings and sales. This means that the buildings could be occupied for either or all of the uses specified. This makes setting out floorspace ratios more challenging, therefore general categories have been devised illustrating the types and variations of economic development that are being delivered across the district.

- 2.74** To facilitate flexibility in economic development uses where they are included as a potentially suitable use for a site, or part of a site, the potential capacity is given as indicative figures only to acknowledge the requirement for economic uses on the site to promote sustainability or where constraints make the site unsuitable for residential development. The ultimate decision on the proportion of the site area to be used for employment purposes will be determined through the Local Plan and planning applications.

### Town centres

- 2.75** For economic development within town centres, many will relate to existing buildings and either involve a change of use or demolition and rebuild. The built form could utilise a higher percentage of the site area due to the reduced need to provide parking and landscaping for example as these may be provided already in close proximity to the site. There are also greater opportunities to maximise floorspace by building on several floors. As such there are likely to be greater site specific considerations and constraints so no typology has been provided here. If a town centre site was identified through the desktop review or call for site consultation, then we will assess on a case by case basis seeking views of there Council specialists such as urban design, conservation and those working on the market towns programme.

- 2.76** Two major town centre regenerations to have completed recently are provided as examples below:

1. The redevelopment of Chequers Court within Huntingdon town centre has helped to rejuvenate the retail offer of the town. An application for the redevelopment of the 1960s units for modern units on 0.93ha of land saw the built form occupying some 50% of the site area. The site is now occupied by 11 businesses including shops and cafes. Minimal landscaping and parking were provided as a multi storey car park providing 406 spaces was built on adjoining land within an existing car parking area. This allowed for a higher plot ratio to be achieved on site. The site was completed in 2018.
2. Within St Neots, the redevelopment of land formerly comprising of a household waste recycling centre, old fire station, car park and recreation ground has increased the leisure offer within the town. The mixed use development includes a cinema, three restaurants, gym and three flats. The site is 1.08ha with the built form occupying 30% of the site. The scheme also provided some 105 car parking spaces and 65 cycle spaces as well as some open/play space to mitigate the loss of the recreation ground. The site specifics here resulted in a lower plot ratio for the site.

**New units in Chequers Court, Huntingdon**



**St Neots Priory Quarter Rowley Arts centre**



### Economic development within new settlement and urban extension proposals

- 2.77** As with the residential typologies, a typology for strategic scale economic development has not been devised here reflecting the site specific considerations and opportunities that will vary between sites and proposals. Some new settlement or urban extension proposals will be economic led, others may be residential led which will impact the mix of appropriate uses to create sustainable communities, neighbourhoods and environments and to achieve the objectives/priorities of the development.

## 2 Methodology

- 2.78** Alconbury Weald is currently the key example within the district of economic development being built as part of a new settlement. The economic elements of Wintringham Park, the district's other strategic expansion location, have not yet received detailed planning approval so details on the floorspace and uses provided are yet to be determined.
- 2.79** Alongside 5,000 new homes and associated community, transport and green infrastructure, Alconbury Weald is planned to provide some 290,000sqm of employment floorspace (B uses). The majority of this will be within the 150ha Enterprise Zone designation meaning that part of the site is focussed for employment development. The Enterprise Zone is intended to encourage investment, attract innovative companies and create around 8,000 jobs within the site.
- 2.80** Of the approximately 106,500sqm of non-residential floorspace already completed across Alconbury Weald since 2012, the vast majority have been for a mix of B1 and B2 development (96,500sqm) for offices, research and development, industrial and manufacturing. B8 warehousing and storage is low at some 5,000sqm providing ancillary storage capacity on site only. Other uses relating to food & drink, a small shop, community facilities, primary school and leisure have provided some 5,000sqm. These support the needs of the growing population as the site is being developed. The development of the site and incorporation of such uses is also responsive to site specific matters such as the heritage on the site. The conservation and enhancement of heritage within the site is a key feature particularly seen in the renovation of the Watch Office into a café. These opportunities exemplify how economic development can be used as a tool to regenerate and engage people, as such there should be flexibility in how development is brought forward in these cases.
- 2.81** Across the reserved matters and full applications currently made on the site for new build economic uses, the range that the built form occupied for each application area was between 10 and 61% with the overall built form across the cumulative site areas being 41%. The quite significant range reflects that these applications are part of a wider site where parking, landscaping and access roads are in some cases shared.

**Boulevard, Alconbury Enterprise Zone**



**Swynford Stores**



**The Club, Alconbury Enterprise Zone**



**Alconbury watch office, now café**



**Business Parks - 0.35 plot ratio**

Typical locations where this may be found	Characteristics
<p>Purpose built business parks are usually located on the edges of towns and larger villages providing distinct concentrations of employment uses. They can also be found within or as extensions to existing business locations where they have been introduced to rejuvenate an area or meet changing business needs.</p>	<p><b>Development form</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predominantly focused on provision of offices with B2 and B8 uses integrated</li> <li>• Units often arranged within business courtyards with large central car parking areas</li> </ul> <p><b>Parking provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive surface level car parking and some dedicated bicycle parking</li> <li>• Parking usually provided as one space per 0.01ha of land</li> <li>• Increasing amounts of electric vehicle charging points</li> </ul> <p><b>Landscaping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usually incidental landscaping to break up car parking areas and soften development edges</li> <li>• some areas have more significant amounts of landscaping if adjoining residential areas or open countryside</li> </ul>

**Examples**

**Eagle Business Park, Yaxley**

Following outline approval, phase 2 of the Eagle Business Park in Yaxley has been delivered via reserved matters applications and full applications related to particular plots/parcels within the site. Each provide a range of units for B1/B2/B8 uses with associated parking and some soft landscaping. Across the reserved matters and full applications currently made on the site for new build business units, the range that the built form occupied for each parcel was between 25 and 45% with the overall built form across the cumulative site areas being 37%. Parking provision works out at approximately one space per 0.01 of land. Site has been building out since 2016.

- 6.59ha of land across with reserved matters and full approval
- approximately 24,000sqm of floorspace completed or approved
- overall built form uses 37% of the site area (parcels range between occupying 25 and 45%)



**Lakes Business Park, Fenstanton**

Following outline approval, the Lakes Business Park in Fenstanton parish has been delivered via reserved matters and full applications related to particular plots/parcels within the site. Each provide a range of units for B1/B2/B8 uses with associated parking and some soft landscaping. Across the reserved matters and full

## 2 Methodology

Typical locations where this may be found	Characteristics
<p>applications currently made on the site for new build business units, the range that the built form occupied for each parcel was between 40 and 46% with the overall built form across the cumulative site areas being 42%. Parking provision works out at approximately one space per 0.01 of land. The lowest percentage was observed on a parcel for a scaffolding depot which due to operational reasons required more open land. Site has been building out since 2019.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.87ha of land across with reserved matters and full approval</li> <li>• approximately 12,000sqm of floorspace completed or approved</li> <li>• overall built form uses 42% of the site area (parcels range between occupying 22 and 46%)</li> </ul>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>	
<p><b>Hinchingbrooke Business Park, Huntingdon</b></p>	
<p>Kingfisher Court is an example of an infill development within an existing business park providing a courtyard of 3 terraces with centrally located building entrances and service areas. 8 units built falling within B1a/B2/B8 uses. The Falcon Way development is another example of an infill development of six units for B1/B2/B8 uses with associated parking and manoeuvring areas. Both include some soft landscaping. Both sites were completed in 2018.</p>	
<p><b>Kingfisher Court</b></p>	<p><b>Falcon Way</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.48ha of land</li> <li>• 45 vehicle parking spaces</li> <li>• built form uses 34% of the site area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.49ha of land</li> <li>• 47 vehicle parking spaces</li> <li>• built form uses 40% of the site area</li> </ul>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>	



**Industrial Areas - 0.4 plot ratio**

Typical locations where this may be found	Characteristics
<p>Industrial estates occur both within and on the peripheries of all the main towns, and some larger villages. These are commonly close to housing providing jobs accessible by sustainable modes of transport. Some industrial areas date back to the 1950s and now are in need of some regeneration/rejuvenation to enhance their appearance or to comply with changing operational standards. There have been instances of trade counters and retail units for trades and home improvements diversifying industrial areas.</p>	<p><b>Development form</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many units focused on manufacturing or warehousing but some include trade counters and space for offices</li> <li>• Usually smaller brick built or metal framed units and larger factory premises</li> <li>• Usually large expanses of steel security boundary fencing</li> </ul> <p><b>Parking provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large expanses of tarmac road surface and car/lorry parking</li> <li>• Parking usually provided as one space per 0.01ha of land</li> <li>• Frequently have heavily engineered road layouts</li> <li>• Heavily trafficked by cars and heavy goods vehicles, but generally few pedestrians</li> </ul> <p><b>Landscaping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usually very minimal landscaping with only incidental soft landscaping to soften development edges</li> <li>• Some industrial areas located with more urban areas have grass verges</li> </ul>

**Examples**


**Tower Close, St Peter's Road, Huntingdon**

Located within an established employment area, this application saw the demolition of the existing large scale commercial building on site and the erection of two large commercial buildings to provide B1, B2 and B8 uses with associated car parking and servicing. Approximately 100 vehicle parking spaces are provided for cars and motorbikes with additional spaces for cycle storage and four electric vehicle charging points. Modern design with features to increase biodiversity have been incorporated and some landscaping where the site site adjoins St Peter's Road. Site completed in 2022.

- 1.1ha of land
- 5,175sqm of floorspace across two units for B1/B2/B8 use
- built form uses 47% of the site area



## 2 Methodology

Typical locations where this may be found	Characteristics
	<p><b>Somersham Road Industrial Area, Nuffield Road, St Ives</b></p> <p>Located on a prominent corner plot within in an established employment area, this was a redevelopment of a vacant plot following the demolition of pre-existing buildings in around 2006. The site was completed in 2020 and has provided 10 new B1/B2/B8 units. The whole of the site is covered with hardstanding. Very minimal soft landscaping measures and fencing due to the site's location within a pre-existing industrial area. Has incorporated approximately 20 car parking spaces with disability spaces and cycle parking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.27ha of land</li> <li>• 10 B1/B2/B8 units totalling 966 sqm</li> <li>• built form uses 36% of the site area with the remaining site being covered in hardstanding</li> </ul> 

**Retail (food stores) - 0.25 plot ratio**

Typical locations where this may be found	Characteristics
<p>Large food stores usually located on the edge of towns, maximising connections to the strategic road network and supporting a wider network of communities. Some smaller food stores and other retail units have been built on brownfield sites within towns adding greater market choice and being in closer proximity to the local population for those who may not be able to travel via car to settlement edges.</p>	<p><b>Development form</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food stores are often stand-alone units, other goods often clustered into retail parks</li> </ul> <p><b>Parking provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extensive surface level car parking and some dedicated bicycle parking</li> <li>Parking is usually provided at 1.3 spaces per 0.01ha of land</li> <li>Increasing amounts of electric vehicle charging points</li> <li>Segregated rear servicing yards</li> <li>Fairly well trafficked, with bustling pedestrian movement at busy periods</li> </ul> <p><b>Landscaping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually integrated landscaping and around the edge to provide some softening of development edges</li> </ul>

**Examples**

**Aldi and Lidl, Huntingdon**

Both were previously industrial sites that were cleared for medium sized food stores and associated parking. Aldi was completed in 2017 and is located on a parcel of land along the Edison Bell Way link road forming part of the wider regeneration of the Huntingdon West area. Lidl is located along Stukeley Road to the west of the railway line several hundred metres from Aldi. The site was completed in 2016. Both have large parking areas and landscaping within and along the site edges.



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0.56ha of land</li> <li>89 vehicle parking spaces with cycle spaces</li> <li>built form uses 33% of the site area</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0.77ha of land</li> <li>97 vehicle parking spaces</li> <li>built form uses 24% of the site area</li> </ul> |
|---|---|



**Aldi and Morrisons in St Ives**

These are well placed in relation to the strategic road network via access onto the A1123 and A1096. Aldi site is a redevelopment of a former factory site within a business park. There is an expansive car park with minimal soft landscaping, service yard to the north of the site and signage. The site was completed in 2021. The Morrisons

## 2 Methodology

Typical locations where this may be found	Characteristics
<p>is a larger unit by some 500 sqm than the other examples here is also accompanied by a petrol filling station and non-food retail unit with servicing, parking and associated landscaping. It also has substantially more parking. The site was completed in 2019.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 0.79ha of land</li> <li>● 126 parking spaces with 8 cycle spaces</li> <li>● built form uses 22% of the site area</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 2.74ha of land</li> <li>● 303 parking spaces with 40 cycle spaces</li> <li>● built form uses 18% of the site area</li> </ul> 

## Retail Parks - 0.20 plot ratio

Typical locations where this may be found	Characteristics
<p>Retail parks with clusters of large retail units are generally found on the outskirts of settlements or as redeveloped or reused industrial areas. Larger 21st century residential led developments often incorporate smaller retail units.</p>	<p><b>Development form</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large scale units, mostly in coloured cladding Directional road frontage and internal signage</li> </ul> <p><b>Parking provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extensive surface level car parking with some dedicated bicycle parking</li> <li>Parking is usually provided at 1.05 spaces per 0.01ha of land</li> <li>Segregated rear servicing yards</li> <li>Increasing amounts of electric vehicle charging points</li> </ul> <p><b>Landscaping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated soft landscaping</li> </ul>

### Examples

#### **Quora Retail Park, Howard Road, Eaton Socon, St Neots**

This was a redevelopment of a brownfield site that had formerly had an industrial unit and offices but had been vacant for several years. It is located in the south of St Neots. The retail-led regeneration of the site saw the additional of a food store, two other large retail units (non-food products), three other units for food outlets and small retail. There is soft landscaping breaking up the expansive parking area and footpaths. The site completed in 2016.


- 1.7ha site
- 203 car parking spaces
- built form uses 27% of the site area



#### **Abbey Retail Park, St Ives**

The Abbey Retail Park is located on the eastern edge of St Ives, approximately 2 kilometres north east of St Ives town centre. It is an irregular shape with quite significant vegetation around the edges of the site particularly where it adjoins residential neighbourhoods. The irregularity of the site makes building on parts of the site impractical

## 2 Methodology

Typical locations where this may be found	Characteristics
	<p>resulting in a lower net developable area. The retail park consists of several drive thrus, restaurants and small shops including a McDonalds, Costa Coffee, Eric's Fish Bar and a Subway with units added over time intensifying the retail park.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1.15ha site</li> <li>● Approximately 106 car parking spaces</li> <li>● built form uses 13% of the site area</li> </ul> 

### Question 13

#### Economic Development Capacity Estimates

Do you agree with the economic development density categories proposed?

If not, please suggest your preferred categories and density estimates.

## Presentation of detailed site assessments

- 2.82** The suitability, availability, achievability and deliverability / developability of each site, as well as details of the site will be recorded in a standard template. The proposed template for the assessment is provided on the following page.
- 2.83** To provide consistency, use of the same assessment template is proposed no matter the scale or use of the proposed development. However, it is recognised that the level of detail is likely to vary and be proportionate to the scale and nature of the use proposed. For example, for a new settlement proposal, it would be expected that a greater amount of information will be provided by which to assess it and thus more commentary will be included in its assessment when compared to a site proposing development of 10 dwellings.

### Question 14

#### Detailed Site Assessments

Do you agree with the proposed layout for presentation of the detailed site assessments?

If not, please suggest how the detailed site assessments might be improved.

- 2.84** It is proposed that sites which are demonstrated to be deliverable or developable through the detailed site assessments would then progress through to a separate Sustainability Appraisal phase. This would look at detailed aspects of the proposed site and its relationship with its surroundings including aspects such as access to services and facilities, impact on designated sites of biodiversity significance, and likelihood of experiencing pollution and its ability to contribute towards national priorities such as reusing previously developed land and reaching net zero carbon emission targets.

### Question 15

#### Progression to Sustainability Appraisal

Do you agree that only sites which are assessed as being deliverable or developable progress to the more detailed scrutiny applied through the Sustainability Appraisal approach?

If not, please suggest on what basis sites should progress through for this more detailed scrutiny.

## 2 Methodology

<b>Site reference</b>	HLAAXXXX
<b>Site name</b>	

Site address	Parish	Site area (ha)	Promoter's stated use(s)	Promoter's stated capacity	Potential capacity
			Site promoter's anticipated use(s)	Site promoter's anticipated capacity	LAA capacity calculations

<b>Location and constraints</b>	<b>Aerial and key features</b>
MAP	MAP

<b>How was the site identified?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose from options bulleted in paragraph 2.10</li> </ul>
<b>Relevant planning history</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State any relevant planning history on the site - applications or appeals that have been approved, refused, withdrawn</li> </ul>
<b>Land type and character</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State here if it is greenfield, previously developed land, garden land etc. Also detail here if the site is a regeneration opportunity</li> </ul>

<b>Suitability and constraints</b>	<b>Suitability grouping</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State here commentary on the potential suitability of the site for development. Include here any physical, environmental or policy constraints including how these constraints could be overcome or mitigated.</li> </ul>	Score will either be + , ~ , -
<b>Availability</b>	<b>Availability grouping</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State here relevant commentary such as if the site is being promoted actively / submitted as part of call for sites, planning history and landownership</li> </ul>	Score will either be + , ~ , -
<b>Achievability</b>	<b>Achievability grouping</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State here commentary on what progress has or is being made towards bringing forward the proposed development such as any agreements in place, progress on a planning application, infrastructure requirements and constraints to overcome etc.</li> </ul>	Score will either be + , ~ , -
<b>Deliverability / developability</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State here the site promoter's anticipated delivery of the proposed site and provide assessment whether this is considered to be achievable.</li> </ul>	If all above are + or ~ then the site can be considered deliverable or developable. Choose when: in 1-5, 6-10, 11-15 or 15-25 years



**Progression of Site through to Sustainability Appraisal**

<b>Should the site progress to the sustainability stage?</b>	Yes or No
Reason for outcome	

## 2 Methodology

### Stage 3 - Windfall assessment

- 2.85** Windfall housing development is defined by the NPPF as being development taking place on sites not identified in the development plan. Paragraph 71 of the NPPF 2021 states that *'where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of anticipated supply, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply. Any allowance should be realistic having regard to the strategic housing land availability assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends....'*
- 2.86** The delivery of housing on unidentified small sites has been and will continue to be an important source of housing supply within the district. Current windfall developed in Huntingdonshire mostly derives from enabling policies in the current Local Plan. For example, through rural exceptions housing and permissive policies such as LP 8 Key Service Centres and LP 9 Small Settlements that allow for development proposals on land within the built up area of key service centres and small settlements and on land well-related to the built-up area as long it accords with other policies in the Local Plan. These policies include but are not limited to, avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, or recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. In addition, some windfall development can be enabled through the National Planning Policy Framework, or via planning appeals.
- 2.87** Development on windfall sites provides additional flexibility to housing supply and to the types of housing found across the district. In accordance with national guidance on undertaking a land availability assessment, an assessment of potential housing supply from windfall sites is outlined below.
- 2.88** To understand the potential future windfall supply for the district we are proposing to look back at the historic rate of delivery in the district since 1 April 2011 (the start of the current Local Plan period). This approach was also used to identify windfall delivery during the examination of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and was approved by the Planning Inspector. In this instance windfall supply was broken down into three categories: sites which received prior approval, rural exceptions sites and all other sites providing between 1 and 9 dwellings. This windfall delivery is documented in the Council's Housing Trajectory which can be found in Part One of the [Annual Monitoring Report](#).
- 2.89** This time we are proposing to identify historic windfall on sites containing between one and four homes, this is because the LAA will be looking for potential development sites of five or more homes and therefore available, suitable and achievable land for the delivery of homes on sites that can accommodate five or more homes will have been identified via an alternative method.
- 2.90** To assess the historic rate of delivery on sites containing one to four homes officers will use past housing completions data, this data shows planning applications that have been granted permission and the number of homes that have been delivered within a specific monitoring year. Housing completions data is gathered annually in collaboration with the Cambridgeshire County Council's Research and Monitoring Team, it is a tried and tested data gathering exercise used across the country by Local Planning Authorities. This housing completions data is also used to inform the Government of housing delivery rates across the County and feeds into the district's Annual Monitoring Reports, Housing Trajectories and Housing Delivery Test calculations.
- 2.91** When assessing the historic windfall housing delivery rate on sites containing 1 to 4 homes, applications for prior approval and any planning applications relating to rural exception sites will be assessed separately to other planning applications. This is so that we can identify three types of windfall allowance: one for prior approvals, one for rural exceptions housing and another for 'mainstream housing supply' (all other sites containing 1 to 4 dwellings). The findings of this windfall analysis will help to inform what windfall allowance may be appropriate to use for the new Local Plan.

**Question 16****Windfall Assessment**

Do you agree with the proposed approach to assessing the supply of windfall housing?

If not, please suggest your preferred approach for assessment of the windfall housing supply or indicate if you think such an assessment should not be undertaken.

## 2 Methodology

### Stage 4 - Assessment review

- 2.92** National guidance states that once the sites and broad locations have been assessed, the development potential of all sites can be collected to produce an indicative trajectory.
- 2.93** This trajectory should set out how much housing and the amount of economic development can be provided, and at what point in the future (i.e. within years 1 to 5, 6 to 10, and 11 and beyond). An overall risk assessment should be made as to whether sites will come forward as anticipated. This will utilise the evidence gathered through the desktop review, officer knowledge, call for sites consultation and communication with site promoters.
- 2.94** The guidance states if there are insufficient sites to meet needs then the assessment should be revisited to reconsider the assumptions made on the development potential of sites to make the most efficient use of land including physical and policy constraints, this may also include applying a range of densities to reflect the accessibility and potential of different areas, especially for sites in town centres, and other locations that are well served by public transport. This also includes sites for possible new settlements.

#### Question 17

##### Assessment Review

If insufficient sites are identified through the desktop review and the first call for sites to meet needs throughout the next Local Plan period, please suggest whether priority should be given to:

- a. increasing densities within identified sites to accommodate the necessary scale of development, or
- b. attempting to identify additional sites.

If not, please suggest your preferred approach to obtaining sufficient land to meet needs.

### Stage 5 - Final evidence base

- 2.95** National guidance expects the following standard outputs to be produced as part of the land availability assessment:
- a list of all sites or broad locations considered, cross-referenced to their locations on maps;
  - an assessment of each site or broad location, including:
    - where these have been discounted, evidence justifying reasons given;
    - where these are considered suitable, available and achievable, the potential type and quantity of development, including a reasonable estimate of build out rates, setting out how any barriers to delivery could be overcome and when;
  - an indicative trajectory of anticipated development based on the evidence available.

#### Question 18

##### Final Evidence Base

Do you agree that the methodology set out in this paper would fulfill these expectations?

If not, please suggest what additional elements you think are required.

### 3 Next steps

- 3.1** After the consultation closes all responses received will be considered and suggested approaches balanced against each other. Amendments will be made and the LAA Methodology finalised before it is used to assess sites submitted through the Call for Sites. The responses and any changes made will be summarised in the Council's Statement of Consultation.
- 3.2** The Land Availability Assessment outcomes will help inform options for preparation of the development strategy for the updated Local Plan. It will be used in conjunction with several other studies including but not limited to:
- Settlement Hierarchy
  - Strategic Flood Risk Assessments
  - Strategic Transport Assessments
  - Housing Need Assessment - based on the government's [Standard Method](#)
  - Infrastructure Needs Assessment
- 3.3** Collectively these will identify the amount of land required for different uses, constraints and opportunities which affect their prospects of being brought forward and their appropriateness in the local context. Potential sites will be put forward for engagement through the Council's Local Plan Options Document with the Land Availability Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal forming key parts of the evidence base for the next Local Plan.

## 4 Glossary

### 4 Glossary

#### **Achievable**

A site can be considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time.

#### **Ancient or veteran tree**

Tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient, but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.

#### **Ancient woodland**

An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

#### **Archaeological interest**

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

#### **Available**

A site's availability will be judged based on whether there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership impediments to development, and when it is likely to deliver the proposed development.

#### **Best and most versatile agricultural land**

Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

#### **Biodiversity**

All aspects of biological diversity.

#### **Brownfield**

See Previously Developed Land (PDL).

#### **Community infrastructure**

Facilities available for use by the community that provide for the health, welfare, social, educational, leisure, recreational and cultural needs of the community. Examples include village halls, doctors' surgeries, pubs, churches, museums, libraries and children's play areas. It may also include areas of informal open space and sports facilities.

#### **Conservation Area**

An area "of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance"

#### **Deliverable**

To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. In particular:

- a. sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence

## Glossary

that homes will not be delivered within five years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans).

- b. where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.

### **Density**

The amount of development on a given piece of land.

### **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)**

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, formerly the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, is the UK Government department for housing, communities, local government in England and the levelling up policy.

### **Developable**

Sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.

### **Economic development**

Development, including those within the B Use Classes, public and community uses and main town centre uses (but excluding housing development).

### **European site**

This includes candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, and is defined in regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

### **Geodiversity**

The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

### **Green infrastructure**

The network of green spaces such as parks, playing fields, allotments and cemeteries; these may have public access or be private spaces. Traditionally including water features such as rivers and lakes these are increasingly referred to as blue infrastructure.

### **Green space**

Publicly accessible spaces, including local parks, sports grounds, cemeteries, school grounds, allotments, commons and historic parks and gardens.

### **Green space buffer**

An area of vegetation or open space that provides visual and/ or physical enclosure or creates a distinct break between contrasting land use areas.

### **Habitat**

The natural home or environment of a plant or animal.

### **Habitat site**

## 4 Glossary

Any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites.

### **Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)**

A study intended to assess overall potential for housing and employment development in an area, including the identification of specific housing and employment sites with development potential over a 15 year time span. See also LAA and SHLAA.

### **Heritage assets**

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

### **Historic environment**

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

### **Infrastructure**

A collective term for services such as roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.

### **International, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity**

All international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

### **Land Availability Assessment (LAA)**

A study intended to assess overall potential for housing development in an area, including the identification of specific housing sites with development potential over a 15 year time span. See also HELAA and SHLAA.

### **Land use**

The broad functions land is used for such as industrial, residential or commercial.

### **Landscape**

The character and appearance of land including its shape, form, natural features, biodiversity and colours and the way these components are combined.

### **Local plan**

A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.

### **Mitigation measures**

These are measures requested/ carried out in order to limit the damage by a particular development/ activity.

### **Mix**



## Glossary

The range of uses present within a given piece of land.

### **Neighbourhood plans**

A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

### **Open space**

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

### **Playing field**

The whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

### **Pollution**

Anything that affects the quality of land, air, water or soils, which might lead to an adverse impact on human health, the natural environment or general amenity. Pollution can arise from a range of emissions, including smoke, fumes, gases, dust, steam, odour, noise and light.

### **Previously developed land (PDL)**

Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

### **Public rights of way**

The network of footpaths on which access on foot is legally protected and bridleways to which access on foot, cycle and horseback is legally protected.

### **Priority habitats**

Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

### **Ramsar sites**

Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

### **Registered Park and Garden**

A site included on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens in England.

### **Renewable and low carbon energy**

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

### **Rural exception sites**

## 4 Glossary

Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

### **Scheduled Monument**

A scheduled monument means any monument which is for the time being included in the schedule [compiled and maintained by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport].

### **Setting**

The context in which something sits.

### **Setting of a heritage asset**

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

### **Special Areas of Conservation**

Areas defined by regulation 3 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been given special protection as important conservation sites.

### **Special Protection Areas**

Areas classified under regulation 15 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds.

### **Site of Special Scientific Interest**

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

### **Strategic Green Space**

These are areas of green space that serve a wider population than just the district, for example Paxton Pits and the Great Fen.

### **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)**

A study intended to assess overall potential for housing development in an area, including the identification of specific housing sites with development potential over a 15 year time span. See also HELAA.

### **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)**

A study intended to review the existing housing market in an area, consider the nature of future need for market and affordable housing and to inform policy development.

### **Suitable**

A site can be considered suitable if it would provide an appropriate location for development when considered against relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated. Thus, the assessment of a site's suitability for development is a high-level assumption about whether the site physically could be developed, rather than whether the site should or would be developed.

### **Sustainable development**

## Glossary

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This is at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)**

These cover a range of approaches to surface water drainage management including source control measures such as rainwater recycling, infiltration devices to allow water to soak into the ground, vegetated features that hold and drain water downhill mimicking natural drainage patterns, filter drains and porous pavements to allow rainwater and run-off to infiltrate into permeable material below ground and provide storage if needed and basins and ponds to hold excess water after rain and allow controlled discharge that avoids flooding.

### **Sustainable transport modes**

Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

### **Town Centre**

Area defined on the local authority's policies map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in the development plan, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres.

### **Transport assessment**

A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies measures required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport, and measures that will be needed deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.

### **Transport statement**

A simplified version of a transport assessment where it is agreed the transport issues arising from development proposals are limited and a full transport assessment is not required.

### **Tree Preservation Order (TPO)**

An order made and confirmed by a local planning authority to protect trees from lopping, topping or felling without prior written consent.

### **Vitality and viability**

In terms of retailing, vitality is the capacity of a centre to grow or to develop its level of commercial activity. Viability is the capacity of a centre to achieve the commercial success necessary to sustain the existence of the centre.

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**Public**  
**Key Decision - No**

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Title/Subject Matter:** Local Plans Advisory Group (LPAG) Terms of Reference

**Meeting/Date:** Cabinet – 21 March 2023

**Executive Portfolio:** Executive Councillor for Planning

**Report by:** Chief Planning Officer

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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### **Executive Summary:**

The Development Plans Policy Advisory Group (DPPAG) is a formally constituted group of the Council. The Advisory Group was established by the Cabinet in May 2000, with the Terms of Reference established in December 2001, and revised in February 2017.

In January 2023 it was formally agreed to prepare an update to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 2036. As part of that it was timely to review to that initial Member-level “sounding board” for emerging policy materials associated with the Local Plan. Moving forward this group will be known as the Local Plans Advisory Group (LPAG).

### **Recommendation:**

- (a) that the Cabinet agree the revised Terms of Reference for the Local Plans Advisory Group; and
- (b) approve the membership of the Advisory Group as outlined in paragraph 1.4 of the report.

**LOCAL PLANS ADVISORY GROUP  
PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE**

<b>Name</b>
The group is to be called Local Plans Advisory Group (LPAG).
<b>Purpose</b>
To advise on preparation and content of the Council's statutory development plan LPAG is the key advisory and recommendation Group to the Cabinet on all Local Plan policy matters, including the testing of its alignment with other Council strategies.
<b>Membership</b>
<p>LPAG will be politically balanced. Membership will consist of a total of seven Councillors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Executive Councillor with responsibility for planning policy;</li> <li>• up to six other Members;</li> <li>• Membership of the Group is not restricted to Councillors who have experience of sitting on the Development Management Committee;</li> <li>• at the discretion of the Chairman, other Members may be invited to attend an individual meetings but they would not have voting rights, and</li> <li>• an individual Member who is not a Member of LPAG may address a meeting of the Group where written notice has been given to and prior permission obtained from the Chairman.</li> </ul>
<b>Chair</b>
The Chairman and Vice Chairman will be elected at the first meeting of LPAG within each municipal year.
<b>Responsibilities</b>
<p>LPAG will have the following primary responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to understand and advise on the significant issues relating to planning policy formulation the District;</li> <li>• to make recommendations to the Executive Councillor with responsibility for oversight of the local plan and for advice on reports being presented for determination through normal decision making process in relation to the content of any draft development plan document covering all or any part of Huntingdonshire;</li> <li>• to inform the public engagement process for preparation of any development plan document, and</li> <li>• to support effective communication with the broader membership of the Council, local communities or stakeholders to facilitate successful preparation of any development plan document.</li> </ul>
<b>Operations</b>
Papers/ briefings will be presented to the Panel to stimulate debate about local options/ opportunities and decisions. Any insights will be gathered on the basis of simple majority, and presented as advice but will not be binding the decision makers.
<b>Frequency of Meetings</b>
There will be no set schedule of meetings for LPAG. Meetings will be called in response to preparation of draft material for any development plan document or supplementary planning document.

**Confidentiality**

All information received by Members arising from participation in LPAG shall be deemed confidential.

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 It was originally envisaged that the Advisory Group could provide an initial Member-level "sounding board" for issues associated with the Local Plan, Structure Plan and Regional Planning Guidance. Emerging policy materials were to be presented to the Advisory Group at an early stage of their development. It was not the intention that the Advisory Group would present any formal reports or recommendations to the Cabinet; their views were to be reflected in reports by officers for presentation to the Cabinet in the normal way.
- 1.2 In January 2023 Cabinet formally endorsed commencement of an update to the HLP2036. It is therefore timely to revisit the Terms of Reference for this group under the new name of Local Plans Advisory Group (LPAG).
- 1.3 The membership of DPPAG for the current year is:
- E R Butler
  - D B Dew
  - P A Jordan
  - J Neish
  - T D Sanderson
  - R A Slade
  - C H Tevlin
  - S Wakeford
- 1.4 The proposed membership of LPAG for the remainder of the year is:
- T D Sanderson
  - D B Dew
  - C H Tevlin
  - C Gleadow
  - J Neish
  - E R Butler
  - S Corney

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

- 2.1 The Local Plans Advisory Group (LPAG) is a very useful forum/group for Members to be fully engaged with the development of planning policies. This group will consider chapters of the Local Plan and these meetings provide useful feedback from members to officers, while also allowing officers to update members on changes to planning legislation and/ or Government Guidance.
- 2.2 This is a formally constituted group of the Council and any changes to the Terms of Reference need to be ratified by the Cabinet.

## **3. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 3.1 This Advisory Group will be convened as and when meetings are required to take place.



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

- 4.1 Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations; Forward-thinking economic growth (Action 5).
- 4.2 Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations; Lowering our Carbon Emissions (Action 5).

#### **5. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- Current Terms of Reference have not been updated since 2017.
- Revised Terms of Reference would ensure LPAG is consistent with the Government's planning guidance and current planning legislation.
- Ensure Members are engaged in the evolution of planning policies, including public engagement.
- Improve communication with local communities thus providing better customer engagement.

#### **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Huntingdonshire Local Plan Review and Proposed update. Jan 2023. Report can be found [here](#).
- Statement of Community Involvement. Jan 23. Report can be found [here](#).
- Sustainability Scoping Report. Jan 23. Report can be found [here](#).

#### **CONTACT OFFICER**

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**Public**  
**Key Decision – Yes**

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Title/Subject Matter:** Huntingdonshire Place Strategy

**Meeting/Date:** Scrutiny (Growth & Partnerships) – 1 March 2023  
Cabinet – 21 March 2023  
Council – 29 March 2023

**Executive Portfolio:** Cllr Sarah Conboy, Executive Leader, Chair of the Cabinet and Executive Councillor for Place

**Report by:** Oliver Morley, Interim Managing Director

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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### **Executive Summary:**

The report seeks endorsement of the shared Place Strategy for Huntingdonshire, known as Huntingdonshire Futures with the recommendation for it to be approved by Council.

Huntingdonshire Futures is a statement of shared aspirations for the future that seeks to improve the lives of all our residents, communities and businesses.

This is the culmination of many months of engagement with residents, partners, elected representatives and other stakeholders to deliver a brighter future for Huntingdonshire via five outcomes; Pride in Place, Environment Innovation, Inclusive Economy, Health Embedded and Travel Transformed.

Huntingdonshire Futures will guide future strategy and policy developments and investment decisions by the Council and partners, enabling more effective delivery of integrated interventions that better serve the current and future needs of residents, communities and businesses.

The adoption of Huntingdonshire Futures is a significant milestone that underlines the Council's commitment to working differently with partners and stakeholders to better deliver our shared ambitions and outcomes, being an enabler supporting action within our communities and across our partners and influencing the actions of others.

The Council is committed to pro-actively working with partners and stakeholders throughout 2023/24 with an emphasis on embedding partnership working, agreeing short term actions, monitoring progress and how we can learn from what is working well and could be even better.

**Recommendation:**

**Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

- Note the extensive engagement and work with partners, stakeholders and residents across Huntingdonshire to develop the shared Place Strategy known as Huntingdonshire Futures.
- Endorse and commit to the outcomes and ambitions set out in Huntingdonshire Futures.
- Recommend to Council the adoption of Huntingdonshire Futures.

**Council is RECOMMENDED to:**

- adopt the Place Strategy for Huntingdonshire - Huntingdonshire Futures

## 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The report seeks endorsement of the shared Place Strategy for Huntingdonshire, known as Huntingdonshire Futures with the recommendation for it to be approved by Council.
- 1.2 The adoption of Huntingdonshire Futures is a significant milestone that underlines the Council's commitment to:
- Taking a holistic focus to the whole place, not just individual locations or issues.
  - Working differently with partners and stakeholders to better deliver our shared ambitions and outcomes, recognising our different roles, responsibilities and networks.
  - Engaging differently and using resident and stakeholder feedback to inform the development of our own strategies and policies.
  - Being an enabler supporting action within our communities and across our partners and influencing the actions of others.
  - Continuing pro-active working with partners and stakeholders over the coming months focussing on agreeing short term key actions, monitoring and how we can learn from what is working well and could be even better.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Huntingdonshire is already one of the best places to live in the country, but we want to make sure this is true for future generations too with a greener, fairer future for all. That is why we have developed Huntingdonshire Futures, that will shape not only the future of Huntingdonshire but also the future activities of the Council.
- 2.2 Huntingdonshire Futures has been developed collaboratively using a variety of bespoke engagement techniques along with existing mechanisms. It has also drawn on existing data, intelligence, insight and strategies whilst adopting a fresh approach to challenge current thinking and to take into account future societal, lifestyle and technological advancements and changes.

The **aims** and **benefits** of developing Huntingdonshire Futures are:

- To create a statement of shared aspirations for the future of our place, people, economy and the environment, which improves the lives of all our residents, communities and businesses
- To unite stakeholders through a shared sense of direction
- Reduce duplication of effort and funding across the Council and partners by addressing shared issues and priorities in an integrated and holistic way thus encouraging more effective decision making and use of limited public funds
- To guide future strategy and policy developments and investment decisions by the Council and partners enabling more effective delivery of integrated interventions that better serve the current and future needs of residents, communities and businesses.

### **3. SHAPING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER**

3.1 Huntingdonshire Futures has been co-created with residents, businesses, partners, utilities providers and public sector bodies setting out their views about the type of place we all want Huntingdonshire to be.

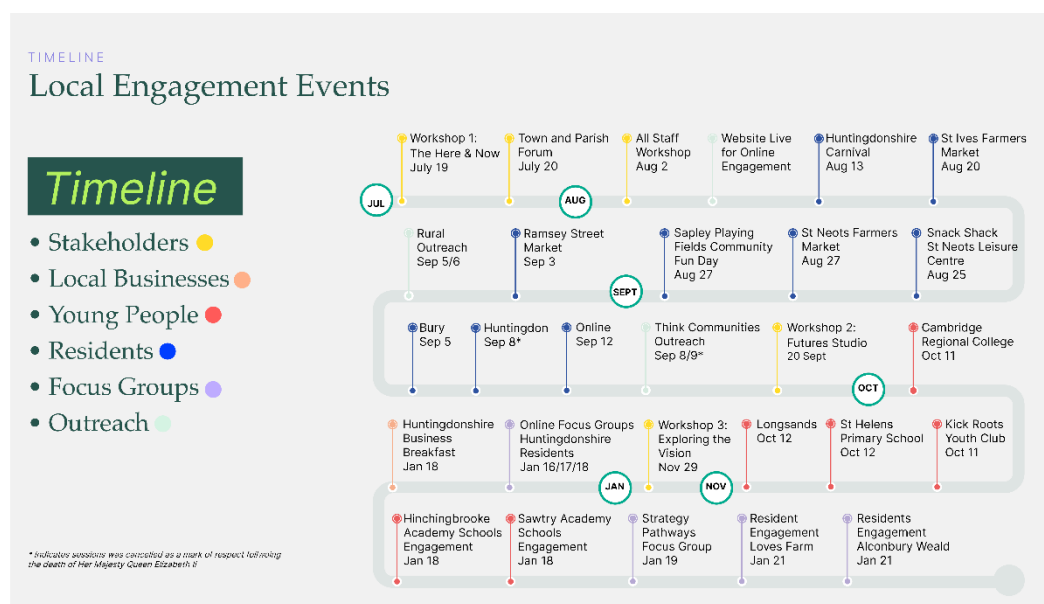
3.2 A broad approach has been used, utilising a range of tools and techniques in order to develop a clear understanding of the current perceptions, strengths and challenges we face as an area as well as identifying where there was consensus and dissonance on different aspects of Huntingdonshire. All of these processes have informed Huntingdonshire Futures which defines the high-level ambitions for Huntingdonshire, articulating our long-term goals.

3.3 Diagram 1 provides a high-level overview of the iterative nature of this engagement which has included:

- Three half day in person stakeholder workshops with representatives from nearly 70 organisations taking place in July, September and November 2022.
- A Town & Parish council in person workshop in July 2022 and online update and feedback sessions on 17th October 2022 and 25th January 2023
- 481 resident conversations were held with residents at one of four pop up exhibitions in locations such as Huntingdon carnival and Ramsey market, attending virtual or physical focus groups, engaging through existing community groups such as Sapley park fun day and conversations in rural community meeting places such as benches in parks in Godmanchester, Hilton, Kimbolton, Sawtry, and Stilton. This initial phase of engagement focused on understanding and exploring what people feel about Huntingdonshire now; their priorities for change around the four key themes of economy, environment, people and community, and place and what if we did things differently.
- During October 2022 there was a particular focus on engaging young people. This engagement was undertaken alongside the Huntingdonshire climate strategy engagement work. 147 children and young people participated in 'what if' engagement exercises through a programme with schools and groups including Kick Root Youth Club, Cambridge Regional College, Longsands Academy and St Helen's School.
- In January 2023 258 residents aged between 11 and 94 years joined listening sessions to which focussed on understanding and exploring how participants thought and felt about the draft place strategy and the role of the community through a combination of online and face to face focus groups including students in Years 7 to 9 at Sawtry Village Academy and Years 7-12 at Hinchingsbrooke Academy, Ghanaian Community Association, 3cs Clon Caring Community and newer residents at Loves Farm and Alconbury Weald.

- A business breakfast workshop in January 2023 with over 30 attendees providing an opportunity to exploring feedback on the draft place strategy and the role of the business community in supporting the delivery.
- Two workshops for hdc members in September 2023 and January 2023 initially exploring opportunities and challenges and then testing the draft strategy.
- Engaging existing partnerships and forums such as the huntingdonshire place board and hunts forum of voluntary organisations.

#### 4. DIAGRAM 1: STAKEHOLDER AND RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT IN DEVELOPING HUNTINGDONSHIRE FUTURES



4.1 Throughout the entire period, thoughts, ideas and feedback have been gathered online at [Huntingdonshire Futures](https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/futures). Social Media has been used to promote opportunities for residents to find a pop-up exhibition, sign up to a focus group or find out what is online and partners received regular sharing of updates on activities and progress via the Place email address [Place@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:Place@huntingdonshire.gov.uk) which has acted as a single contact point throughout this process.

4.2 A summary report of stakeholder engagement activity can be found at Appendix 1 along with a report on resident conversations at Appendix 2.

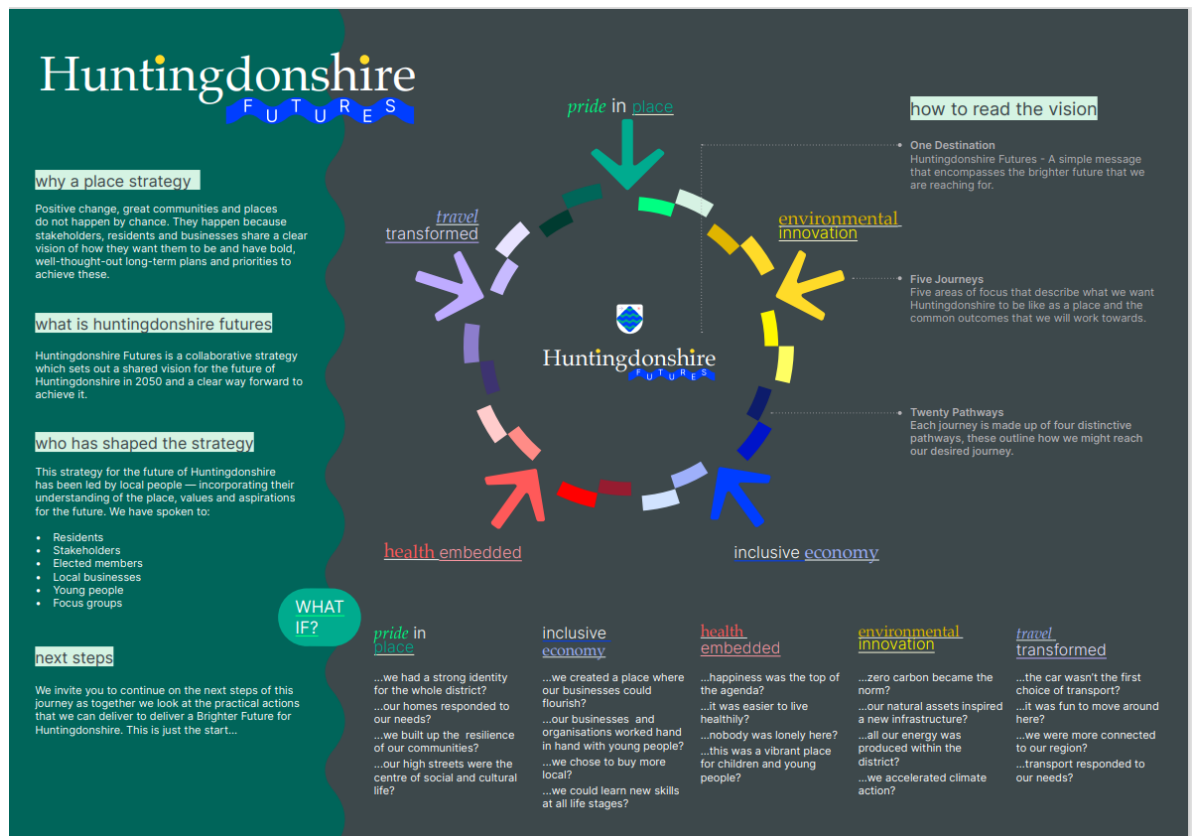
#### 5. KEY ELEMENTS OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE FUTURES

5.1 As a result of feedback received in early 2023 on the Huntingdonshire Futures Key Directions document a number of amendments have been made to Huntingdonshire Futures.

5.2 Huntingdonshire Futures is structured around one **Destination**, five **Journeys** and twenty **Pathways**.

- 5.3 The **Destination** is a simple message that encompasses the brighter future that we are reaching for.
- 5.4 The five **Journeys** underpin the Destination, describing what we want Huntingdonshire to be like as a place and the common outcomes that we want to work towards. The Journeys are:
1. Pride in Place
  2. Environment Innovation
  3. Inclusive Economy
  4. Health Embedded
  5. Travel Transformed
- 5.5 Each Journey is made up of four distinctive **Pathways**, these outline how we might reach our desired journey. There are currently twenty Pathways. Diagram 2 shows how this all fits together.

**Diagram 2: Huntingdonshire Futures Overview**



- 5.6 An example of one of the Journeys and associated Pathways is shown below. The draft Huntingdonshire Futures Strategy can be found at Appendix 3.



**Diagram 3: Journey and Pathway example**



## 6. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 6.1 Progress on the development of the Place Strategy was discussed at Overview and Scrutiny at its meeting on 4th January 2023. All Members were also invited to attend a second workshop on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023 to hear an overview of headline feedback received from stakeholders and residents and to discuss revisions to the Place Strategy presented in this paper.
- 6.2 The Panel discussed the Place Strategy at its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023.
- 6.3 Councillor Gardener expressed concern that engagement had mainly been focused on urban areas of the district so far but was pleased to see that it was planned to consult with rural areas which make up a large proportion of the district. The Panel were reassured that this work was ongoing in rural areas and would continue to be an ongoing dialogue to ensure engagement across the whole of the district.
- 6.4 Following a further question from Councillor Gardener regarding the change in operator for the TING service which has created confusion and loss of confidence amongst residents, the Panel heard that this would be further investigated and reported back.
- 6.5 The Panel were advised, following a question from Councillor Wells regarding the Council taking a more active role in rewilding and biodiversity it's own green spaces and across the district. This point was noted and the Panel were advised that the team would take this away and ensure that commitment is as strong in this document as in other supporting strategies.

- 6.6 Councillor Gray expressed concerns on the detail contained within the Strategy and that it appeared that a lot of detail was still work in progress. The Panel heard that the Strategy is a long term vision but encapsulates feedback received so far, and will continue to adapt as the conversation continues. The Council is facilitating this plan but will work with partners to implement this over the coming years. The Panel were assured that more refinement and detailed actions would follow alongside the implementation of the Corporate Plan. Councillor Gray expressed further concern that some of the Strategy may be aspirations of the coalition but questioned if this was what residents of the district wanted, especially if public funds would be used to implement them. The Panel were assured that engagement with residents would continue to ensure the best interests of both residents and the district.
- 6.7 Councillor Gardener enquired how the Strategy would be updated following the proposed engagement with rural areas later in the year. The Panel heard that whilst there were no further mass rounds of consultation planned, there would be continued engagement alongside the help of all Councillors and the Strategy would be subject to constant reflection alongside an annual review process.
- 6.8 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for the Cabinet to make a decision on the recommendations.

## **7. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS**

- 7.1 The biggest risks are maintaining momentum after the intensive period of strategy development, ability to sharpen the focus on action and impacts whilst balancing the need to build on the new approach of partners working together. It would be easier for the Council to push ahead and take forward Huntingdonshire Futures on its own, it is harder and will take longer to work collaboratively to maximise benefits of working together to better deliver agreed outcomes. Mitigations include Huntingdonshire Futures journeys and pathways having been mapped across the Council's new Corporate Plan so the contribution of the Council is clear. The project plan for the next phase will be agreed in quarter 1, 23/24.

## **8. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 8.1 Workshops, forums and conversations with partners that focus on refining actions, testing new ways of working and progress reporting will take place from quarter 2 onwards in 23/24.
- 8.2 It should be noted that the feedback received during the development of Huntingdonshire Futures has been used to inform the development of the Council's recently adopted Climate Strategy, new Corporate Plan and issues explored in the Local Plan. It will also be used to inform the refresh of the Council's Community Strategy.

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

- 9.1 The delivery of the Place Strategy is a key action within the Council's current 2022/23 Corporate Plan. Feedback received through the development of Huntingdonshire Futures has informed the Council's new three-year Corporate Plan which is also being presented to Council on the 29 March 2023. There is strong alignment between the themes within Huntingdonshire Futures and the Council's new Corporate Plan, with mapping of specific actions and next steps.
- 9.2 Huntingdonshire Futures will directly deliver against the Council's new 23/24 Corporate Plan outcome priorities:
- Priority 1 – Improving quality of life for local people
  - Priority 2 – Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations
  - Priority 3 - Deliver good quality, high Value for Money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations

## **10. CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 Please refer paragraphs 3.1 to 3.5 on engagement and consultation activity along with Appendices 1 and 2.

## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

## **12. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 The Council's 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) earmarked £100K to support the implementation of Huntingdonshire Futures, this funding will be used to progress further development work.
- 12.2 The intention is to use Huntingdonshire Futures to inform Council strategies, policies and approach to working differently with partners and residents.

### 13. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 As set out in the Community (Transition) Strategy 2021-23, the Council are committed to supporting residents through a positive and ongoing working relationship with local communities. Tackling health improvements has featured strongly in the Huntingdonshire Futures conversation, resulting in one of the five Journeys focussing on **Health Embedded**. Pathways for action include a focus on happiness, where it is easier to live healthily, where nobody is lonely and the area being a vibrant place for children and young people. Support in these areas will directly contribute to positive health outcomes.

### 14. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 In December 2021 the Council adopted a core set of environmental principles, the Council are now committed to the development of a new Huntingdonshire Climate Strategy. In October 2022 the Council passed a Cost of Living and Climate Change motion that recognises that the current cost of living and climate crises require joint attention to support the wellbeing of residents and businesses. In February 2023 Council formally recognised the Climate Crisis and Ecological Emergency, adopted the Council's Climate Strategy underlining the organisations commitment to:

- Setting a positive example through its actions to be a net carbon zero Council by 2040
- Acting as an enabler supporting action within our communities and across our partners
- Acting as an encourager to those that live, work and visit Huntingdonshire to take climate action and reduce carbon emissions

- 14.2 Within Huntingdonshire Futures one of the five Journeys focuses on **Environmental Innovation**, with pathways for action including zero carbon becoming the norm, our natural assets inspiring new infrastructure, all energy being produced within the district and we accelerated climate action.

### 15. EQUALITIES

- 15.1 The Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 15.2 Good planning and effective regeneration can improve environments and opportunities for communities experiencing disadvantage. Planning which does not adequately engage with or consider the needs of local communities is unlikely to improve their life chances and may further entrench area-based disadvantage.

- 15.3 The development of Huntingdonshire Futures has deliberately sought to engage a broad range of groups and stakeholders as outlined in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.7.

## **16. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 16.1 To endorse Huntingdonshire Futures with the recommendation for it to be approved by Council

## **17. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

Appendix 1 – Stakeholder Engagement Summary Report  
Appendix 2 – Resident Conversations about the future of Huntingdonshire  
Appendix 3 – Draft Place Strategy: Huntingdonshire Futures

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## Appendix 1: Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

### Introduction and Background

Huntingdonshire Futures is being developed in collaboration with others. Throughout the engagement, we have sought to bring together residents, businesses, partners, utilities providers and public sector bodies to set out their views about the future.

At the heart of Huntingdonshire Futures is understanding what is most important to residents, communities and stakeholders within our towns and rural areas and across Huntingdonshire. Therefore, this summary report sets out the stakeholder engagement activity to date and outlines some of the feedback we have heard. There is a separate report that outlines all resident engagement.

### Engagement activity to date

A broad approach has been used, utilising a range of tools and techniques in order to develop a clear understanding of the current perceptions, strengths and challenges we face as an area as well as identifying where there was consensus and dissonance on different aspects of Huntingdonshire. This has included:

- **Stakeholder workshops**

Three half day stakeholder workshops, which took place on 19 July 2022, 20 September 2022 and 29 November 2022. These were hosted at the Burgess Hall, St Ives with representatives from over 70 organisations including NHS, Police, Fire & Rescue, the further education Sector, schools, Cambridgeshire County Council, utilities providers, businesses, along with a broad range of community and voluntary organisations.

The first workshop looked at the here and now to understand what Huntingdonshire is like today. The second workshop focussed on the future with participants being inspired to think about the changes that will impact on or transform Huntingdonshire in the years up to 2050. Finally, the third workshop rounded things off by exploring the emerging Place Strategy, with participants asked to feedback on the developing themes.

Sessions with existing partnerships and forums such as the Huntingdonshire Place Board also took place on 24 November 2022 and 26 January 2023 and the Hunts Forum on 28 November 2022.

- **Town and Parish Council Engagement**

Town and Parish Councils are vital to our district. They are key stakeholders in Huntingdonshire Futures. An in-person Town and Parish Council engagement session took place at the Burgess Hall on 20 July 2022. This workshop explored the challenges and opportunities facing Huntingdonshire and captured ideas about what actions could address these in the short and longer term. Online sessions which included feedback on what we had heard as well as the emerging Place Strategy Structure were held on the 17 October 2022 and 25 January 2023. At these sessions, details were provided on how Towns & Parishes could feed into the development of the strategy. A future session is also planned in April 2023.

On 8 August 2022 and 21 October 2022, we approached Towns and Parishes via email to ask for help and support in encouraging and enabling their communities to take part in shaping the emerging strategy. In order to explore and understand what is important to residents both now and in the future, we requested information on any local community events, groups, or organisations in their area with whom we could work with.

- **Business engagement**

Huntingdonshire District Council invited senior business leaders from all over the district to a business breakfast on 18 January 2023. This event was organised to show how committed the Council is to support and grow the local economy and also to give business leaders the chance to provide feedback on the development of the emerging Place Strategy. Thirty delegates attended the session where the structure of the Place strategy was tested; with a focus on the Place Strategy journeys and pathways, how businesses could get involved and how the Council could work smarter and more collaboratively with businesses.

- **Member engagement**

Engagement with Huntingdonshire District Councillors has also taken place throughout the development of the Place Strategy. On 27 September 2022, the Member workshop hosted in the Civic Suite at Pathfinder House gave Members the chance to learn more about the opportunities and challenges facing Huntingdonshire. These discussions resulted in ideas and observations concerning how we could address potential short- and long-term solutions through the implementation of the Place Strategy. At the next Member workshop on 31 January 2023, Members reviewed the comments residents and stakeholders provided during December and January and discussed potential revisions to the strategy.

- **Online engagement**

Throughout the entire engagement process, thoughts, ideas and feedback have been gathered online via the Huntingdonshire Futures website which went live in August 2023 and has had 2,034 site visits. Around 80 social media posts have been shared across the council's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts, with Facebook posts reaching an average of around 1,500 people per post. The council has also been tagged in social media posts from stakeholders who have attended the workshops and focus groups. Social Media promotion has also involved sharing posts with partners such as Town and Parish Councils, the voluntary and community sector has been used to promote opportunities for residents to find out more.

Thoughts, ideas, and feedback were gathered online during the entire engagement process through the Huntingdonshire Futures website, which went live in August 2023 and has received 2,034 site visits. The council's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn accounts have collectively posted about 80 social media messages, with Facebook posts on average reaching around 1,500 users. Stakeholders who attended the workshops and focus groups have also mentioned the council in social media posts. Social media promotion has also involved sharing posts with Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary and community sector who have used their socials to promote opportunities for residents to find out more information on the emerging Place Strategy.

- **Online Focus Groups**

Across December 2022 and January 2023, the attention turned to testing and refining the focus of the strategy, with the emerging areas of focus shared with key partners and stakeholders. A series of online focus groups took place in January 2023 with a session on 16 January for people who have lived in Huntingdonshire for three years or less. A session took place on 17 January for people who have lived in Huntingdonshire for 15 years or more, and a session was hosted on 18 January for people who live in Huntingdonshire but work outside the district. In-person focus groups were also held at Love's Farm and Alconbury Weald on 23 January. As themes started to emerge, stakeholders were given the opportunity to complete an online questionnaire in December 2022 and early January 2023 to reflect on what was being proposed and to provide any further thoughts on the developing strategy.



## Stakeholder Phase 1 Engagement: July 2022 – September 2022

During our first phase of engagement a number of key points emerged, namely:

### Key messages – People

- Make the District one of the top 10 places to live in the UK focus on quality of life
- Make decision making and funding equitable and inclusive, driven by the people it is meant to serve
- Maximise participation in volunteering and support existing organisations and initiatives
- Connect children and young people with local opportunities.
- Help people to get fit and keep fit.
- Encourage more face-to-face time with local services.

### Key messages – Place & Communities

- Enhance the role of the river within towns for recreation and green tourism.
- Create communities not just new homes. New development should be balanced to avoid overwhelming local character and infrastructure.
- Transition away from reliance on the car by making the district a place where public transport and active travel is the most desirable option
- Encourage shared community responsibility for the upkeep of green and open spaces to foster a sense of ownership and social interaction
- Create a district wide strategy for buses with more and later running routes, including rural areas

### Key messages – Economy

- Revitalise and diversify town centres including fostering cafe culture and the night-time economy (pubs and entertainment)
- Expand employment and training opportunities through lifelong learning and networks.
- Attract higher value jobs by celebrating accessibility combined with remote working opportunities.
- Educate businesses on sustainable practices.
- Don't leave rural areas behind - investment shouldn't just be focused on market towns
- Keep investment local.

### Key messages – Environment

- Roll out a comprehensive building stock retrofit programme.
- Make the District a place where the threat of flooding is reduced as much as possible.
- Encourage rewilding and biodiversity in both public and private spaces including more trees within towns
- Establish farmers as sustainable guardians of land.
- Pioneer the transition to the Circular Economy
- Accelerate the transition to electric vehicles and provide e-bikes and e-scooters in towns.
- Create better pedestrian and cycle footpaths.

## Stakeholder Phase 2 Engagement: November 2022 – January 2023

Feedback from all stakeholders led to the development of the following structure of the Place Strategy. During the second phase of engagement the structure of the strategy and areas of focus were tested and refined through a Key Directions document. This sought feedback on:

- **One Destination** – The strategy is proposed to have one destination statement. This will not be a vision of place, rather a concise statement that sets out what we will collectively reach by all stakeholders following the Place Strategy.
- **Five Journeys** – The strategy is proposed to be framed by five journeys. The Journeys represent the different focus areas that will enable all stakeholders to work towards common outcomes.
- **Twenty Pathways** – The strategy will set out 20 Pathways (four beneath each journey). Each Pathway is an articulation of the futures our stakeholders are imagining for Huntingdonshire.

### Feedback on Key directions

The themes below provide an overview of the feedback on the emerging Place Strategy that was received from different stakeholders during November 2022 and January 2023. 12 responses were received via the Huntingdonshire futures website, in addition feedback was captured from **XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX**

### Pride in Place

Feedback was sought from stakeholders under the emerging ‘Pride in Place’ journey and four pathways:

- What if we had a strong identity for the whole district?
- What if we had beautiful places to call home?
- What if we were incentivised to look after our own patch?
- What if our high streets were the centre of social and cultural life?

While there was support for ‘Pride in Place’, it was felt that community safety needed a stronger emphasis in the journey, especially relating to the creation of new communities and people taking care of the areas in which they live. Further feedback suggested the importance of addressing loneliness and isolation within the community, as these issues can have negative impacts on mental and physical health. By creating opportunities for social connection and support, it was suggested that this could help ensure people have a sense of belonging to the place around them and a stronger connection to others. Links between volunteering and Pride in Place were also highlighted, as was the need to make more of Huntingdonshire’s strategic location to major towns and cities such as Cambridge.

### Equitable Economy

Feedback was sought from stakeholders under the emerging ‘Equitable Economy’ journey and four pathways:

- What if we become the destination for sustainable tourism?
- What if all the food we bought was grown fresh and local?
- What if our businesses and organisations worked hand in hand with young people?
- What if we created a place where start-ups could flourish?

Overall, stakeholders felt that the 'Equitable Economy' pathway presented a compelling vision for the future of Huntingdonshire and is an important area for focus if we are to create a more sustainable and equitable economy.

Stakeholders suggested that the strategy should look towards growing local food as well as buying fresh and local food. In terms of tourism, it was felt that while the Ouse Valley was mentioned, more could have been made of river usage along with the tourism opportunity that cycling can bring.

Stakeholders also noted the importance of inward investment in driving growth, creating job and developing future skills, as well as the need for greater attention to Huntingdonshire's manufacturing sector, which now contributes 25% to the region's GDP.

Further feedback indicated that the strategy needed to better reference the pivotal value of early years education and quality schools and as there was no mention of schools, further education or higher education. It was also suggested that the strategy needed to be more mindful of the value of learning new skills at all stages of life.

### Environmental Innovation

Feedback was sought from stakeholders under the emerging 'Environmental Innovation' journey and four pathways:

- What if zero carbon became the norm?
- What if our natural assets inspired a new infrastructure?
- What if all our energy was produced within the district?
- What if all our children were fluent in sustainability?

Stakeholders agreed that achieving zero carbon emissions, utilising natural assets to inspire new infrastructure, and producing energy within Huntingdonshire are all crucial goals that will not only benefit the environment but will also contribute to the long-term sustainability and prosperity of the district.

However, there has to be a stronger focus on how the district's natural resources may inspire new infrastructure, as well as a better focus on increasing biodiversity. Additionally, young people need to be at the forefront of driving change by having the opportunity to take part in the decision-making process.

### Health Embedded

Feedback was sought from stakeholders under the emerging 'Health Embedded' journey and four pathways:

- What if we stopped measuring GDP and started measuring happiness?
- What if it was easier to live healthily?
- What if nobody was lonely here?
- What if people of every age had the opportunity to skill up?

Stakeholders stated that additional work would need to be done to investigate community social research or use a citizen's assembly as a mechanism to collectively define happiness. It was suggested that the journey should consider promoting living independently for longer, the role leisure can play as well as reflecting how we can support healthy lifestyles for children and young people better.

## Travel Transformed

Feedback was sought from stakeholders under the emerging 'Travel Transformed' journey and four pathways:

- What if the car was a relic of the past?
- What if our mobility was on demand?
- What if our distribution networks delivered for all of us?
- What if it was fun to move around here?

Overall, stakeholders agree that the "Travel Transformed" pathway offers a compelling vision for Huntingdonshire's future and should be given special attention in order to build a more sustainable and convenient transport system.

However, stakeholders were clear that the pathway 'what if the car was a relic of the past?' would be extremely difficult for people across the district as public transport can be inadequate and the car remains a necessity for many to get around, especially in rural areas. As such it was felt there is a need to reframe the pathway and that the strategy should consider alternatives to the car as the preferred method of transport.

Stakeholders suggested that the strategy has to make better reference to public transport and for it to highlight how public transport must meet user demands and be more affordable, reliable and safe for people of all ages. There were additional opinions that suggested connecting more cycle and pedestrian routes and making transit for people more enjoyable.

The strategy also needs to make better reference to public transport according to stakeholders. They want it to reflect how transport must respond to the needs of users and be more affordable, reliable and safer for people of all ages. Other observations included making travel more fun, along with making more of joined up cycle and pedestrian routes.

# CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE

9 FEB 2023

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# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

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Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) saw the development of the Huntingdonshire Futures Place strategy as an opportunity to better co-ordinate their engagement activity so it does not duplicate efforts, confuse residents and stakeholders, or miss opportunities to hear from residents and stakeholders we may not always engage with.

An engagement plan was delivered which set out to:

- Support the development of a new Huntingdonshire Place Strategy, will include our shared ambitions for the future and short, medium, and longer term priorities.
- Ensure a better understanding of what is most important to residents within their localities, as an example in the short term this will be used to support future funding bids including Levelling Up Fund and Shared Prosperity Fund. Beyond this it will inform our thinking on the development of future Local Plans.
- Support the refresh of the Huntingdonshire Community Strategy, which was currently time limited to link in with this activity.
- Provide an opportunity to gain feedback on early masterplanning thinking in Ramsey, Huntingdon, and St Ives.

This report summarises the findings of the community engagement process, which informed the Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy. It provides an overview of the two distinct phase of engagement and what local people told us about their aspirations for their district.



# PHASE 1: JULY – OCTOBER 2022

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## Phase 1

This initial phase of engagement focused on understanding and exploring:

- What people feel about Huntingdonshire now.
- Their priorities for change around the four key themes of economy, environment, people and community, and place.
- What if we did things differently? What types of change in approach would local people like to see considered in the context of the place strategy?

## How We Engaged

Phase 1 of the community engagement was delivered through a range of mechanisms:

- Pop up exhibitions with interactive activities at Huntingdon Carnival, St Ives Farmers Market, St Neots Farmers Market and Ramsey Market.
- Focus groups in Bury and Huntingdon (please note additional focus groups were postponed as a mark of respect following the death of Queen Elizabeth II), and digital focus groups on Zoom.
- Visiting community groups and activities including Butterfly Ladies in Eynesbury, Yaxley Coffee Morning, Sapley Park Fun Day, Conygear Foodbank and Conygear Fun Day.
- Rural area visit, speaking to people in rural communities including Godmanchester, Hilton, Kimbolton, Sawtry, and Stilton through visits to community meeting places such as benches in parks and bus stops.
- A discussion session with young people aged 20-24 who live in Huntingdonshire.





# EMERGING THEMES

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Across the phase one events and activities we had 481 conversations with people from across the district aged 6 to 95, living in rural areas and market towns. Notes from engagement sessions have been reviewed and coded to identify emerging themes in relation to the four key elements of the place's strategy.

## Economy

**The Role of Retail:** We explored with local people both how they perceived the economy now and how they wanted it to be in future. Consistently, particularly in the market towns, retail was seen to be critical to the economy, with the retail offer being seen as a key measure of success.

*"There are just not enough shops in the High Street anymore. I can't spend my money locally. For shopping I have to go to Cambridge."*

Focus Group Participant

*"To have a thriving market town you have to have shops. Not just charity shops and cafes."*

Note On A Display Board

*"What if we make market towns work as market towns?"*

Note On A Display Board

There is an acknowledgement that the internet and other challenges are changing how people shop, that high street is facing challenges across the country. However, there is a clear perception that thriving high streets in the districts market towns are important to local people. This aligns with a desire to see opportunities to spend money locally. People also want to see targeted support for local businesses specifically business rate relief, lower rents and support with energy bills.

**The Quest for Innovation:** Huntingdonshire's relation to Cambridge, and the health and technology innovations happening in that city are seen as a missed opportunity.

*"We have to make being near Cambridge work for Huntingdonshire, work for our economy."*

Focus Group Participant

*"Could Huntingdonshire be a Silicon Valley in 30 years' time?"*

Focus Group Participant

*"What if the wealth, culture, knowledge, high tech solutions and infrastructure in Cambridge was spread across the County?"*

Focus Group Participant – What if



Engagement suggests local people would like to see more jobs and opportunities in innovative sectors including biotech, robotics and AI based in Huntingdonshire. An innovation driven economy should be linked to education provision and opportunities for young people.

**Infrastructure as a Barrier to Economic Growth:** In conversations with local people, infrastructure across the district that was seen as a barrier to attracting businesses, entrepreneurship, and economic growth.

*“Ramsey doesn’t have an A road. Ramsey doesn’t have a train station. Ramsey doesn’t have a decent bus service. No wonder we can’t attract businesses here.”*

Conversation with Ramsey Resident

*“I don’t understand why you can’t get a direct train to Cambridge. We’re not linked to where the jobs are.”*

Focus Group Participant

There was a concern that the current road and rail infrastructure is a barrier to bringing new businesses into the area and are also a barrier to benefitting from economic success in the wider region. There is a feeling that the district’s infrastructure is *“holding it back from being more successful.”*

**Night-time and Cultural Economy:** Local people spoke of a perceived lack of a night-time and cultural economy across the district. As with retail, there is a desire to stay and spend local, alongside there being a perception that the economy does not offer enough.

*“You have to search out the night-time economy in Huntingdonshire.”*

Focus Group Participant

*“Not much culture. Very little musical culture.”*

Post It Note

*“You can go and have a meal. You can go and have a drink. But there’s not much else – you can’t go for a dance.”*

Conversation with Conygear Park Event Attendee

One of the challenges in terms of delivering these aspirations is that most participants want the night-time and cultural economy to be based where they live, specifically for those living in the district’s market towns. This connects with concerns about public transport and the ability to get around the district.

**A Local Economy That Works for Everyone:** There is a concern, particularly in deprived areas of the district, that there is an increasing divide based on socio-economic factors. For example, people living in areas of deprivation, and using support services including food banks, feel the local economy is lacking in opportunity for them. That when you are struggling to meet the needs of your household economy, for example paying increasing energy bills, you have different requirements from your local economy.

*"If we do not have jobs in Huntingdonshire for people who live in Huntingdonshire, we're just going to become a dormitory town."*

Post It Note

*"You should be able to earn a decent living here. People should be being paid a fair wage."*

Focus Group Participant

*"Too many people around here are getting left behind."*

Conversation with Food Bank User

The ideal of a local economy that supports local people, provides opportunity for local people and keeps local money in the Huntingdonshire economy was seen as important and vital to the future success of the district.

## Environment

**The Need to Act Now:** Conversations with local people showed that there is an understanding of the need to act now in relation to climate change. Recent events including significant flooding in St Ives, and 40° temperatures were cited as examples.

*"What if we stopped destroying the planet now?"*

Conversation with St Neots Resident

*"Climate change is the big threat we are facing."*

Post It Note

*"Stop talking about doing something (about climate change) and do something."*

Conversation with Huntingdon Carnival Visitor

There is concern that change is not happening at the pace that is needed, with a perception *"that it's all talk and no action."* Whilst the majority of people we spoke to acknowledged that climate change is a real and urgent issue, there are a small group of people for whom it is a hoax and / or not a priority.

**Local Nuances:** Pop up events showed clear and distinct local issues, specifically in the Market Towns.

*"St Ives could be underwater in 50 years? I need information to make a decision about our home and where we live."*

Conversation with St Ives Residents



*“Why are houses being built without solar panels? Without heat pumps? Without a wind turbine on every estate? Without electrical vehicle chargers?”*

Conversation with St Neots Resident

*“If you want me to use my car less then there has to be a cheap, reliable, convenient alternative. I had to by a car because the bus services weren’t reliable.”*

Conversation with Ramsey Resident

*“For me I have to use less energy because I can’t afford what I use. It’s not about climate change its about how much money my family has.”*

Conversation with Huntingdon Resident

As illustrated in the quotes above, in St Ives, the focus was on potential impact on future flooding, specifically on homes and businesses. People in this community wanted to see direct action to reduce and mitigate the impact of flooding.

In St Neots the focus is on buildings and infrastructure, and a desire to see this delivered in an environmental conscious way.

In Ramsey, public transport was seen as important to their ability to cut their emissions, there is an acknowledgement of an over reliance on the car and frustration that *“you cannot live in Ramsey without a car.”* This frustration is also reflected in rural communities.

People we spoke to in Huntingdon tended to put the climate crisis in the context of cost of living and the desire to reduce energy usage primarily to reduce household costs.

**Housing and Climate Change:** Consistently in engagement there was a belief that new house building needed to be more environmentally conscious and *that “there is no excuse for the lack of environmental provision in new builds.”* Participants wanted to see a clear strategy for how new housing will be built in a way to minimise environmental impacts, including net zero building, renewable energy and generation, and reducing water and energy usage. Interestingly, these references were specific to new homes and did not include other new builds including business premises and infrastructure.

*“There’s lot of new housing been built. Why on earth are they not being built with solar panels?”*

Focus Group Participant

*“I would love to replace my old boiler with a new heat pump, but I do not have the money to do that.”*

Focus Group Participant

*“We’ve just bought a new house and I’m already worried it’s not built to survive the climate we’re moving towards.”*

Focus Group Participant



Owners of existing homes were concerned about the cost of making changes to their homes – including both changes to reduce the environmental impacts of their homes and changes to protect their homes from increasing temperatures and rising water levels.

**Supporting Behaviour Change:** There is a proportion of the population who want to do more, acknowledge that there is a need to do more, but aren't sure what to do and how. These people want to be able to change their behaviour and want to be supported to make positive changes to reduce their environmental impact.

*“Where do you start? I can't afford to do anything to my house. I can't not use my car. What can I do?”*

Conversation with Community Group Participant

*“What if good things for the environment were cheaper?”*

Post It Note

*“What if solar panels were a planning requirement?”*

Post It Note

While there was a desire to make individual and household level changes, there was also a desire to see obvious and apparent systemic change with key organisations including the Council and local businesses being seen to make positive changes to protect the environment.

## People and Communities

**Communities are more than just houses:** A consistent topic raised in community engagement was a concern about house building and increasing population numbers, without the infrastructure (road, public transport and schools), and facilities, and support services (health, education and well-being) being provided to meet this increased need.

*“What if we built communities, not houses?”*

Post It Note

*“Villages should be supported to be viable, but not overwhelmed.”*

Post It Note

*“Increase in population – can't keep putting people in local towns.”*

Post It Note

In engagement, the local people there, were people who did not want to see any further house building, whilst others appreciated the need for more homes. Consistently, local people wanted to see an approach to house building that brings community facilities and infrastructure with new homes. Approaches such as the [15 minute city](#) and Australia's approach to planning (where community facilities come first) were cited.



**Housing for the Life Journey:** Housing is a need and community engagement highlighted a concern that housing development is focused on economic viability rather than need. In that, local people feel it is about *“big houses that developers can sell for high prices. Not homes for local people.”*

*“You can’t find an affordable home when you’re young. Then when your children have left the nest and you want to downsize you can’t do that.”*

Conversation with a St Neots Resident

*“What if we built more social housing and the council retained them?”*

Focus Group Participant

*“Affordable housing needs to be affordable, and developers need to be held to account to deliver.”*

Focus Group Participant

Discussions highlighted a desire to see a housing strategy that considers all aspects of people’s lives and the housing they need for each step of their life. For example, affordable housing to get on the ladder, opportunities to move to larger homes as families grow, and downsize as people get older. Most people we spoke to enjoy and value living in the area, but there are concerns that they will have to leave to find homes they can afford and meet their needs.

**Young People:** Both young people (under 20), and the wider population are concerned about a perceived lack of opportunity and lack of “things to do” for this age group.

*“There is just nothing to do for teenagers here.”*

Conversation with Sapley Park Event Attendee

*“What if there was a way to harness young people’s talent?”*

Post It Note

*“We need to keep young people in the area, boosting our economy.”*

Focus Group Participant

Engagement participants spoke of the importance of creating aspiration, ambition, and opportunity for young people. In addition, increasing concerns around anti-social behaviour and county lines were in part attributed to the lack of provision for young people / teenagers.

In phase 2, we will be working with young people to understand what type of district they want and need to build their lives in this area.



**Huntingdonshire As the Best Place to Live:** Among a proportion of engagement participants there was a belief that Huntingdonshire should focus its energy on primarily being “a great place to live, where people can live happy and healthy lives.” That it should seek to find benefits from the post pandemic, understanding that you can work from home, and there are opportunities when you don’t live and work in the same place.

*“Huntingdonshire is a great place to live. So why don’t we just focus on that? Making Huntingdonshire a really great place to live. You don’t have to live where you work anymore. People can still work in other places and spend in our economy.”*

Focus Group Participant

*“If people live here but don’t work here, we just become a dormitory town.”*

Conversation with Ramsey Event Attendee

*“Being able to work from home during the pandemic has changed what people think about when choosing where to live.”*

Focus Group Participant

However, there was another school of thought that more people should be both living and working in the district. A concern that places across Huntingdonshire are becoming dormitory towns’, where there is no major employer or industry, and people go to other places to work and spend.

## Place

**A Green and Pleasant Land:** When asked what the best things are about living in Huntingdonshire, people consistently raised the countryside, access to green places, the local rivers, and wildlife.

*“Please stop building on our green places.”*

Hilton Resident

*“It is a very pretty place; we are lucky to live here.”*

Focus Group Participant

*“Activate green spaces for the community.”*

Post It Note

Huntingdonshire has high levels of accessible greenspace, but there are concerns across the community that these valued spaces and places are at risk, primarily from house building. Other issues raised included sewage in rivers, fly tipping, and a desire to see more trees across the district.



**Getting Around the District:** There is a belief among the community that the public transport system is not fit for the needs of the district. Public transport is seen as vital to enabling people to move around the district, reducing rural isolation and contributing to net zero aspirations. The Ting bus was mentioned and overall praised, but not seen as a realistic solution to meet the transport needs of the area.

*“If you live here you have to go in the car and that’s crazy in this world.”*

Hilton Resident

*“If you don’t fix the incredibly broken public transport system in this district, and to this district, nothing else you are trying to do can be achieved.”*

Focus Group Participant

*“If we’re cut off due to the buses going, there’s no point planning for 2050.”*

Post It Note in Ramsey

*“It is easier to get to London than St Ives. Why?”*

Conversation in Godmanchester

Public transport is seen as a priority that sits across all themes of the place strategy. In addition, people want to see a joined-up approach across the District and County to rights of way, footpaths, and cycle routes. People spoke of “*cycle paths that just run out in the middle of nowhere*”. They would also like to see routes that are distinct from roads for example, “*we have loads of lovely, flat countryside. Why do I have to cycle next to a busy road and breathe in car fumes. Can’t we create more routes through our lovely countryside and green spaces?*”

**Rural Communities:** Those living in rural communities think “*all the attention goes to the market towns*” and that there is not a clear strategy for supporting rural communities to continue and thrive.

*“We’ve only just got decent broadband. If you want to live in the village you have to have a car. It’s like we’re being left behind.”*

Focus Group Participant

*“All the investment is in the market towns; no support or finance comes to rural areas.”*

Focus Group Participant

*“We’re getting new bus stops because of some new houses, but no bus. So, what’s the point? Who is making these decisions?”*

Focus Group Participant

*“There are 18 new houses being built in the village. Unlike some, I’m not against it. We need houses. But I am against the number of affordable houses being built being reduced and the Council doing nothing to prevent it.”*

Hilton Resident





Rural communities acknowledge that they are now towns, that they are a different proposition. But they do want to “*feel love, to feel like someone knows we’re here*” and have the fundamentals that make life in rural community’s work including support services in their communities, access to transport and broadband.

**Ambition:** Local people want Huntingdonshire to balance ambition whilst retaining what makes the area charming and special.

*“Why isn’t the District Council bolder, and more ambitious? Stop doing the option that is the bare minimum. What if we didn’t settle for the norm and instead aimed for the ideal.”*

Focus Group Participant

In particular, they want to see their District Council be ambitious in tackling the challenges being faced by local people and communities including the cost of living, climate change, housing need, health and wellbeing, and poverty.

**Is there too much Democracy?** A number of people expressed frustration and confusions at the levels of politics and democracy and the impact.

*“What if we didn’t let politics get in the way of change?”*

Post It Note

*“Huntingdonshire does not exist.”*

St Neots Resident

*“You try to get something done. There is an overgrown tree growing over our path. You ring the Council, and they say it’s not us it’s the other council. Then you try them. Nothing ever gets done. The cemetery isn’t kept tidy. The paths are full of potholes because everyone can just put the blame on another Council.”*

Yaxley Residents

Those who took part in engagement want to have clarity about what Council is responsible for what, and to be able to access support and information from Council’s when they need it.

**Does Huntingdonshire have an Identity?** Throughout engagement no one referred to themselves as being a resident of Huntingdonshire. Often when asked if they came from Huntingdonshire at pop up events, they wouldn’t be sure. Instead, people would talk about the town or village where they live.

*“What is Huntingdonshire anyway? It’s some towns and some villages, but you can’t say Huntingdonshire is this.”*

Focus Group Participants

As a result, their aspirations for the future are primarily focused on change in the places where they live, rather than at a District wide level.

# YOUNG PEOPLE FOCUS GROUP

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To capture more perspectives from young people during phase 1 we did an additional discussion session with 3 young people aged 20 -24 who live in Huntingdonshire.

## Economy

- More needs to be done to give young people the opportunity to learn and develop new skills, that can give them wider potential / choice of careers.
- Schools and colleges in the area are to focus on the “*university route and make it the only option*” and “*when you’re at school its just uni, uni, uni, uni, uni.*”

*“I did a degree apprenticeship. I was hoping for a chemistry role but they offered me a position in HR. It was the best thing I could have done. I been able to learn, develop and buy my own home. But degree apprenticeships are seen as a lesser thing.”*

- More needs to be done to present alternative pathways to young people, there is a belief that at the moment there is a blockage between connecting young people to enterprise and employers in the area.
- It is important that young people see the options and routes available to them and here from a range of perspectives about what a successful life is and could be.
- Have to cultivate opportunities for young people to grow and develop.

*“Education and supporting young people should be seen as a community issue.”*

- They would like to see more of a night-time economy in Huntingdonshire but don’t want it to “*just be about eating and drinking.*” They are looking for a different offer based on experiences. They want shared activities that bring people together for example gaming, football and dancing.
- Transport is a major barrier, which disconnects local people from employment, training and participating in the wider community and economy.

*“You have to be able to drive to work here, the X5 used to be okay but now driving is the only option.”*



## Environment

- Is a priority for this group and they are concerned about the lack of action they see at all levels of Government.

## Place

- New housing that is being built in the area is not affordable for young people.
- Rent is too high and is a barrier to people being able to save for their own home. There are young people living in rented accommodation *“who are having to decided between heating and eating.”*
- As with the wider community they are concerned about the numbers of new houses and the perceived lack of community services and infrastructure.
- They are frustrated by what they see as misuse of power examples cited included a 199 house development, which meant it didn't meet the 200 household threshold for community infrastructure. One participant spoke of his dad losing his business premises for a housing development and receiving no support to relocate.

## People and Communities

- There is a significant concern about the lack of mental health support for young people in the area.

*“Counselling should be available in all schools for everyone. There is a mental health crisis among young people here.”*

- Without mental health support, young people will be unable to be part of the local community and contribute to the local economy.
- Social media and gaming communities are important ways for young people to connect, but there is concern about the impact on mental health.
- They feel that the communities in which they live do not reflect them, and do not meet their needs. The decision to leave in the area tends to be driven by family, friends and the ability to travel to different places for example London.

*“I don't see me in my local community.”*

- They believe that decisions about where they live and what happens in their community are made without them. That there is no clear involvement of young people in the current system. None of the participants knew who their Councillor is, there was some awareness of the local MP.

*“Nothing about us without us.”*



- They would like to see approaches like citizen's assemblies that give local people, of all types, to be active in decision making and work with decision makers. They believe there are numerous under-represented groups including young people and the LGBTQ+ community.
- Need to be creative about how we engage use different techniques and approaches like gamification to involve and encourage people to participate. They want to see spaces created where local people can be part of the shaping what happens.
- There is a need to better connect people to information and support to *"empower people through information."*
- They also want to see different measures of success being used beyond financial, e.g., wellbeing and happiness.
- Their priorities for change are mental health, citizens' assembly and support networks. They see Huntingdonshire Future's as an opportunity to be bold and make significant changes.



# WHAT IF?

Pioneered by the founder of Transition Town Totnes - Rob Hopkins, 'What if?' is a simple question, but perhaps the most important question that society has somehow forgotten. In his book 'What if to what next', Hopkins explores what we must do to revive and replenish our collective imagination. If we can rekindle that precious creative spark, whole societies and cultures can change rapidly, dramatically and unexpectedly for the better. Through all engagement activities we collated 'What if's?' These are shown in the table below.

What if.....

Economy	Environment	People and Communities	Place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we supported our local markets?</li> <li>• we invested more and better?</li> <li>• we kept investment local?</li> <li>• we sold only local produce in our markets?</li> <li>• we could bring energy prices down?</li> <li>• we had a scope to encourage more visitors?</li> <li>• what if public transport was affordable?</li> <li>• we made it obvious we want businesses in our town centre?</li> <li>• we had a tourism destination management plan?</li> <li>• we maximised tourism and presented our towns better?</li> <li>• we had a night-time economy?</li> <li>• we had a town wide festival that works with local businesses?</li> <li>• we run the weekend farmers market until 3pm?</li> <li>• we switched to thinking local?</li> <li>• we make the market towns work as market towns?</li> <li>• we did have affordable housing?</li> <li>• our economy was a green economy?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• waste was managed sustainably?</li> <li>• we didn't build on green spaces?</li> <li>• we make it interesting to be sustainable?</li> <li>• we invest in water infrastructure?</li> <li>• we stopped destroying the planet now?</li> <li>• we had an honest conversation with constructors about sustainable building?</li> <li>• we started doing something now, rather than just having bland conversations about the environment that go nowhere?</li> <li>• the river valley was an AOWB?</li> <li>• for every new house built, we planted 10 trees?</li> <li>• we had a way of saving water?</li> <li>• St. Ives was car free?</li> <li>• we had a strategy for flooding to prevent St. Ives being underwater in 2050?</li> <li>• planning required solar panels, water butts, insulated and estate turbines?</li> <li>• we recognised climate change as an immediate issue?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ambulances came quicker?</li> <li>• we gave local young people a social café?</li> <li>• children with special educational needs had the same opportunity and support as others?</li> <li>• all children walked to school?</li> <li>• there was a way to harness young people's talent?</li> <li>• if we went back to face healthcare?</li> <li>• we put people before money?</li> <li>• HDC lead a joined-up thinking programme?</li> <li>• we built community pride?</li> <li>• we did more to encourage people to come together?</li> <li>• celebrated local art?</li> <li>• we drove forward kerbside and car park charging and gave everyone the opportunity to run an electric vehicle?</li> <li>• we had initiatives to bring certain age groups together to plan together?</li> <li>• we made bold decisions?</li> <li>• we helped, rather than hindered people disposing of rubbish in public spaces?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we did planning like Australia?</li> <li>• public transport was the first choice?</li> <li>• we built new houses with character?</li> <li>• we didn't let politics get in the way of change?</li> <li>• we design towns so the people who find it most challenging (disabled, additional needs) can get around?</li> <li>• we connected car parks to parks and new housing?</li> <li>• we had a 15-minute model town/district?</li> <li>• the guided busway was reliable?</li> <li>• new housing development followed the 15-minute model?</li> <li>• we had more than one bus a day?</li> <li>• infrastructure kept up with development?</li> <li>• we thought about the impact of more housing?</li> <li>• hospital was connected to a university?</li> <li>• if the plans for buses had happened?</li> <li>• St. Ives was a dark town?</li> <li>• we had reasons to visit?</li> <li>• we had parking strategies targeted to local areas?</li> </ul>

Economy	Environment	People and Communities	Place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we supported businesses to reduce energy costs?</li> <li>• trees were a planning condition?</li> <li>• no one did a journey less than a mile in a car?</li> <li>• we planted fruit trees in public areas and grow vegetables in public?</li> <li>• we supported businesses to become more circular?</li> <li>• we remove the word waste? Everything is reusable.</li> <li>• we shared what is already happening to protect the environment?</li> <li>• streets were pedestrianised?</li> <li>• we communicated better?</li> <li>• we re-isolated our rural areas?</li> <li>• we had an educational ad campaign on how/what to recycle?</li> <li>• we had cheap energy now?</li> <li>• solar panels were a planning requirement?</li> <li>• we supported businesses to reduce energy costs?</li> <li>• childcare supported working rather than a barrier?</li> <li>• the council lead by example with flexible working?</li> <li>• we built affordable housing?</li> <li>• businesses were incentivised to look after their patch?</li> <li>• we had universal basic income?</li> <li>• we all shopped locally?</li> <li>• we had a local, fresh produce economy?</li> <li>• community projects had long term funding?</li> <li>• national government reduced business rates?</li> <li>• business advice and support – how can we progress?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we had nature friendly forming with zero soil erosion?</li> <li>• when we plant trees, we looked after them?</li> <li>• you could walk, cycle, or catch a bus everywhere?</li> <li>• plans and activities for nature recovery for all our green spaces and land in the district were produced by local people?</li> <li>• we had a great natural and town environment?</li> <li>• we focussed on the environment?</li> <li>• If we supported businesses to be green?</li> <li>• people reused their waste?</li> <li>• no-one drove a journey that was less than a mile?</li> <li>• new builds had to have solar panels?</li> <li>• put the environment first?</li> <li>• good things for the environment where cheaper?</li> <li>• we never built on green space?</li> <li>• everyone planted a tree in their garden?</li> <li>• we made it easy to not use a car?</li> <li>• we promote alternatives to weedkiller, grain dumping, and paving?</li> <li>• every house had a water butt?</li> <li>• we had more trees, and more planting incentives to keep lawns and hedges?</li> <li>• we had more ways to reuse water?</li> <li>• all old houses were retrofitted?</li> <li>• we viewed climate change as the number one?</li> <li>• we had more green organizing campaigns to show others and also encourage everyone to has a little garden?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we had a shared sense of direction?</li> <li>• we built communities, not housing?</li> <li>• we promoted things to do better?</li> <li>• we had an honest conversation with residents about infrastructure and planning?</li> <li>• we used sport and culture to bring people in?</li> <li>• people in rural villages didn't need a car?</li> <li>• we had a better wellbeing?</li> <li>• we did prevention and early intervention?</li> <li>• we were kind to each other?</li> <li>• we brought support services to people rather than expecting them to come to you?</li> <li>• all children had an equal chance?</li> <li>• no child lived in poverty in Huntingdonshire?</li> <li>• no-one was lonely?</li> <li>• we put the pedestrian first?</li> <li>• we designed people centred places?</li> <li>• we had youth clubs that were open everyday</li> <li>• we involved young people in planning?</li> <li>• we had community-based adult education?</li> <li>• we had a district wide cycle path network?</li> <li>• we had public transport for the villages?</li> <li>• we helped people to help themselves?</li> <li>• we incentivised behavioural change?</li> <li>• children with ALN had equal opportunities?</li> <li>• we educated children to be citizens?</li> <li>• we enable behavioural change?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we had school choice?</li> <li>• we stopped putting housing first?</li> <li>• public transport was affordable?</li> <li>• we had a proper high street?</li> <li>• there was a shopping centre?</li> <li>• had less parking?</li> <li>• we had the town centre of the future?</li> <li>• we had reasons to visit town?</li> <li>• It was illegal to build a flat without a balcony?</li> <li>• St. Neots was the go-to place?</li> <li>• everyone felt safe where they live?</li> <li>• we had good links to villages and London?</li> <li>• transport was regular?</li> <li>• the positive energy about the town was used to promote what is good?</li> <li>• we had a district identity?</li> <li>• we took pride in how our town looks and feels?</li> <li>• Ramsey had another industrial/incubator hub? Same site as Lidl?</li> <li>• we made change rather than talking about it?</li> <li>• we had a safe cycle/footpath to countryside centre at Ramsey Heights?</li> <li>• It was safer to cycle?</li> <li>• we didn't have the same high street as everywhere else?</li> <li>• we had 5G in Ramsey?</li> <li>• Ramsey had a bypass?</li> <li>• we had a Tom's Cakes in Ramsey?</li> <li>• we had everything we need here?</li> <li>• we had more reliable buses?</li> <li>• we had free public transport?</li> <li>• we considered the long-standing assets?</li> </ul>

Economy	Environment	People and Communities	Place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more support was given to small businesses?</li> <li>• we supported local businesses?</li> <li>• we helped local businesses to grow?</li> <li>• we addressed the barriers to work e.g., transport?</li> <li>• we have a career pathway for everyone?</li> <li>• we enabled businesses to expand?</li> <li>• we had enough jobs locally for all our school leavers?</li> <li>• the wealth, culture, knowledge, high tech solutions and infrastructure in Cambridge was spread across the County?</li> <li>• I could work locally?</li> <li>• we could compare work pay to work done, I feel like the people who work the most don't get an equal amount of compensation compared with their counter who have little work input and get a larger amount of compensation?</li> <li>• more technology was used to make life easier and more fun for everyone, and also discovery of medicines for diseases that have none currently?</li> <li>• the government provided reliable technology and internet to have a good working environment?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what if we reduced air pollution that diversify to other sources of energy?</li> <li>• what if we reduced the number of private gasoline vehicles around town to reduce air pollution, diversify sources of energy, like solar, wind turbines, increase recreational parks, bring in more developmental &amp; economic projects?</li> <li>• what if we reduced air pollution?</li> <li>• what if we had alternative sources of local renewable energy?</li> <li>• what if we restricted where people can drive?</li> <li>• what if the government made everywhere green?</li> <li>• built houses now that do what we need them to in 2050?</li> <li>• helped people change their behaviour?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Huntingdonshire was truly inclusive?</li> <li>• The council answered emails?</li> <li>• we created spaces for teenagers to come together?</li> <li>• we had a bandstand?</li> <li>• we focused on solutions, not problems?</li> <li>• we thought about the life cycle of people in planning?</li> <li>• empty shops became community hubs?</li> <li>• all the public bodies spoke to each other and worked together?</li> <li>• renters were supported to buy?</li> <li>• we had communal spaces?</li> <li>• we kept young people in our area and spending in our economy?</li> <li>• joined up transport: bus, rail, and cycling?</li> <li>• we thought about downsizing? Bungalows as well as houses?</li> <li>• we had a more sustained community?</li> <li>• we helped those just about managing?</li> <li>• there were no waiting lists?</li> <li>• the council stepped in early to help people with their mental health?</li> <li>• we could make access to sport free for under 16s?</li> <li>• we had a community pub?</li> <li>• we had role models for children?</li> <li>• we had youth workers in our community?</li> <li>• we had detached youth workers?</li> <li>• we did join up local planning?</li> <li>• we promoted understanding of biodiversity in the Fens</li> <li>• we guaranteed a job for everyone?</li> <li>• we looked after the right people?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• smaller buses were available and reliable?</li> <li>• Huntingdonshire was more accessible to all by public transport?</li> <li>• traffic went? What if we could divide the ring road bus / cycle with a small park and ride.</li> <li>• we could minimise the hustle of travelling to workplaces and leisure opportunities by promoting more eco-friendly means like cycling and walking to protect our environment?</li> <li>• we used our history and parks to generate income from tourists to support our economy?</li> <li>• we had modern places to live in our historic buildings and towns?</li> <li>• what if public transport worked with people's lives?</li> <li>• the ting bus was available across Huntingdonshire and in the evening.</li> <li>• Huntingdonshire was the Silicon Valley of the region.</li> <li>• It was affordable to live in Huntingdonshire?</li> <li>• we were more ambitious and bold? We didn't settle for the norm and aimed for the ideal?</li> <li>• stopped working in silos?</li> <li>• we sorted out transportation?</li> <li>• built more social housing?</li> <li>• had rent control?</li> </ul>

Economy	Environment	People and Communities	Place
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we helped young people on to the house ladder?</li> <li>• we put addressing poverty on the agenda?</li> <li>• help was person centred?</li> <li>• we listened?</li> <li>• the police were more present in Ramsey?</li> <li>• we lived in caring communities?</li> <li>• we stopped overlooking one off incidents?</li> </ul>	



# POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

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When reviewing the note and comments from the engagement activities, there were two key factors that primarily defined people's aspirations for the future.

**Where People Live:** As previously discussed in engagement activities, people prioritised need and change in the town or village they lived. Therefore, change tended to focus on local issues rather than District wide challenges.

**Socio-Economic Status:** There is a divide in people's priorities for the next 30 years based on socio economic status. Those living in areas of deprivation and struggling in the face of costing of living feel the priority should be on immediate support to address those challenges now rather than future thinking. Those in a stronger socio-economic position wanted to balance short, medium, and long term change.



# PHASE 2: JANUARY 2023

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## Phase 2

This summary report sets out the findings of the second phase of engagement to support the Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy. This phase of engagement focused on understanding and exploring how participants think and feel about:

- The proposed journeys that make up the draft Place Strategy.
- The pathways and actions that can make a change.
- The role of the community.

## How We Engaged

Phase 2 of the community engagement was delivered through the following mechanisms:

- A programme of focus groups and listening sessions:
  - Digital:
    - People who have lived in Huntingdonshire for 3 years or less.
    - People who have live in Huntingdonshire for 15 years or more.
    - The pathways and you – general focus group.
    - Ghanian Community Association.
  - Face to Face:
    - Conygear Centre Users.
    - 3C's Colne Caring Community.
    - Young people aged 18 to 24.
    - People who live in Love's Farm.
    - People who live in Alconbury Weald.
- Working with young people at Sawtry Village Academy (Year 7 to Year 9) and Hinchingsbrooke School (Year 7 to Year 12).



# THE FIVE JOURNEYS

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Across the phase 2 listening sessions we heard the perspectives of 258 people, aged 11 to 94, living in rural areas and market towns. Notes from the sessions have been reviewed and coded to identify emerging themes in relation to the five pathways which form the basis of the draft place strategy.

## Pride of Place

**It is important to be proud of where you live:** Most participants felt it was important to be proud of where you live, that it is important to feel connected to your community. Pride is connected to how people feel about and perceive where they live.

*"I would like to be proud of where I live. I think if I did, I would be more inclined to get involved and make it better."*

Conygear Centre Focus Group Participant

*"If you're proud of where you live, it means you like where you live."*

Year 7 Student

**How can you feel proud of a place where you don't feel safe:** Almost all of the young people we worked with in schools included the importance of feeling and being safe as a criteria for a successful community and part of creating a great place to live. The majority of the those students said they didn't feel safe or were able to cite incidents when they did not feel safe.

*"You can't work through town without being harassed by gross men. Being shouted at. It makes me feel awful."*

Year 10 Student

*"There is a great skate park in St Neots. But every time my son goes there, he tells me about drug deals happening. People taking drugs. Where are the police?"*

Love's Farm Focus Group Participant

*"When there's litter everywhere, when they use your area to fly tip. When nothing is taken care of you don't feel safe never mind proud of where you live."*

Conygear Centre Focus Group Participant

Participants raised a range of issues related to community safety including county lines, street lighting and anti-social behaviour. There is a belief that the area is getting less safe over time, which impacts on people's ability to feel proud about where they live.



**A decline in standards:** Participants spoke of a perceived decline in standards, not just across public services but also in the behaviour of people in area. There is a concern that Huntingdonshire is on a downward trajectory.

*“Nothing is working at the moment. The roads are full of potholes, you can’t get in at the doctors. Why should we feel proud?”*

Digital Focus Group Participant

*“We could have more bins, but the problem is the people. They don’t care, they don’t care about where they live. Why should we have to pick up after them.”*

Year 9 Student

The idea of having pride in Huntingdonshire, is connected to the other journeys and all aspects of life. The small things do matter, several discussions around pride were connected to litter and graffiti. Others raised concerns that the things that used to make them proud of their town are no longer happening, as one focus group participant explained *“there used to be wonderful flowers outside the Church in Huntingdonshire every spring. That does not happen anymore. Huntingdon is now very run down. You do not see flowers anymore.”*

**What if We Were Incentivised to Look After Own Patch:** In activities with students at Sawtry Village Academy and Hinchbrook School there were several discussions about the role of the individual / people and the role of the public sector.

*“Why should I do a litter pick. That is not my job. Someone is paid to do that.”*

Year 11 Student

*“I think we should do things that can help keep where we live, how we want it to be.”*

Year 9 Student

Across the focus groups, some felt that local people should take more of an active role in looking after their own patch. Others felt that *“too much is being left to volunteers, what does the Council actually do now”* (digital focus group participant). The Alconbury Weald focus groups participants suggested there is a good balance between the role of local people and public services / the developer in their area. This was put down to the type of people who lived in the area, a willingness to put in *“hard work to keep it the way it is now”* and the presence of a Community Development Officer.



**We Had Beautiful Places To Call Home:** In focus groups the reference to ‘beautiful homes’ and ‘beautiful places to call home’ in the description and pathway often brought the conversation to planning. Listening to local people, as in phase 1, there is a concern that the planning system in the area is not meeting the needs of local people and communities.

*“The HDC planning process feeds into everything. Why are they building houses without capacity for GPs, without the transport links? It feels like reality isn’t considered and decisions are being made on data from the 70’s. You need to get in front of the problems.”*

Love’s Farm Focus Group Participant

*“Why is it beautiful homes and not affordable homes?”*

Young People Aged 18 to 24 Focus Group

*“The cost of houses around loves farm and Wintringham are in my opinion, as a 22 year old working, horrendous and I definitely think that most young people my age will feel that these prices aren’t affordable for anyone.”*

Love’s Farm Focus Group Participant

*“There seems to be an inability to do things in a cohesive way in this area. New houses are being built and transport is getting worse.*

Love’s Farm Focus Group Participant

*“Nobody collaboratively thinks.”*

Young People Aged 18 to 24 Focus Group

*“Everyone passes the buck. They hide behind the bureaucracy.”*

Young People Aged 18 to 24 Focus Group

There is a perception that the planning system is not working in the area, and that more transparency and clarity in how the planning process works in Huntingdonshire and why decisions are made is needed.

Part of this perception relates to affordable housing and the lack thereof. Young people in particular are concerned about their inability to get on the house ladder, and parents feel their children may need to move out of the area to afford home.

**We Had a Strong Identity for the Whole District:** Very few participants described themselves as coming from Huntingdonshire. In discussions participants struggled to find a single identify for the District and tended to focus on the specific town or village they live in.



**Our High Streets Were the Centre of Social and Cultural Life:** As with phase 1, there is concern that town centres / High Streets are run down, unattractive and not great places to visit. There is an acknowledgement that High Streets across England are struggling, but this is tempered by a feeling that there is not enough action and support for the areas Market Towns.

*"Its all nail shops, and coffee shops and barbers. There's so many barbers and yet I've never seen so many bald people."*

Young People Aged 18 to 24 Focus Group

*"We keep losing our banks. I read about banking hubs recently, can we have one of those. Not everyone is on the internet."*

Digital Focus Group Participant

*"There is noting special about our town centre."*

Digital Focus Group Participant

On whole there is support for this pathway, but a need to see more tangible and realistic actions for change.

**How do you know if you're successful:** A consistent concern is the numerous levels of democracy in the area and the inability to hold specific Council's / public sector organisations to account. The community wants to clear about what the District Council is seeking to achieve. To have mechanisms by which they can held the public sector to account.

*"This all feels very woolly too me. How we will know if anything has changed. What will you measure?"*

Love's Farm Focus Group Participants

*"It's so broad as to be almost meaningless."*

Digital Focus Group Participant



## Environmental Innovation

**Zero Carbon Became the Norm and All Our Children Were Fluent in Sustainability:** There is a consistent concern that not enough is being done to achieve net zero and protect the environment. It was felt the Place Strategy needs to focus on ways to help people and communities make a difference in their own areas.

*“We learn about sustainability at school. What we don’t learn is what we can do to reduce our own environmental impact.”*

Year 12 Student

*“There needs to be more done to make people change, like when they started charging for carrier bags.”*

Year 9 student

As well as support and education, people wanted to see more environmental innovation on a community level in their locality. For example, the Conygear Centre focus groups participants spoke about a desire to see a recycle and reuse facility in their area *“if we had somewhere people could take their old office chair, then someone else could use it. We wouldn’t have that chair dumped in the alleyway behind our homes.”*

**New Homes:** As in phase 1 focus groups participants feel it is a missed opportunity not to ensure all new homes are built to minimise their environmental impact.

*“Why are you letting developers getting away with building homes without solar panels? There is no excuse.”*

Alconbury Weald Focus Group

*“All houses should have no carbon footprint.”*

Year 11 student

Participants spoke about wanting to see policy being used to ensure that new homes are carbon neutral, across both phases of engagement this was a clear and consistent message.

**All Our Energy was Produced with the District:** There is support for community energy generation projects, particularly those which can both reduce environmental impact and people’s utility bills.

*“It’s very windy here, very flat we should have a community wind turbine.”*

Alconbury Weald Focus Group

*“If it reduces my energy bill then I would support community energy. But you won’t do that round here you’ll do it in a better neighbourhood.”*

Conygear Centre Focus Group

There is concern that local people won't know where to start and there needs to be a clear mechanism to turn this pathway into projects. There also needs to be an assurance that this pathway and opportunity reaches all communities and provides equality of opportunity. Interestingly there was no nimbyism (not in my backyard) in the focus group sessions and people weren't concerned about the possibility of community energy generation infrastructure in their community.

**Our Natural Assets Inspired A New Infrastructure:** As with phase 1 the natural environment was considered to be one of the areas key assets, greenspaces and access to nature are often cited as the best thing about Huntingdonshire.

*"How is this protecting local wildlife? We should be protecting what we already have."*

Year 9 Student

*"Our greenspaces are a very important factor. Without them it wouldn't be the same."*

Digital Focus Group Participants

There is a desire to see a more explicit protection of existing natural assets as well as 'taking inspiration for new infrastructure' and 'making the most of our wonderful natural assets.'

**Show What You're Doing:** At all of the schools' sessions, during a warm up exercise we asked a series of yes / no questions. One of which was 'are we doing enough to tackle climate change?' in response one student asked "what is the Council doing in Huntingdonshire?" From discussions in focus group sessions, it became clear that local people are not seeing key organisations like the Council being proactive in the battle against climate change.

*"When we talk about the environment, we're talking about where we live. I know what I'm doing, but I don't know what HDC, or St Neots Town Council are doing. Are you doing anything?"*

Digital Focus Group Participants

*"Is HDC switching the lights of when no-one is the office? Are they going to invest in electric bin lorries? What are they doing?"*

Digital Focus Group Participants





## Equitable Economy

**We Created A Place Where Start-ups Could Flourish:** Across the focus groups there is a desire to see this journey being used specifically to support local entrepreneurs and local businesses to thrive and grow.

*“When I think of start-ups, I think of Hi – tech/ Biotech start-ups in Silicon Fen in Cambridge.’ ‘The word start-up tends to be used in that context, whereas if we think about local businesses, entrepreneurship is more appropriate.”*

Ghanian Community Association

*“There are communities of like minded people, like here in St Neots. How will this support those of us who are already here?”*

Young people aged 18 to 24

*“This should be about small innovative companies, not attracting big companies in.”*

Young people aged 18 to 24.

They would like to see HDC and other partners explore if they could for example *“cut business rates”* or *“motivate landlords to not let buildings stand empty”*. They want the Council to explore these issues and explain what it can and can not do. As one participant put it *“the Council should be supporting those who want to but can’t rather than those who could but don’t.”*

**We Become the Destination for Sustainable Tourism:** There was limited support for sustainable tourism, across the focus group sessions. It was felt that the focus should be on addressing *“the needs of local people, rather than the wants of visitors.”*

*“Why are you trying to attract tourists, when the people who live here don’t have everything they need.”*

Year 10 student

*“Will people want to visit here? Can we really compete with other places? I’d rather you invest in our local businesses.”*

Digital Focus Group Participant

*“There’s nothing in our town centre, I would be embarrassed if people came here to visit.”*

Digital Focus Group Participant

There was some support for tourism as a mechanism for creating jobs, however there was concern that these tend to be low paid / zero hour contracts. Participants picked up on the potential for reduced public sector budgets in the future, and there is a belief that resources and capacity should be focused on the needs of the people who live in the area.



**Our Business and Organisations Worked with Young People:** Everyone who participated thinks it is important to create opportunity for young people, but there was a feeling that support for young people needs to go beyond this one pathway.

Almost every young person we spoke to at Sawtry Village Academy and Hinchbrook School felt there is nothing for them to do in Huntingdonshire. There is a perception that young people are also facing increasing challenges in the area, with parents of older children making references to drug taking, anti-social behaviour and county lines.

*“Youth Council – don’t put me on a kids table. If you want to work with us, take us seriously.”*

18 to 24 Focus Group

*“I run the youth club and we’re looking at the moment at how we can get work experience for young people. It is so hard.”*

Alconbury Weald Focus Group

*“Schools need to be more consistent in what they do and how they support our young people.”*

Love’s Farm Focus Group Participants

There is a desire to see opportunities created for young people and this is widely supported. Young people feel this process needs to involve and engage them more. They feel that are the moment too many decisions that affect them are being made without their involvement.

**Growing Food Fresh and Local:** Discussions on this topic with focus group participants, highlighted the need to think about the specificity of how to deliver this locally. This was an example of a topic where people were concerned about its fundamentally deliverability.

*“Importing food from other places increases air miles, and shipping miles. Growing food locally is better for the environment.”*

Ghanian Community Association

*“We could have a local good supply but the lose of local farmland seems to run counter to that. You need to be realistic and make sure it is achievable.”*

Digital Focus Group Participant

*“Community orchards would be a good way to educate people about growing food.”*

Year 10 Student



## Health Embedded

**GDP v Happiness:** In discussion it was felt that people being happy is a worthwhile aspiration, but concern there is concern about how this can be measured and delivered. It was also felt to be confusing to put it in the context of GDP, which most focus group participants did not understand.

*“How are you going to measure happiness? It feels like a nice thing to say, but how are you actually going to do that.”*

Love’s Farm Focus Group Participant

*“People should be happy to live here, but I think that happiness will come from the place improving. I don’t think it should be a thing on its own.”*

Digital Focus Group Participant

In conversations with focus group participants, it was suggested that the language should maybe change to focus on wellbeing, in the context of wellbeing being a key priority for the council and its partners.

**Easier to Live Healthy:** There was support for this pathway, in the context of preventive health that reduces need for health services.

*“Let’s be honest its money that makes it easier to live healthy.”*

Conygear Focus Group Participant

*“Gyms should be cheaper, so everyone can afford them.”*

Year 7 Student

*“It would be better to do more to prevent people from getting to the point where they’re really ill. Whether that’s physical health or mental health.”*

Year 12 Student

*“It would be easier to live healthy if there was a doctor here. Why do we have to go to St Ives?”*

3C’s Participant

Participants want to see this pathway tackle the barriers that prevent people in their community living healthier lives including the cost of healthy living and the lack of health infrastructure in some communities.

**Loneliness:** In conversation, when loneliness was discussed in the context of the wider impact on people’s lives it became more of a priority for participants.

*“No-one should be lonely; we should have events and parties where people can get together.”*

Year 8 Student

*“The Council needs to visit people in their homes and see how they’re doing... There is a personal touch missing in Colne. The Council should have a list of vulnerable people on their system to visit.”*

3C’s Participant

There is a perception that increased loneliness is in part due to the legacy of covid, that as a result of the pandemic there are less places, events and activities that bring people together.

**Skills and Training:** Probably because it is the health embedded theme, participants tended to focus on skills and training opportunities for people who work in health and care related fields.

*“It will contribute to Huntingdonshire’s health sector, and people will not feel discriminated.”*

Digital Focus Group Participants

*“There are lots of people who work in care in this area, and we don’t do enough to support them. They certainly don’t get paid enough.”*

Digital Focus Group Participant

Some people felt that lifelong learning would be a better fit for equitable economy, *“if equitable means for everyone. If we’re talking about skills and training for people of all ages, maybe that should move.”*

**Mental Health:** A significant number of participants felt that mental health needs a specific pathway / focus with the place strategy beyond happiness and loneliness.

*“Mental health is being pushed aside in this conversation.”*

18 to 24 Focus Group Participant

*“You really need to help with mental health in this area. There’s lots of people struggling who can’t get help.”*

Year 9 Student

*“When I was a police-officer I spent more time dealing with mental health than anything else, and the only training I had was a half day slide show on mental health.”*

18 to 24 Focus Group Participant

There is a swell of support for mental health being a specific pathway within the place strategy. If this is not possible a clear reason why needs to be given in feedback.



## Travel Transformed

**Car As A Relic of the Past:** A significant majority of participants of all ages felt this pathway is fundamentally unachievable, and therefore to an extent setting up the Place Strategy for failure.

*"It's not going to happen; people are not going to get rid of their cars. Even if electric cars become more successful people will still be using cars."*

Alconbury Weald Focus Group Participant

*"Public transport needs to be frequent, cheap and reliable otherwise it won't work. That's why I'm sticking to my car."*

Alconbury Weald Focus Group Participant

*"I've only just passed my test and there is no way I'm going to give up my car."*

Year 12 Student

*"We live in a car centric county; it's going to take one heck of a network to beat point to point."*

Digital Focus Group Participant

*"There doesn't seem to be much thinking about disabled people in this."*

3Cs Participant

It was felt that this pathway does not reflect the reality of the district and the challenges of getting around. That it doesn't take into account that services such as GPS's and schools are not available within all local communities, or those people who need to use cars for health reasons. They felt the language of this statement is *"to final, too black and white"* (digital focus group participant).

**Mobility on Demand:** There was a feeling among participants that this is good in theory more challenging in practice. A number of people spoke of using the Ting bus service, but concerns were raised. For example, one focus group participant explained that son uses the service to get to work, but on several occasions there have not been enough drivers. As a result, he has needed to get a taxi, which the Ting service has then paid for.

*"My son has used the Ting service to get to work, it was going great but lately they haven't had the drivers. Which means he gets a taxi that they pay for. How is that sustainable? The Ting needs to be working properly first before they do more of it."*

Alconbury Weald Focus Group Participant

*"Huntingdon needs Uber, when can we get uber."*

Year 12 Student

*"The reality needs to be considered – I've heard about the Ting bus, but I don't think I would rely on it to get me to work."*

Digital Focus Group Participant

Among young people in particular the need for 'uber' was raised consistently in conversation.

**Distribution Networks:** There was an acknowledgement that there are high levels of traffic in the area, and that distribution of goods contributes to this. However, discussions of this topic were limited and it was not a key priority for local people.

*"We do need to think about how stuff as well as people moves around."*

Year 11 Student

*"I think on a very local level we can do more about how we move goods around. But on a bigger scale is this feasible."*

Digital Focus Group Participant

**Fun to Move Around:** Again, as with mobility on demand it was felt there was a need to get the basics right and improve on existing infrastructure first. As was the case in phase 1, participants feel that the current approach to cycling and walking is disconnected.

*"It is impossible to cycle to Cambridge, or Sandy or Huntingdon from here. More needs to be done to create a network, rather than just a hodge potch of paths."*

Love's Farm Focus Group

*"I would maybe walk more if all the street lights in my local neighbourhood worked."*

Digital Focus Group Participant

*"The river is lovely; it would be great to see paddleboards and rowers on it more often. But are members of the public just allowed to do that?"*

Digital Focus Group Participant

As shown above there is also an aspiration to see more made of the river, which is seen as a key feature of the District. Project like the St Neots Future High Street Fund are looking at the river, but local people are unsure of what they and others can do on the river.



# THE MISSING JOURNEYS

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## Crime and Community Safety

As part of our work in schools, we asked the students to create a vision for the future of their community. Almost, all these visions referenced that their community needed to be safe. Several students spoke of times when they had felt unsafe or had witnessed anti-social behaviour or had concerns about levels of drug taking locally.

In focus group sessions, in particular the discussion at Love's Farm, it was felt that tackling crime and community safety were significant gaps in the proposed journeys / place strategy. Parents raised significant concerns about behaviour in their communities and the potential influence on their children.

From the phase 2 engagement an argument could be made that crime and community safety should be considered as an independent journey or as a specific pathway within potentially pride of place.

## Young People

Whilst people of all ages would arguably benefit from change across the place strategy, there was a feeling that more consideration needs to be given to young people beyond the 'what if our businesses and organisations worked hand in hand with young people.' A range of issues were raised including consistency of schooling and education, mental health, lack of things to do for young people and anti-social behaviour.

## Culture, Recreation, and the Night-time Economy

Young people in particular thought that the equitable economy theme should have a specific pathway around culture, recreation, and the night-time economy. That there is a need for a clear pathway for how Huntingdonshire District Council plans to support, enhance and develop culture, recreation and the night-time economy in the area. In so doing illustrating how this will benefit the area, creating jobs and opportunity.

## Mental Health

There are references to mental health in the current draft of the place strategy. However, its importance and the levels of need across the District is felt by local people to require a specific pathway of its own.

## Forward Thinking Planning

Throughout phases 1 and 2, the local planning system has been criticised and the community would like to see it used for the benefit of local people. The place strategy needs to illustrate how the planning system can change and will change to deliver its aspirations. It needs to show how it will link to local plan/s and other strategies. If this is not possible, then the feedback process needs to explain why.

## People

The place strategy needs to ensure that it puts local people and communities at its heart. People want to be sure that the place strategy is a journey towards the changes they want and need in their local area to improve quality of life for them and their families.



## Transparency and Communication

As with phase 1 there is a concern that number of levels of democracy in the District “means that we have blame game, with people hiding from their responsibilities.” The place strategy narrative needs to explain how its journeys have been chosen, why it is focusing on these specific pathways and which organisations will be responsible and accountable for change.

## POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

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When reviewing the notes from the focus groups it was apparent that the factors summarised in this section were most likely to lead to differences in perspective and need.

**Socio-Economic Status:** As with phase 1 there is a divide in people’s priorities for the next 30 years based on socio economic status. Those living in areas of deprivation and struggling feel “left behind” and that they do not benefit from the same levels of support and care as other areas.

*“We had all our bins taken away. There are barely any bins in our park. Behind our homes there is always fly tipping. You don’t get that in the posh areas, the areas where you spend money.”*

Conygear Centre Focus Group Participant

*“Let’s be honest nobody cares about what happens in the Oxmoor. It’s got a bad reputation, and nobody wants to make it any better.”*

Year 11 Student

**Where People Live:** There was evidence of variation based on where people live. For example, the Love’s Farm focus group included a discussion about a perceived missing journey / focus on community safety, support for young people and a perceived lack of community infrastructure including a “promised pub.” In contrast in Alconbury Weald there was a perception of a stronger sense of community, that there is “low level crime” but it was not seen as a fundamental issue that the Place Strategy needed to address.

*“Crime and drugs are a massive problem here. Bikes keep getting stolen, there’s no police presence. I’m concerned about what is going on and how it’s influencing my kids.”*

Love’s Farm Focus Group Participant

*“There’s not respect here. If you tell teenagers not to litter, they tell you to F-off.”*

Love’s Farm Focus Group Participant

*“It is friendly place, as you’re walking around everyone says hello. So much so that when someone didn’t say hello to me the other day, I almost called them on it. Told them that we say hello round here.”*

Alconbury Weald Focus Group Participant





*"We are in a bit of a bubble here. I hope that as we grow, and more houses are built the friendliness grows on."*

Alconbury Weald Focus Group Participant

As shown in phase 1 there is also a rural urban divide. For example, those we spoke to at the 3C's Colne Caring Community Session explained how for them transport and health are linked. Young people from areas such as Offord, talked about community groups that had gone during the covid pandemic and not comeback. The impact of not have accessible things to do and activities in your community, without the need to have access to a car.

*"We've lost all our doctors they've gone to St. Ives."*

3C's participant

*"None of my school mates live where I live. There used to be a youth club in Offord but now there is nothing to do where I live."*

Year 9 student

**Commuters:** While travel was seen as an issue for almost everyone we spoke to, it was a particular area of focus for commuters. Focus group participants spoke of moving to the area for its perceived "good transport links" only to be disappointed by the reality.

*"Too often I'm stuck in traffic. I'm a single mum and I can't guarantee I'll get home in time for childcare. The bus is expensive and slow. There is not direct train. Cycling is taking your life in your own hands. It has to be the car for me."*

Love's Farm Focus Group Participant

*"I'm support a Ukrainian family they are working in Cambridge, and it is a nightmare to get them there."*

Love's Farm Focus Group Participant

*"I had to travel for my work experience and most of the time the bus didn't show up. I can drive now; I won't give up my car."*

Year 12 Student



**Age of Participants:** Young people (below mid-20s) had very specific perceived gaps in the place strategy journeys particularly around mental health, the night-time economy and how the Council and Councillors work with and listen to local young people.

*“You really need to help young people with mental health problems. They won’t be able to go to school or get jobs if you don’t.”*

Year 9 student

*“Any conversation about mental health is just pushed aside.”*

18 to 24 focus group participant

*“How do you keep young people here? A night-time economy, entertainment, culture it could be busy all the time.”*

18 to 24 focus group participant

*“We’ve got ideas, but how do we put them in front of decision makers. Why don’t Councillors come and listen to us. Work with us.”*

Year 12 student

## FEEDBACK AND COMMUNICATION

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### Feedback

Consideration needs to be given to communicating to participants how the engagement process has shaped the place strategy. In addition where the communities has asked for elements / themes / areas that are not suitable for the Place Strategy an explanation needs to be provided.

### Communicating the Place Strategy

The engagement process has shown that there is concern that *“this process is about nothing more than a fancy brochure”* (Digital Focus Group Participant) and *“it is meaningless if we can’t hold it to account”* (Love’s Farm Focus Group participant). Communication around the Place Strategy needs to clearly and concisely illustrate:

- **The role and remit of the Place Strategy.**
- **Who will be responsible for delivering the strategy and who is committed to supporting its implementation.**
- **How the Place Strategy will link to other Huntingdonshire District Council policies and strategies.**
- **How the community can hold the strategy to account.**
- **How the success of the strategy will be measured.**





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# Place<sup>\*</sup> Strategy

Huntingdonshire 2050

MARCH 2023





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## foreword

Come on a journey towards Huntingdonshire's future.  
A destination where we know the communities we want to build and the opportunities we want to create.  
A destination where thinking radically and imaginatively will leave a legacy now and for generations to come.  
A destination where shared ambitions and collective endeavour will realise a place renowned for doing things the right way.  
At the heart of the Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy is understanding what is most important to residents, communities and stakeholders within our towns and rural areas.  
By investing time and developing this shared strategy with our stakeholders and partners, who will continue to champion or lead on parts of it, we can influence better outcomes for our residents and communities to ensure Huntingdonshire continues to be one of the best places to live in the country.  
Together we can reach a brighter future for Huntingdonshire.

**Cllr Sarah Conboy,**

Executive Leader of Huntingdonshire District Council



## Why a place strategy

We are living in a world of change, with the pace of change appearing to speed up. The climate emergency, the cost of living crisis, energy and food insecurity and the aftermath of the Covid pandemic means that many of us look forward with concern and a sense of unease.

However, uncertain times can ignite new ideas and revive optimism.

People are re-evaluating what is important in life, focusing on what makes our communities stronger. Our nation's small towns are reigniting their sense of local pride and distinction, shifting the limelight from the big cities. We are beginning to rethink what makes a successful society — focusing less on economic growth and prioritising well-being, happiness, and healthy ecosystems.

Positive change, great communities and places do not happen by chance.

They happen because stakeholders, residents and businesses share a clear vision of how they want them to be and have bold, well-thought-out long-term plans and priorities to achieve these.





## What is **huntingdonshire futures**

Huntingdonshire Futures is a collaborative strategy which sets out a shared vision for the future of Huntingdonshire in 2050 and a clear way forward to achieve it.

### Together we seek to meet the following objectives:

- Gain a greater understanding of what is most important to residents, communities and stakeholders across Huntingdonshire.
- Unite stakeholders through a shared sense of direction and ambition.
- Create a shared Place Strategy that maps out our plans for our place, people, economy, and the environment which improves the lives of all of our residents, communities, and businesses.
- Guide future strategy, policy developments and investment decisions made by the council and partners, to enable more effective delivery of integrated interventions that better serve the current and future needs of residents, communities, and businesses.

# Evolution of the strategy



START

Huntingdonshire Futures is a collaborative exploration of what makes Huntingdonshire unique, what challenges we face, and what our future may hold up to 2050. This Place Strategy captures what we have learnt and heard from reviewing evidence and an extensive programme of workshops and conversations. It also is the result of challenging our own thinking and looking beyond the district to innovative case studies across the world.

June 2022  
Work begins to develop a shared vision for Huntingdonshire

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## ENGAGEMENT PERIOD 2 Futures Literacy - Exploring 'What If?'

Workshop 1 and Community Engagement begins

July 2022



Sept 2022  
Workshop 2 and Community Engagement continues



## ENGAGEMENT PERIOD 3 Exploring the Vision

Nov 2022

Workshop 3 and beginning of the second phase of Community Engagement testing key directions



Draft strategy produced  
Feb 2023

Huntingdonshire District Council look to adopt the Strategy  
March 2023

ONGOING DIALOGUE  
Taking the Vision Forward

## ENGAGEMENT PERIOD 1 The Here and Now



# Stakeholder engagement

This strategy for the future of Huntingdonshire has been led by local people — incorporating their understanding of the place, values and aspirations for the future.

A group of over sixty stakeholders were gathered to participate in a series of three workshops. Participants included representatives from business groups, the Police, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue, the NHS and local community groups.

## WORKSHOP 1

Workshop 1 explored the 'Here and Now', and sought to understand Huntingdonshire as it is. We encouraged participants to identify locations and characteristics that make the district special. They then explored strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats according to Huntingdonshire's economy, environment, people and place. Finally, they were encouraged to begin to look to the future and identify inspirational projects that could be achieved in the long and short term.

## WORKSHOP 2

Workshop 2 focussed on the future, and participants were encouraged to think beyond the day to day by questioning 'What if?'. Building on knowledge gained from workshop one and community consultation, participants were

presented with a series of 'What if' statements, and encouraged to be bold and imaginative. They then explored the context, assets, opportunities and challenges, unique to Huntingdonshire to deliver these scenarios. They were invited to explore the direct and indirect consequences of each possibility and finally offer a pledge to the district to begin to establish some commitments.

## WORKSHOP 3

The aim of Workshop 3 was to begin to test the direction for the place strategy. Each table of participants were presented with a draft 'What if' story gathered from Workshop Two and asked how well the statement was working or if anything was missed. They were then tasked with preparing an action plan of short and long term steps to implement the 'What if' story they were exploring. Finally, they were encouraged to define ideas to take the Place Strategy forward.

## WEBSITE

An interactive website was developed to host activities and gather feedback. Over the course of the stakeholder engagement period, different material was shared and users encouraged to comment and input. This process was coordinated with community consultation to best capture feedback.



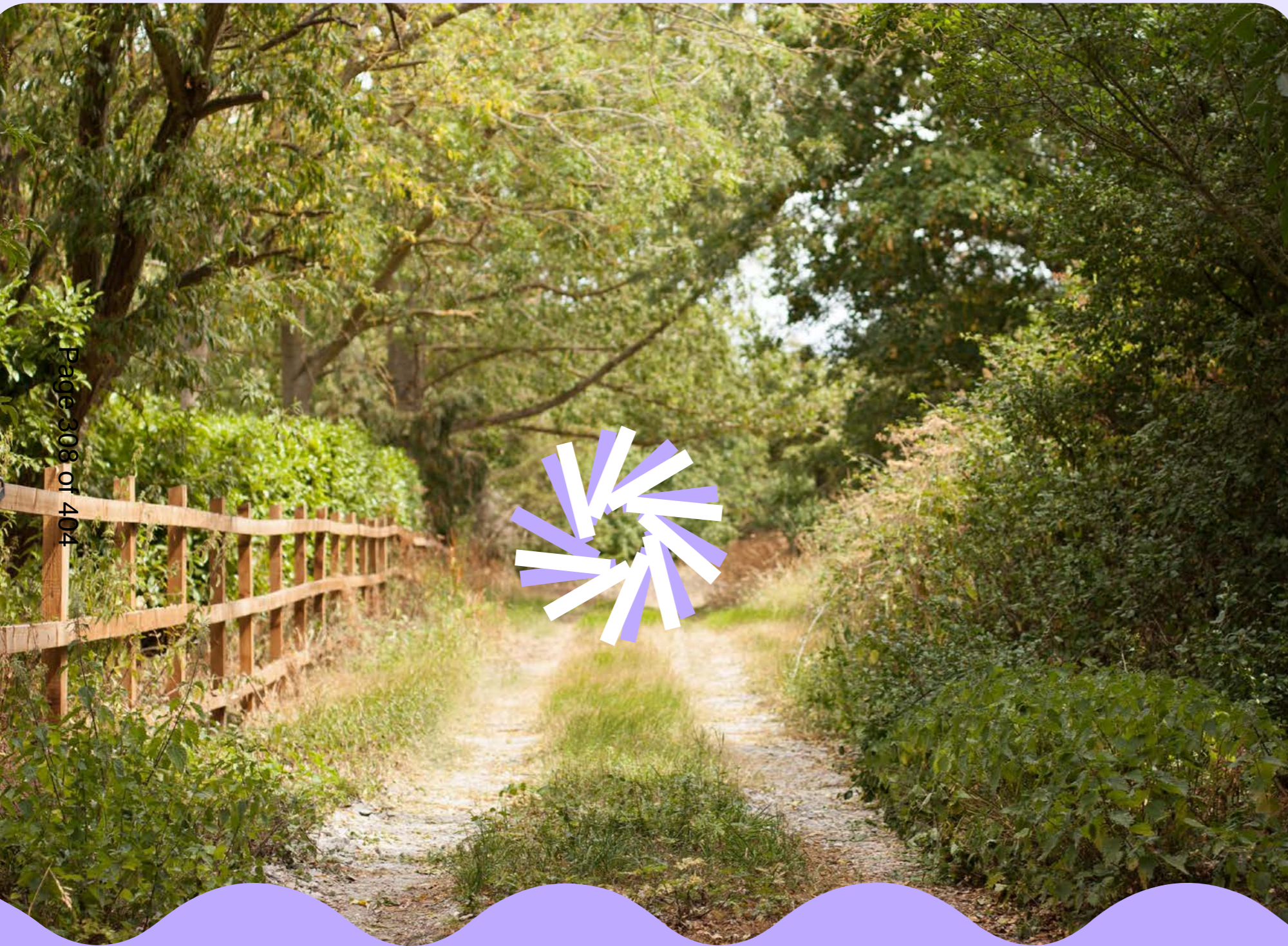
## community co-creation

The approach to community engagement has been developed to enable and encourage local people to join a conversation about the future of their district. Using a range of techniques, the focus has been on deliberative dialogue and quality of discussion. We delivered two phases of engagement, the first focusing on understanding local people's aspirations for the future of Huntingdonshire, on the context of people, place, economy, and the environment. We went to local people with pop up events in local markets and at other events, as well as delivering a programme of structured focus group sessions and activities with young people in partnership with schools and colleges. We asked the question 'What if', encouraging the community to think about what is possible in the communities in which they live.

The second phase of the engagement programme was a check and challenge process. We delivered a programme of focus groups and activities, working with local

organisations including schools, community groups and foodbanks. This qualitative engagement was designed to give residents the opportunity to feedback on the proposed destination, journeys, and pathways. This involved working with local people to understand their priorities for change and what they consider to be most important as well as exploring what actions for change they would like to see within the strategy. We also discussed any perceived gaps in the proposed approach and the role of the community in delivering change.

Across both phases of engagement we reviewed the qualitative data collated and looked for words or phrases that participants used repeatedly to identify themes or patterns. These were used to conduct further analysis to ensure we had a rounded understanding and supported the drafting of the strategy, so it aligns with the perspective of our communities.



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## Thinking Ahead

The Importance of Thinking Ahead

What if?

## The Importance of Thinking Ahead

# Futures Literacy

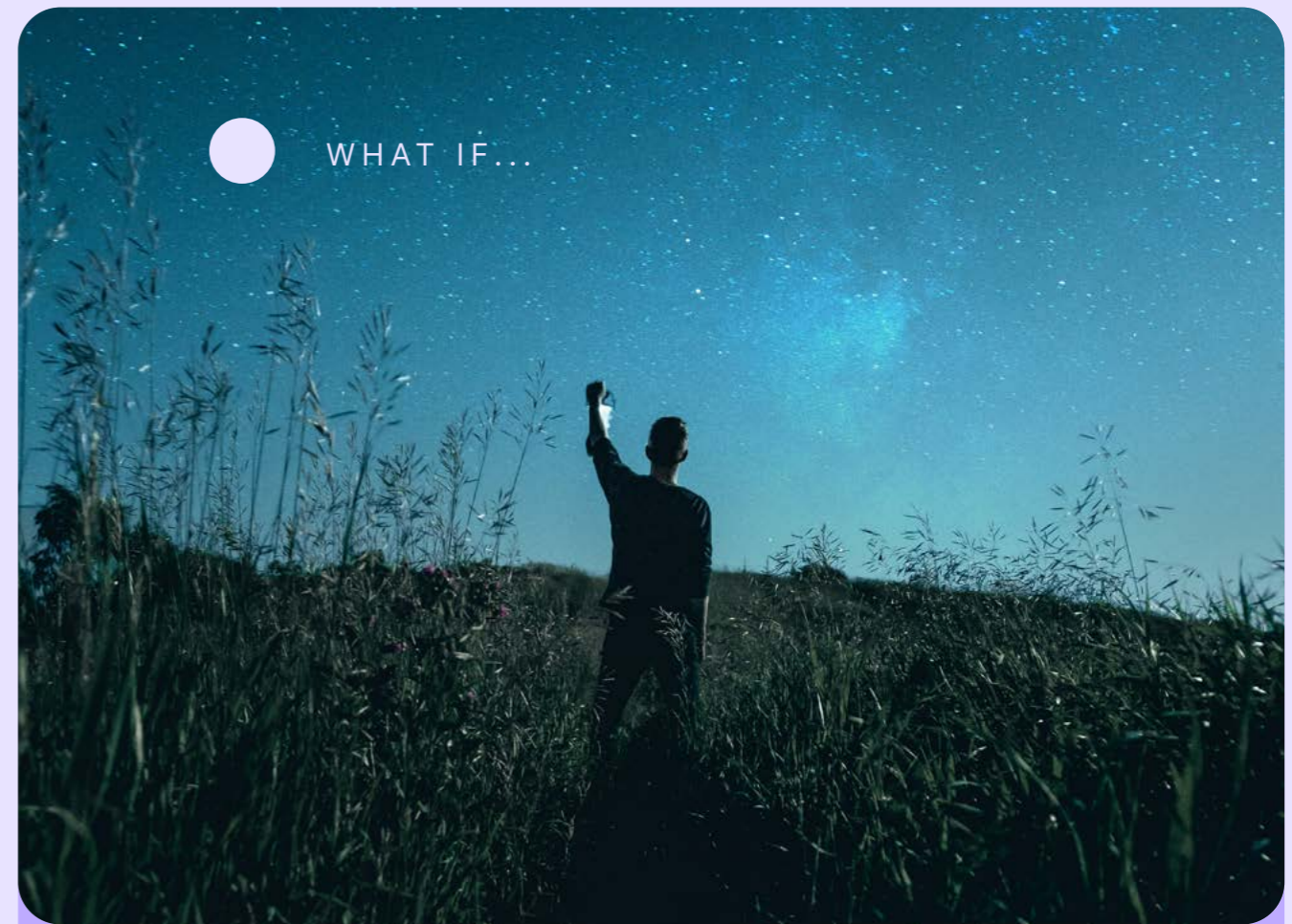
In times of uncertainty, it can be a challenge to look up from our every day lives and work practices to think about the future. 'Futures Literacy', developed by UNESCO is the ability to imagine complex future scenarios beyond the realms of what we already know. We have used this thinking to help the people and businesses of Huntingdonshire to collectively imagine a new future and challenge current thinking. Futures Literacy builds upon 'literacy' which typically refers to the ability to read and write but is often applied to wider competencies such as 'computer literacy' or 'media literacy'. It is our ability to identify, interpret and communicate knowledge.

The act of imagining and planning for future scenarios within government, businesses and organisations has previously been left to specialists called 'futurists', but everyone in Huntingdonshire - students, politicians, teachers and business leaders, should be equipped with the skills to think imaginatively about the future. This is because everyone's vision of the future is personal. It will always be shaped by our biases and experiences, but by pulling together lots of these individual lenses, we add breadth and depth to our collective vision.

Everyone with a stake in our future should be equipped to think beyond the realms of 'probable' and 'preferable' and open up the world of 'possible' (and perhaps even 'impossible?'), because without big ideas, and brave imagination, it's just 'business as usual'.

Source: UNESCO Futures Literacy, [link](#)

We have to stop "colonising tomorrow with the ideas of today" (Nicklas Larson, Medium)



## What if...? A simple question with big ambition

To develop 'Futures Literacy' to collectively imagine a new future beyond business as usual, the people and businesses of Huntingdonshire were asked to question 'What if...'

Pioneered by the founder of Transition Town Totnes – Rob Hopkins, 'What if?' is a simple question, but perhaps the most important question we have to refocus our outlook on the future. In his book 'What if to what next', Hopkins explores what we must do to revive and replenish our collective imagination. If we can rekindle

that precious creative spark, whole societies and cultures can change rapidly, dramatically and unexpectedly for the better. Questioning what if allows us to imagine alternative stories for Huntingdonshire and explore what would be needed to get there.

This strategy brings together a shared understanding of the current strengths and challenges facing Huntingdonshire today, combined with future thinking to set out a clear vision for how we want Huntingdonshire to be in 2050.

Source: Rob Hopkins, [link](#)

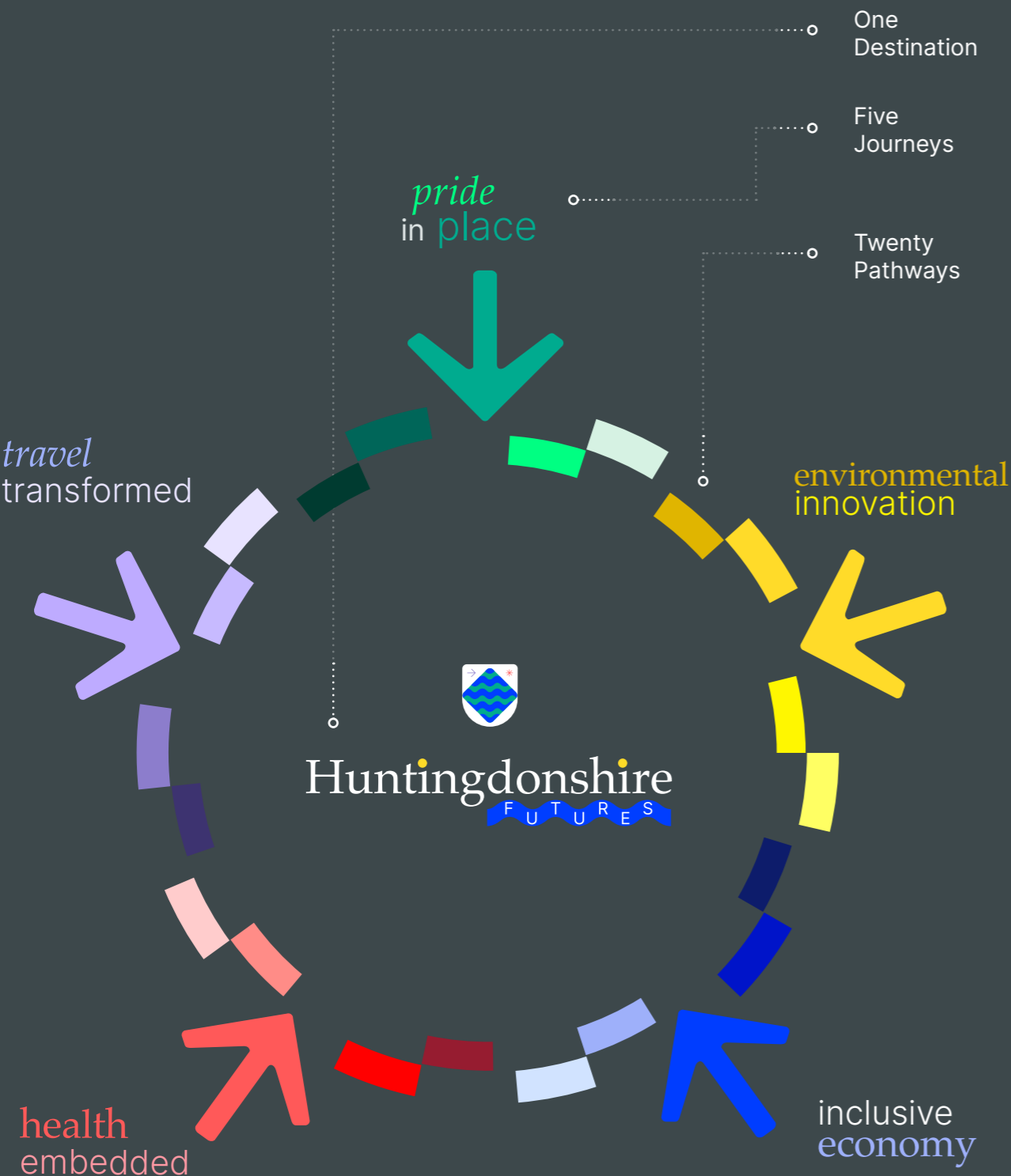


## Huntingdonshire Futures

- [Introducing the Place Strategy](#)
- [Pride in Place](#)
- [Inclusive Economy](#)
- [Health Embedded](#)
- [Environmental Innovation](#)
- [Travel Transformed](#)

# introducing the place strategy

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## One Destination

Huntingdonshire Futures - A simple message that encompasses the brighter future that we are reaching for.

## Five Journeys

Five areas of focus that describe what we want Huntingdonshire to be like as a place and the common outcomes that we will work towards.

## Twenty Pathways

Each journey is made up of four distinctive pathways, these outline how we might reach our desired journey.

The Pathways consist of the following:

- What If?**  
 Asking ourselves 'What If...?' helps us to imagine what's possible. Each pathway is introduced with a 'What If...?' statement which articulates what we imagine Huntingdonshire could be.
- Guiding Lights**  
 These are examples of relevant projects which show what can be done.
- What Could We Do?**  
 This presents potential steps, projects or initiatives that could be picked up by various stakeholders in order for us to achieve the vision.

Each pathway will have different delivery requirements, stakeholder involvement and action plans. These are currently under development. By exploring these we hope to be able to catalyse new types of collaboration across sectors and develop truly cross-cutting initiatives that build on existing strengths and address multiple challenges at once. Not all pathways will be taken forward immediately and they will be reviewed and revised to keep them up to date.

## Journey One

Distinct, unified and well-loved — by 2050, Huntingdonshire's citizens will feel proud to live and work in a place with stand-out character. We will enjoy homes that respond to our needs, great places to spend time in and a strong and safe community who take care of their surroundings.

You said...



'What is Huntingdonshire anyway?'



'I would like to be proud of where I live. I think if I did, I would be more inclined to get involved and make it better'



'You can't find an affordable home when you're young. Then when you want to downsize you can't'







# we had a strong identity for the whole district?



**In a world where...** we are all spending more time locally, a sense of pride in our local area is fundamental. Yet we have heard that Huntingdonshire lacks a strong identity compared to neighbouring places such as Cambridge and Peterborough. Our residents, particularly our younger ones, don't feel a sense of belonging to the district.

**There is a place...** next to Cambridge with untapped potential including rich heritage and remarkable landscapes. We love our wide open fens and parklands, rolling claylands, and the picturesque Ouse Valley. And there's so much to enjoy about our charming market towns and villages.

**Which could become...** a district that people from all over the UK are drawn to, and residents are proud to call home. A place which celebrates its unique assets and competes with its neighbours — attracting employers, visitors and new residents who recognise what it means to live, work and play in true Huntingdonshire style.

**But only if...** we come together to recognise all the great localised initiatives taking place, and define what makes our place and people unique. The District Council, residents, businesses, cultural institutions and community groups must work together to decide what the essence of Huntingdonshire is and begin to promote our shared story.

Source: Huntingdonshire Futures Stakeholder Engagement

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## What could we do?

### 1. Create a powerful place brand

Huntingdonshire needs a place brand that articulates the shared identity of the district. In close collaboration with the community, businesses and marketing experts a recognisable brand based on Huntingdonshire's unique identity should be developed.

Local people will feel a sense of ownership over it, and visitors can get to know the district and what it stands for through the brand. Campaign events engaging with the local community could kickstart the initiative and then maintain the momentum through regular marketing activity. The place brand could be co-created to draw on the aspects of the district that local people love.

### 2. Introduce Place Champions

Nobody knows this district better than our long-standing local residents. We should seek out knowledgeable, passionate and well connected local people to become Place Champions. These champions will 'shout' about all the local activities and initiatives taking place, including the hidden treasures.

Place Champions will work together to make sure that great things do not go unnoticed, and these will reinforce the Place Brand and further inspire locals to feel proud of their district.

### 3. Establish a tourism board

The establishment of a tourism board could help coordinate and promote Huntingdonshire as a place to visit.

By involving local businesses, interest groups, cultural institutions and relevant organisations we can create a unique narrative around what makes Huntingdonshire special and why visitors should come.

This board can help identify gaps in the market, generating business opportunities and help to create a clearer sense of identity for local residents, raising awareness of local leisure and culture opportunities.

## Guiding Lights



## Raising the local profile: Visit Peak District and Derbyshire

Derbyshire County Council is working with Marketing Peak District & Derbyshire and partner authorities to develop the county's visitor economy by improving the offer, quality and identity of individual towns as part of wider destination management and place branding.

Local businesses can join the members network and enjoy benefits that help raise their profile. Support provided includes workshops, networking events, press and PR coverage and affordable advertising opportunities.

Source: Visit Peak District and Derbyshire, [link](#)





# our homes responded to our needs?

**In a world where...** affordable housing is in scarce demand, social infrastructure is under strain and the majority of new housing in England lacks design quality and distinctiveness (Housing Design Audit for England by the Place Alliance). And where people are concerned that developers focus on building homes, rather than integrated communities.

**There is a place...** with a high quality of life, picturesque market towns and villages with incredible character, and landscapes that can inspire the creation of beautiful new places. A place that has been delivering 1,000 new homes per year since 2018, with similar levels projected to 2030.

**Which could become...** a leader in high quality, affordable, adaptable and energy efficient housing, which blends with the rich local character. A place where housing responds to the residents' needs and is served by essential social infrastructure, such as GPs and primary schools. Where new developments form integrated communities within their surrounding areas.

**But only if...** the council worked with stakeholders from the industry, including developers and land owners, and with other local authorities and institutions, to raise the ambition of well-designed, affordable housing which meets the community's needs.

Source: Place Alliance Housing Design Audit, [link](#), Huntingdonshire Local Plan 2036

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## Guiding Lights



### Lovedon Fields, Hampshire

The 50 dwelling development of Lovedon Fields has recently won both the RIBA South Award and RIBA National Award for 2022 for its design quality. The rural housing scheme comprises of 40% affordable and shared ownership housing, a typology mix of apartments, terraces and detached houses, including some lifetime homes. The scheme has plentiful green public space, two-thirds of the site is conceived as a wildflower meadow and roofs feature integrated solar panels. The scheme is aligned with the local vernacular and provides a sensitive edge to South Downs National Park.

Source: RIBA Architecture, [link](#)  
Top image: Jim Stephenson



## What could we do?



### 1. Address housing affordability

An inclusive community is one where diverse groups of people can live together and enjoy life. This requires high quality of housing to be accessible and affordable to all who need it, especially young people who want to climb the housing ladder.

This could be achieved through trialling new forms for affordable housing delivery such as self-build schemes, community land trusts, council led house building and public private partnerships. New developments will be built with affordable housing, forming well-served inclusive communities.

### 2. Respond to evolving needs



People's lives evolve which means that their housing needs evolve in parallel. Growing families need homes that cover their new needs, young people need flexible homes that allow them to work and play from there, and the older generation needs housing that enables them to be independent.

This requires the availability of diverse housing typologies, from flats to town houses and custom-built homes, which offer flexible spaces of the right size responding to their inhabitants' needs. Homes which are inter-generational, accessible and adaptable.

This also includes the requirement for homes to be close to the necessary infrastructure, including schools, healthcare and public transport, to foster sustainable communities.

### 3. Raise the ambition for better design

The ambition and inspiration for better housing design should be reinforced across the district. The council will work with the industry and other local authorities and public institutions to promote and encourage well-designed high quality homes.

Local guidance and standards can promote a higher design aspiration and requirement utilising best practice examples from the district, the County and the rest of the country. Local towns and Parishes can enable locally led ambitious design guides, or opportunities to shape their areas through Neighbourhood Plans. Initiatives such as the Public Practice and the Eastern Design Review Panel could also be considered. Finally, a new local or joint housing expo with other authorities could be organised to showcase best practice and kickstart the discussion around better design.



# we built up the resilience of our communities?



**In a world where...** the squeeze on income for people and businesses reduces everyone's ability to do good things for others, people can feel disconnected from where they live. Young people in Huntingdonshire particularly feel alienated here.

**There is a place...** with strong, conscientious communities, business forums and networks, where people are fiercely proud of their neighbourhood and actively involved in helping each other.

**Which could become...** a place that feels safe, inclusive and offers access to support. A place that encourages bottom-up initiatives, making sure everyone sees the value of investing in the fabric of our society.

**But only if...** community groups, businesses and volunteers are enabled and supported to work together. Only if programmes are established to make new engagement and collaboration easy, backed up by increased awareness of opportunities.

Source: Huntingdonshire Futures Stakeholder Engagement

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## What could we do?

### 1. Enable citizens to shape the commons

The district can set up its very own Citizens Assembly, where anyone interested in shaping the commons can get involved. This will give a voice and a sense of agency to everyone in the district, including residents, business owners, teenagers and employees and encourage participation in the political process. The Assembly can raise issues that concern its members, collectively decide which are the most important to address, seek funding and implement the improvements.

As an independent organisation it can set the priorities that mean the most to its members, hold others to account and deliver change in a more direct way.

### 2. Support community and voluntary organisations

The district boasts a very strong and established volunteering sector with numerous community and volunteer groups, such as Warm Spaces, actively supporting and helping the community.

This rich sector should be supported through a digital platform with access to guidance on governance, fundraising and grants, recruiting volunteers and training. The platform could also host a network to support the different community organisations and voluntary groups to collaborate and attract volunteers, and get in touch with businesses and service providers for their needs. Venue hire, events organisation and other communications could be facilitated through the same platform.

## Guiding Lights



### Oxmoor Community Fridge

As the cost of living is rapidly increasing, more people are in need of support to put food on the table. The Oxmoor Community Fridge fills this need, by redistributing food given away by supermarkets and other donations, from Thongsley Fields Primary and Nursery School every Tuesday. The service is in very high demand, supporting approximately 45 residents every 1.5 hour session and having redistributed more than 10 tonnes of food in the past year, helping to reduce food waste. It even provides the option of home delivery to vulnerable residents.

Source: Zero Waste Initiatives, Huntingdonshire District Council, [link](#)



### 3. Strengthen the sense of safety

The spaces we inhabit and our public spaces are an integral part of our lives, and therefore should feel safe, welcoming and well-kept. Places that look less well maintained are more likely to attract anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

Therefore, the council, the public services and other key stakeholders should work together to make improvements in the public realm's infrastructure, maintenance and supervision. It is important to keep spaces such as schools and housing estates safe, through good surveillance and clean public areas, to ensure the students' and inhabitants' wellbeing. Public realm and infrastructure interventions should have regard to attracting activity and feeling secure to use.

# What if...

## our high streets were the centre of social and cultural life?

**In a world where...** high streets are in decline, our village and town centres are no longer the heart of community life. Research by the Local Data Company and Power to Change has found vacancy rates at an all time high, due to the growth of out of town retail, online shopping and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**There is a place...** that benefits from its diversity arising from a cluster of market towns and villages each with its own unique offer of markets, independent shops, picturesque historic cores and plenty of citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit.

**Which could become...** a district that leads the revival of the high street across the UK. Rich in diverse spaces that go beyond retail, embrace the café culture and allow people to come together. Places that attract and retain locals and visitors, both in the day and later in the night with a revived offer of night time activities.

**But only if...** we work together — retail is all about exchange after all. We need cross-sector collaboration between landowners, the council, businesses and community groups to identify and revamp empty spaces and create vibrant public places where people want to linger.

Source: Power to Change, [link](#)

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### Guiding Lights



### Art in the High Street

The Croydon Art Store converted a four story shopping centre unit into an arts and cultural venue, created in collaboration between Croydon Council, Kingston School of Art, the local arts organisation Turf Projects and Art Halo. The project seeks to provide affordable studio space, a gallery space to exhibit work from local artists, a free bookable creative event space, and a research space to develop a Croydon biannual art exhibition with Kingston School of Art. It will also give the council an opportunity to see how arts and cultural activities can be made more accessible and regenerate sites that would otherwise be vacant.

Source: Croydon Arts Store, [link](#)

# What could we do?



## 1. Promote meanwhile use

Empty space on our high streets creates a feeling of decline, but meanwhile use, which refers to temporary use of empty property and land, can help enliven spaces as well as provide a great resource for local people.

The council can take a closer look into its high streets and identify vacant and underused spaces, then work with landlords to support temporary use of these spaces by local community groups, businesses and organisations at affordable rates to activate the spaces before a long term solution is found. This can be facilitated by providing a register of spaces, advertising the opportunities, producing guidance and enabling planning policies.

## 2. Boost the night time offer

Huntingdonshire's market towns can lack diversity. While high streets are places of activity and attraction during the daytime, we need to ensure they stay bustling with leisure opportunities also at night.

This could include promoting night markets, cultural events and a cafe and restaurant culture, including pop ups, to test out new businesses and reinstate the high street as the heart of the community, even at night. The council can work together with the local business owners, entrepreneurs, community groups and cultural institutions to identify opportunities and mobilise initiatives through events, branding and advertising, permits and adapting licences.

## 3. Enhance the public realm

Physical improvements on high streets and their surrounding public realm can be crucial to create inviting and attractive spaces. Widening the pavements, dedicating more space to pedestrians and spill out activities can greatly change the experience of high streets into more people-focussed and relaxing spaces.

The addition of public furniture and incidental play facilities can attract people to linger for longer. Reallocating some parking spaces on the high street into public realm can help reduce the dominance of the car and create a more child friendly place.



## Journey Two

Talented, trained and confident — by 2050 Huntingdonshire will champion upskilling and provide inspiring job opportunities for residents in a variety of industries. We will nurture start-ups, enable businesses to grow, and build a strong local economy.

### You said...



'There are communities of like minded people, like here in St Neots. How will this support those of us who are already here?'

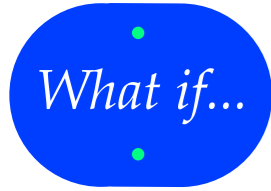


'What if we make market towns work as market towns?'



'Don't put me on a kids' table. If you want to work with us, take us seriously'





# we created a place where our businesses could flourish?

**In a world where...** resilience and cash reserves of businesses have been hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, and where small to medium enterprises often prefer to cluster in areas outside of the district, like Cambridge.

**There is a place...** that has a truly entrepreneurial spirit with 150 start-ups per month, and a strong economy worth £10billion/year led by manufacturing. With strategic road and rail infrastructure and land prices which are attractive to investors and companies looking to seed, develop and scale. With Cambridge and its world-leading science and research industries and cluster of incubating Uni spin outs on its doorstep.

**Which could become...** a place where businesses choose to locate and grow thanks to strategies and infrastructure that attract inward investment and high value jobs. Where both start-ups and established industries are supported by the right affordable spaces, whether that be in innovative incubators or large-scale environmentally friendly developments.

**But only if...** the district throws its weight behind fledgling new businesses — establishing more support networks such as the St Neots Initiative, and only if it ensures its high performing sectors are supported and taps into the potential arising from Cambridge.

Source: "Ready to Recover" Economic Growth Strategy For Huntingdonshire District 2020-2025, Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013 – 2023, Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership (LEP) (2014)

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## Guiding Lights



### Alconbury Enterprise Campus

The Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus is a multi-use development backed by Enterprise Zone status. It facilitates the co-location of research and development production spaces for small and medium-sized businesses in addition to flexible office incubators, as well as bespoke large buildings. The campus is home to a growing number of companies implementing technology solutions including AI, robotics and automation that supports its manufacturing, cleantech and engineering base. It hosts regular business support seminars including expertise from HDC's Invest in Huntingdonshire team.

Source: Space to make and grow your business - Alconbury Enterprise Campus, [link](#)



## What could we do?



1.

### Promote Made in Huntingdonshire

Designed to celebrate all that is positive about the Huntingdonshire Business landscape, 'Made in Huntingdonshire' will provide the platform to help celebrate our amazing businesses and their fantastic achievements, which include the diversity of the products that are designed, prototyped and produced en-mass and the service excellence offered by local companies. As well as our people and residents who make all of the above happen, including our rich base of entrepreneurs, heavyweight business leaders and all of the unsung heroes whose combined industry helps underpin our £10 billion/year economy.



2.

### Foster business development programmes

The setting up of a new business can be daunting and complex. A digital platform with essential guidance to navigating the process can help many entrepreneurs. They might provide guidance on funding, regulation, finding suppliers and marketing, the right premises and much more.

An organisation could be set up as an intermediary who brings into contact the ambitious entrepreneurs with established or larger businesses, suppliers and other experts in the field.

3.

### Secure the right workspaces

The right space which responds to a business' needs, lies at the heart of a healthy operation. Affordable and flexible incubator clusters where start-ups can flourish, versatile offices which enable hybrid work, and innovative green R&D, warehousing and production facilities with easy distribution access, are all necessary for the district's economic growth. With the right policy and processes, we can deliver and promote spaces, which are accessible by public transport and situated at strategic locations, supported by targeted lower business rates and green grants.



# our businesses and organisations worked hand in hand with young people?



**In a world where...** young people want to change the world, they also simply want meaningful work that reflects their values. At the same time businesses struggle to recruit the right staff with the knowledge and skills needed by that particular industry. In Huntingdonshire, the working age population is expected to decrease from 61.8% aged 16-64 in 2020 to 57% in 2043, in part due to people moving away.

**There is a place...** that has a strong and friendly business community, including a high proportion of Small to Medium Enterprises, with plenty of manufacturing, construction, science and tech businesses. With independent initiatives such as Shift Momentum and collaboration potential with Cambridge's world-class economy.

**Which could become...** a place where businesses, educators and young people work together and listen to each other to match skills with industry needs. Where the younger generation is aware of local opportunities available, the skills they need to get there, and feel motivated by the potential to do what they love. Businesses can become more sustainable in the long run, future proofing their workforce and being exposed to new ideas from our bright young thinkers.

**But only if...** there is the time, space and networks available to facilitate exchange, relying on a culture of openness. We look to develop a choice of the right training programmes with apprenticeships and short courses providing different ways to get those valuable qualifications.

Source: Cambridgeshire Insights. Top image: Huntingdonshire Youth Work Forum

## What could we do?

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### 1. Define Huntingdonshire as a District of Learning

Huntingdonshire could be inspired by European Cities of Learning to integrate learning and training into everyday life, and make participation easier and more engaging.

Local businesses could help design these small scale training programmes, so they reflect local specialisms and industry needs and raise the awareness of local opportunities.

Source: Cities of Learning, [link](#)

### 2. Create a culture of work experience

Work experience programmes are a great way for young people to understand opportunities available to them or learn first hand about a job they might be interested in but may not have the access to. Businesses gain access to a young pool of labour, who are eager to learn and build a career as well as share their ideas.

Businesses could be encouraged to initiate apprenticeship and work placement programmes across the district. Schools and students could also be supported through a programme that helps find students a place and assists handling their concerns or developing additional skills.

## Guiding Lights



### Cities of Learning

Many European cities have become Cities of Learning, where learning opportunities are more visible and accessible to young learners. Each city or region uses digital technology to map the learning opportunities, compile online learning 'playlists' and provide 'open badges'. Young people are encouraged to find events and experiences that match their ambitions, either digitally or locally, and build a digital portfolio of their learned skills and achievements. The learning opportunities are contemporary and broad, ranging from game design and entrepreneurship to architecture.

Source: Cities of Learning, [link](#)  
Bottom image: Shift Ignite Programme



### 3. Build a professional network

Planning for the future and ensuring that the current young workforce has the right knowledge and skills is imperative both for their own development and the district's economic growth.

In order to match demand with supply, a network could be established that links education and training providers, job seeker organisations and youth groups with local businesses.

This could be a combination of a digital platform and events to support information sharing, foster the closer collaboration of educators and employers, advertise opportunities and training, and bring young people into contact with a pool of professionals.

Source: Blueprint for All, [link](#)



# What if...

## we chose to buy more local?

**In a world where...** what we consume is increasingly expensive and reliant on vulnerable global supply chains, while our high streets are struggling. We are seeing a rise in obesity and diabetes because we aren't eating good quality, healthy food like we used to. In Huntingdonshire, 65.3% of adults are classed as overweight or obese, higher than the England average.

**There is a place...** with a strong local agricultural economy, a network of diverse local businesses and makers, supported by a wealth of independent retailers. With vibrant market towns which host numerous street markets with local produce and other goods.

**Which could become...** a district with a revitalised food and goods network where local choices are always the most convenient and cost effective. Local food producers, makers, residents, businesses, supermarkets, schools and community groups can use physical spaces and digital tools to make local products the go-to option. A place with easier routes for businesses to trade and contract with each other locally across all industry sectors.

**But only if...** farmers and other local producers are encouraged to supply what local people need and sell it in the region. If appropriate physical space and distribution infrastructure are put in place and consumers are informed about the health, sustainability and economic benefits of buying more locally.

Source: Cambridgeshire Insights

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### Guiding Lights



## Totally Locally

Totally Locally is helping towns around the UK and the world support their independent retailers and producers. Volunteers and groups of businesses receive the 'Town Kit', which includes marketing material and a guide on how to launch the campaign. Local businesses are the 'Hidden Gems' who learn how to celebrate their unique products and inform local consumers. This is all centred around the concept that if each person spent £5 per week in local shops, £13.5 billion would go directly to the local economy.

Source: Totally Locally, [link](#)



# What could we do?



## 1. Support local food hubs and markets

Local Food Hubs could be established at various central locations in the district and rural locations close to their production. The Hubs will aggregate, store, sell on-site and also distribute and market the food products which have been locally produced.

Hubs can play an essential intermediary role between producers who may not have access to warehouses and transport, and the consumers. Farmers Markets, which already exist in the district, are another way of promoting locally sourced products.

Source: Getting to Scale with Regional Food Hubs, [link](#)



## 2. Support local business networks

In order to foster the local making, growing and producing, our businesses should be effectively supported. The council should work with the business community and other stakeholders to boost existing networks, forums and associations to enhance local trading and contracting.

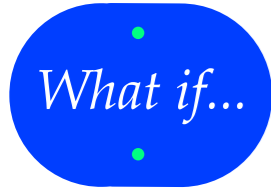
Support could be in the form of promoting networking platforms and events, where businesses can come into contact with other potential business partners and exchange services. Other mechanisms could include incentives and grants to contract with other local businesses and establishing a district-wide database of businesses and associated service providers.

## 3. Launch marketing campaigns

Marketing is vital to help local producers, makers, growers and retailers reach their local target market and establish a client base. Digital advertising, news articles, press coverage, email marketing and social media are all effective marketing tools that could be utilised.

We can provide support to businesses through free material, training and guidance, taking advantage of opportunities such as Totally Locally. Local volunteer and community groups could join forces with businesses to become the pioneers who will celebrate the unique local products and make sure the district is informed about them.





# we could learn new skills at all life stages?



## Guiding Lights

**In a world where...** educational attainment in the district is below the national average. Where people aged 65 and above are forecast to grow to 26.7% in 2043, from 20.4% in 2020. But also where digital advancement means that the knowledge and skills attainment methods become more versatile.

**There is a place...** where 79% of the working age population are economically active, with a robust business network and education providers. This includes good local schools and colleges, and strong links to nearby world-class education at Cambridge University.

**Which could become...** a place where all residents have access to lifelong learning. Where potential is nurtured from the first thousand days at outstanding schools and early years facilities, and everyone independent of their background and age can reach their full potential at any stage — allowing them to discover fulfilling work or productive new hobbies.

**But only if...** the public, private, community and academic sectors come together to raise collective ambitions and provide useful training and education in a range of accessible formats, including both physical and digital classrooms.

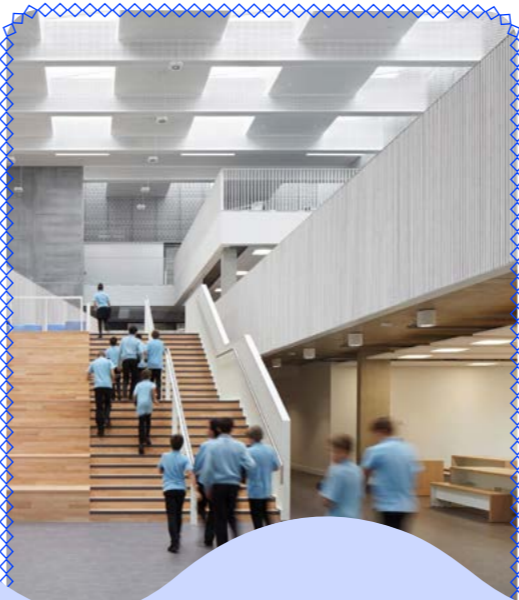
Source: Huntingdonshire Futures Stakeholder Engagement. Top image: Trumpington Community College, Richard Ellis



## Lifelong Learning

Post-pandemic, we have expanded our definition of traditional schooling, including online, shorter, and more specialised courses in our library of learning. Attitudes are still changing. It's not just teaching methods but also subjects and student demographics that are being rewritten. Learning becomes a life-long activity, with no traditional university age, as schools and businesses encourage people of every generation to continue in education. Specialist lifelong learning centres and initiatives are being set up across the UK to widen participation for people of all life stages and demographics.

Source: Lifelong Learning, [link](#)



## What could we do?

### 1. Reinforce the first years of education

The first thousand days of a child's life are crucial in setting the foundations for future growth. Therefore, it is important to have high quality Early Years facilities and nurseries which nurture and stimulate our young residents.

High quality teaching and learning should continue from primary through to post-16 education. Students should be given opportunities to fulfil their educational potential, including children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and socially vulnerable students.

Sufficient supply of high quality school places, physical space enhancements to facilities, and incentives to retain students in education should be provided.

### 2. Establish community learning centres

Community learning centres are service providers or physical spaces that provide functional literacy, vocational skills, and work-related skills to youth and adults not in education, employment or training. This helps to get people into work, improving skills and confidence.

Huntingdonshire could work in partnership to deliver initiatives and make use of existing spaces, facilities and networks such as libraries, vacant shop units or community centres. The training programmes should respond to the needs of the community and could include English skills, vocational courses, business skills and female-focused upskilling, whilst identifying the types of employment opportunities available through engagement with business networks.

### 3. Support the University of the Third Age

The University of the Third Age is a network of local groups across the UK that provide opportunities for people to learn together for fun. Starting in 1982, the approach encourages groups of people no longer in full-time work to come together and continue their enjoyment of learning subjects of interest to them. University of the Third Age groups already exist in Huntingdonshire, focussed in the market towns. These could be supported to raise awareness and expand their reach, particularly to rural areas and diverse new communities. Collaboration between the existing groups and businesses and education providers could also be supported to facilitate knowledge sharing and community cohesion.

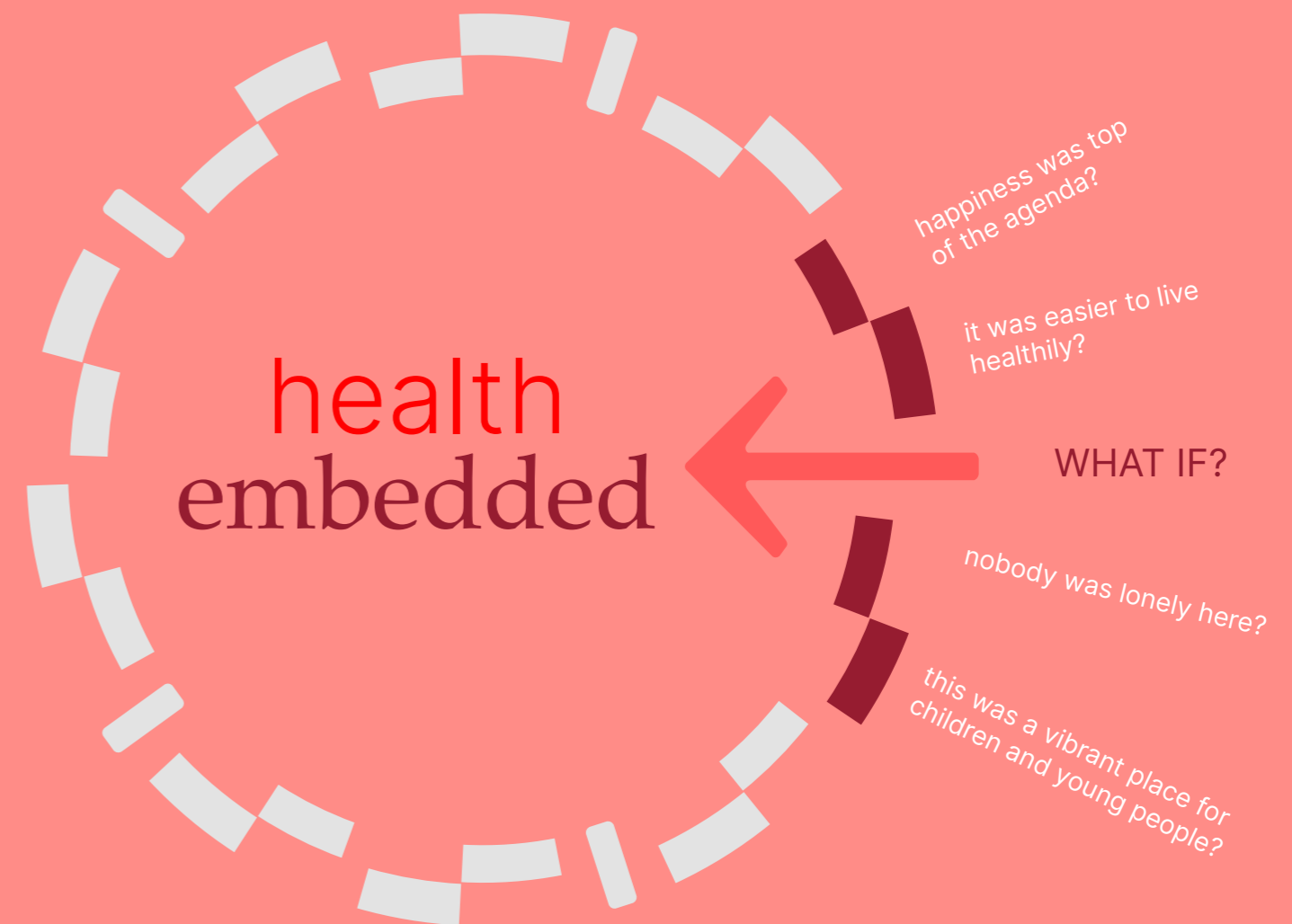
Source: University of the Third Age, [link](#)

## Journey Three

Healthier and more holistic — in 2050  
Huntingdonshire will value happiness and  
health above all else, supporting good quality  
of life for all people at all stages of life.

### You said...

- ‘It would be better to do more to prevent people from getting to the point where they’re really ill. Whether that’s physical health or mental health.’
- ‘Mental health is being pushed aside in this conversation.’
- ‘There are lots of people who work in care in this area, and we don’t do enough to support them’



## Guiding Lights

**In a world where...** we know that economic growth does not necessarily result in wellbeing — health really matters and our mental and physical health is under strain. Prioritising profit has widened social inequality and in Huntingdonshire fewer than 1 in 3 residents have 'very good' life satisfaction.

**There is a place...** that has all the ingredients of a great quality of life; a kind community, beautiful green spaces, access to secure jobs and generally low levels of deprivation.

**Which could become...** a place that prioritises the happiness of its people and their health. A place with a cohesive support system that starts from the top and spreads through the community. A place with culture, a good work life balance, access to nature and opportunities for leisure and play — all the ingredients for a good life.

**But only if...** 'happiness' is top of the agenda for the council and our businesses, instead of just a nice-to-have. This will involve defining what happiness means for Huntingdonshire and how it can be measured in a way that reflects the diverse community — and then using this to inform our plans and decision making.

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## What could we do?

### 1. Define what happiness means for Huntingdonshire

In order to try to achieve happiness, we need to know what happiness means for the people of Huntingdonshire.

Through collaborative sessions, for example a Citizens Assembly, we could come up with a way of defining and measuring happiness that reflects all of Huntingdonshire's diverse communities. This approach could consider factors such as health metrics, work life balance, mental health, opportunities to socialise, access to culture and leisure and financial security.

### 2. Ensure happiness drives decision making

Once a definition for happiness has been determined, and metrics developed, improving happiness should be the shared goal alongside economic growth.

Council programmes and grant-funded organisations should be required to demonstrate how they are improving happiness and the direction of these organisations should be structured towards an approach that best improves happiness.

There should be regular information gathering, to understand progress and understand which aspects of happiness are harder to achieve and require additional investment.

### 3. Celebrate happiness

Raise the profile of Huntingdonshire as a happy place to live and work. This includes branding campaigns that celebrate the high quality of life that Huntingdonshire provides and its new and innovative approach to running volunteering actions, community projects, the local services and initiatives.

This could be supported by a series of community events and festivals that bring places and people together.

## Gross National Happiness

The concept of Gross National Happiness was developed by the Buddhist nation of Bhutan as they felt that sustainable development should take a more holistic approach towards notions of progress and give equal importance to non-economic aspects of wellbeing.

An Index was developed which seeks to define what happiness means for the residents of Bhutan and includes metrics on health, wellbeing, nature and culture. This is used as a tool to measure national progress and inform policy, with projects, funding and decision making meant to be directed in a way that increases happiness.

Source: Gross National Happiness, [link](#)



What if...

# it was easier to live healthily?

**In a world where...** our physical and mental health isn't something we can take for granted, living healthy lives needs to be the obvious choice, but that's often not the case. If you live in the least deprived areas, you can expect to live on average 7 years longer than those living in the most deprived areas of Huntingdonshire. Residents are frustrated by the health service — often struggling to get basic appointments. Depression rates have almost doubled since the pandemic began and depression is also more prevalent amongst young people and those in more precarious economic positions.

**There is a place...** with abundant parks and open spaces, topography that supports active travel and community initiatives that can help to remove barriers to healthy, happy lifestyles.

**Which could become...** an environment where being healthy is inclusive — where all people independent of their abilities can easily access their daily needs so that exercise is embedded in their daily routine, where choosing fresh food options is the easiest and most affordable choice, where mental health is prioritised and where service providers are coordinated and mobile, bringing care into our communities.

**Put only if...** the council, NHS, Cambridgeshire County Council, businesses and residents view health and wellbeing holistically, investing in programmes that examine the social and economic determinants of health and treat the cause of physical and mental health complaints before they arise. This includes the promotion of healthy new places, encouraging active travel and addressing economic insecurity and social isolation.

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## Guiding Lights

### The High Street Hospital

Post-pandemic, we reflect on how interlinked community and healthcare are.

Being local to the community also plays a vital role in accessibility and ways of navigating healthcare are changing, as it strives to become human-centred, meeting people where they are.

Sheffield Hallam Teaching hospital, alongside ARUP, plans to replace dying city centre retail with walk-in clinics – high street hospitals that can use these strategically placed spaces.

Source: Arup High Street Hospital, [link](#)

## What could we do?

health embedded



1.

### Focus on low income communities

There are significant health inequalities across Huntingdonshire, so investment in health and wellbeing should be directed towards those that need it most. In Huntingdonshire, this tends to mean low income neighbourhoods and rural communities.

The council should work together with key stakeholders to ensure that new services or investment in improvements to existing services, public realm and open space prioritise these areas. They tend to be in less accessible locations, with poor access to public transport or low car ownership. Investment in public transport including subsidies would also improve health outcomes for those that need it most.

2.

### Fast track community based integrated services

Community-based integrated services enable people to receive care closer to home, preventing physical and mental health challenges before they arise.

Focusing on everyday health and wellbeing at the local level, through coordination between health care providers and community groups, gives people the support they need when they need it, including services to support self-care and wellbeing, independence and social participation. These sectors should coordinate, adapting the design of their services to better reflect the specific needs of the local population.

This aims to avoid unnecessary hospital care which can be traumatising for individuals and place strain on the NHS.

3.

### Create community food systems

A "community food system" is one in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution and consumption are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of a particular community. This could be facilitated across Huntingdonshire to initiate diverse projects that develop connections between different parts of the food system. More allotments and orchards can be created in spaces close to residents that support mental and physical wellbeing. Space in both high streets and rural areas could become equipped with community kitchens where people can gather. There could also be support for the development of small food enterprises.

Source: Community Food Systems



## Guiding Lights

**In a world where...** increasing loneliness and social isolation affects the mental health of every pocket of society, the most vulnerable and the elderly are hit hardest — although isolation is also rising in young people. Research by the Campaign to End Loneliness found loneliness is likely to increase your risk of death by 26%.

**There is a place...** with passionate and empathetic people in an active volunteering sector and communities focussed around neighbourly towns and villages. People are proud of the strong community ties here, and a growing retired population have time to help those in need.

**Which could become...** a place where everyone has a friend, as all residents have the opportunity to feel engaged in their community and places help facilitate social interaction. This includes parks, high streets community centres, playgrounds and allotments which provide ample opportunities to leave the house, making it easy to engage and participate.

**But only if...** we ensure the built environment provides solutions including co-living, activated public realm, community spaces and good connectivity. In addition, there is a promotion of a diverse range of events and volunteering opportunities to increase participation and grow local networks.

Source: Campaign to End Loneliness, [link](#)

## What could we do?

1.

### Trial co-living

With loneliness on the rise, collective living offers a solution and could be trialled in Huntingdonshire. Here, a community of unrelated individuals or families share housing and facilities. This might be a fully shared home, or just a group of homes organised around a communal garden or kitchen.

This helps counter loneliness and supports a sense of belonging and cohesion by creating easier opportunities to socialise. Through sharing space, these models can be more affordable and reduce consumption of resources.

2.

### Promote intergenerational care

Intergenerational care refers to the practice of bringing the young and elderly together by co-locating and integrating nurseries and care homes.

The practice can decrease loneliness and improve quality of life amongst the elderly participants and has been shown to delay mental and physical decline. This also gives children the opportunity to mix regularly with elderly people, which can be missing if extended family do not live nearby. Children can also benefit from the attention of people who have time to listen and share stories which connect them with the past.

This could be achieved through locating a new nursery and care home together, expanding sites if the opportunity is available or by having reading sessions or shared outings.

3.

### Create a community wellbeing network

Healthcare providers and the voluntary sector could collaborate to establish a network whose purpose is to improve the wellbeing of individual participants and the community as a whole.

This involves creating support plans, signposting to opportunities, helping individuals to access support groups, referring them to specialist agencies or just having a chat.

The network could serve as connectors in the community, providing spaces to socialise and find out about the range of opportunities available across Huntingdonshire, from events, clubs, volunteer opportunities and training.



## Marmalade Lane

As we are beginning to understand the dire consequences of loneliness on our health, new models of co-living are being tested on our doorstep, with concepts such as Marmalade Lane, Cambridge.

Here, residents across forty two homes share facilities such as a common house for residents to socialise, host guests and eat together. A shared garden makes up the heart of the community, with mature trees, food growing and space to relax and play. The homes face onto a child friendly car free street which encourages neighbourly interaction.

Source: Marmalade Lane, [link](#)



What if...

# this was a vibrant place for children and young people?

**In a world where...** poor mental health is on the rise, social media has worsened social isolation and there is the perception that crime and anti-social behaviour is on the rise.

**There is a place...** that has passionate and engaged communities, a strong voluntary sector, independent initiatives such as Shift Momentum and the potential to make the most of links with Cambridge, London and Peterborough.

**Which could become...** a place where children and young people are engaged and inspired through activities and opportunities that reflect their diverse interests. Where ambition is nurtured and young people can reach their full potential — allowing them to socialise, develop confidence, discover productive new hobbies or learn new skills.

**But only if...** the public, private and voluntary sectors come together to deliver places, projects and events that children and young people can enjoy. This includes listening to and responding to the actual interests and needs of those who are intended to participate and fostering a culture of trust that fosters independence and a sense of care for the community.

Source: Huntingdonshire Futures Stakeholder Engagement. Top image: #iwillmovement Twitter

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## Guiding Lights

### Young Technicians Academy

Recently opened in Yaxley, the Young Technicians Academy helps young people build their skills, knowledge and experiences in the creative industries, including music, performing arts, media and live events. Primary and secondary school students learn about backstage operations from performers, while young people can participate in courses and clubs to learn essential skills while having fun.

Creative therapies are also delivered in partnership with communities and not-for-profit organisations.

Source: Young Technicians Academy, [link](#)

## What could we do?

health embedded



1.

### Promote Youth Social Action and the #iwill movement

Youth social action refers to activities that children and young people can do to make a positive difference to others or the environment. The #iwill movement is made up of over 1000 organisations and 700 young ambassadors across the UK that helps to ensure meaningful action is taken to support more children and young people to be active citizens.

Huntingdonshire organizations including schools could sign up to gain access to support and funding opportunities to increase youth social action, recognizing the benefits this provides.

2.

### Support Youth Services and Create a Youth Action Plan

Create through collaboration with young people and organisations across Huntingdonshire, an action plan for the district that sets out how to plan and deliver youth services. This includes preparing a comprehensive map of youth services and out of school activities across the district. Then invest in services and assets that can deliver opportunities for children and young people. This could include community transport options for rural areas, encouraging existing community organisations and spaces to deliver more youth specific activities and providing adequate resources for youth work. The action plan may identify priorities for young people in the district, for example the need for investment in mental health support or requirements to widen participation in youth services to meet Huntingdonshire's changing demographics.

3.

### Youth volunteering networks

Huntingdonshire already has a strong voluntary sector. Enhancing youth participation would support skills building, create opportunities for meaningful social interaction and deliver community benefits.

A network could be established between youth organisations and existing voluntary groups to establish a programme for youth volunteering that balances the interests of children and young people with the specific opportunities Huntingdonshire has to offer. This could be linked to digital tools and incentives to widen participation.

Youth volunteer networks could also make the most of links to opportunities in nearby cities, to broaden the horizon of children and young people, particularly those who may not have access without family support.



## Journey Four

Home to beautiful, local landscapes and pioneering global ambitions — in 2040 Huntingdonshire will be net zero carbon. We set out to be a leader in green innovation making the most of our wonderful natural assets.

### You said...



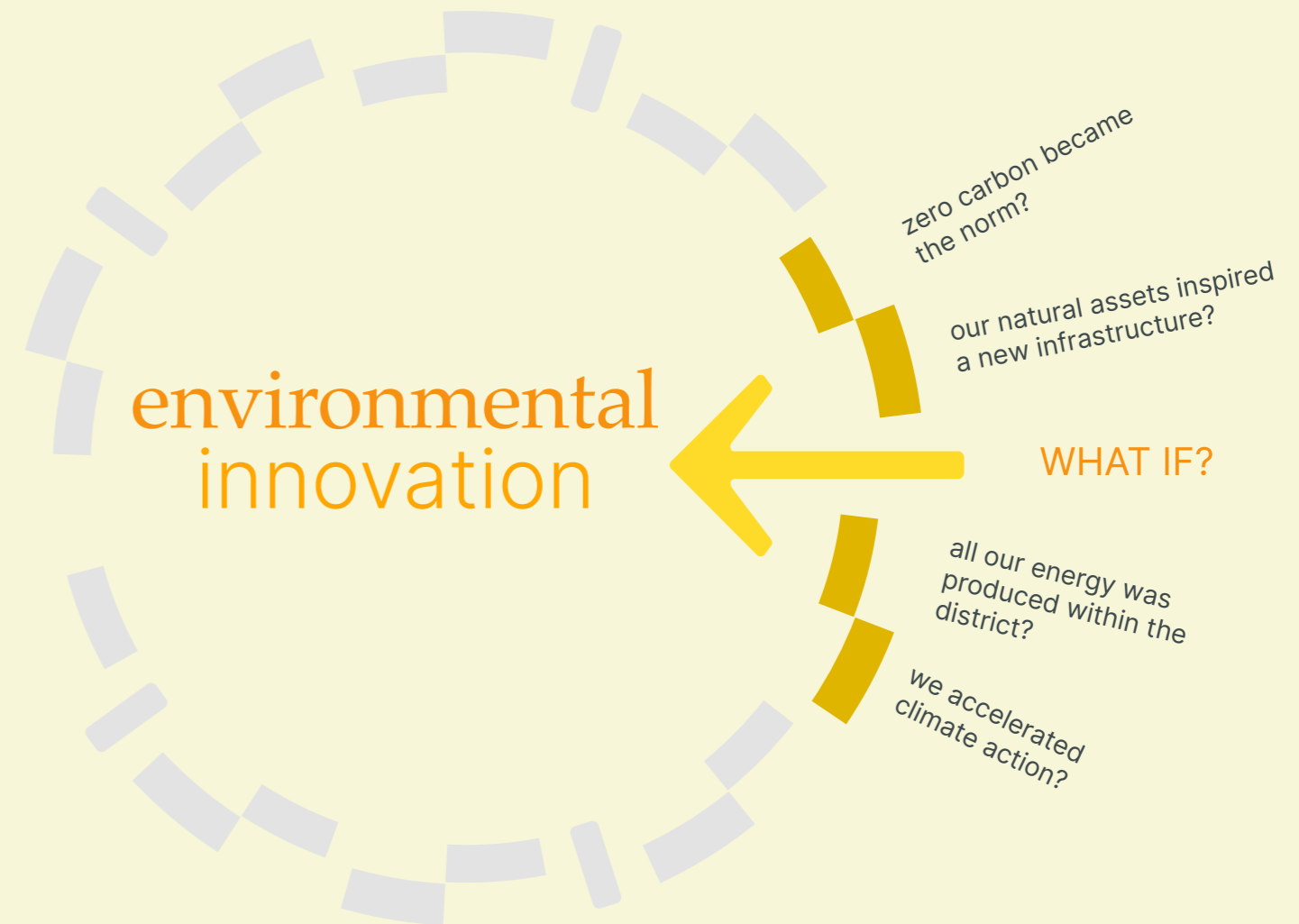
'All houses should have no carbon footprint.'



'We should be protecting what we already have.'



'There needs to be more done to make people change'





# zero carbon became the norm?



## Guiding Lights

**In a world where...** concern over the climate emergency has failed to be translated into serious action, the economy and finance mechanisms remain intertwined with the fossil fuel industry. Huntingdonshire produces 5.3 tonnes of carbon dioxide per person per year compared to the UK average of 5.2 tonnes, and our overall emissions are 88% higher than the UK average, mainly due to road traffic.

**There is a place...** that has the conditions for a rapid transition to net zero – plenty of versatile space for rewilding, developing carbon sinks and building renewable energy projects, as well as a community who support climate action especially if they can see tangible benefits.

**Which could become...** a test bed for initiatives that fast track the transition to net zero and the circular economy, a system based on re-use and regeneration. Where major infrastructure projects and new forms of financing go hand in hand with widespread behaviour change for both businesses and individuals. Where net zero initiatives don't feel like compromises but part of a bright future.

**But only if...** we establish a culture of openness to experimentation, taking risks and investing in ambitious net zero projects that build on current expertise and experience whilst balancing other priorities, proving to communities that they can share in the benefits these schemes.

Source: Huntingdonshire BEIS Emission Data 2020, Huntingdonshire District Council Climate Strategy

## What could we do?

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### 1. Improve energy efficiency

A grant scheme could be established to provide financing for homeowners and businesses to better insulate buildings. This would improve energy efficiency, reducing energy demand and its associated cost and carbon emissions.

Financing mechanisms could include grants, preferential loans or a mechanism to encourage groups of homeowners or businesses to coordinate to achieve economies of scale.

A drive to insulate would also create new business and employment opportunities across the district. This model could also explore localised insulation production business models, such as the use of reedface which would also help restore fenlands.

### 2. Deliver re-wilding projects

Carbon sinks are natural environments that remove more carbon than they produce, which in Huntingdonshire includes woodlands, scrublands and wetlands.

Land owners should be encouraged to deliver rewilding projects that maximise the role of the landscape as a carbon sink whilst also promoting biodiversity. This could work across different environments; from the planting of street trees, to increasing land set aside for nature in agricultural fields, to improving the carbon sink function of existing open spaces or delivering ambitious rewilding projects such as the Great Fen.

In addition, processes to estimate the amount of carbon absorbed could be developed to measure progress.

### 3. Support developments to function like the circular economy

Circular economy is a system where waste and pollution are eliminated, goods and materials are re-used and nature is regenerated. We could investigate if developments can function like the circular economy to achieve net zero carbon. This includes design allowing for repair and reuse, maximising the use of shared resources, considering embedded carbon in the building materials and construction process, as well as ensuring energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources while in operation. This would need to be defined and achieved through collaboration with all stakeholders.

We could encourage residential and commercial buildings to achieve high sustainability standards. Awareness campaigns could increase the understanding of and demand for environmentally friendly homes.

## Leeds Climate Innovation District

Achieving low or zero carbon does not need to feel like a compromise. The Climate Innovation District in Leeds has created a desirable, sustainable urban community on former industrial land in the heart of Leeds.

The district integrates housing with healthcare, schools, offices and manufacturing plant surrounded by diverse and accessible open spaces. The buildings are designed to near Passivhaus standard, made from cross laminated timber frames and powered by 100% renewable energy.

Source: Leeds Climate Innovation District, [link](#)





What if...

# our natural assets inspired a new infrastructure?

**In a world where...** societies have ignored and exploited nature, the climate crisis is accelerating with devastating effects including dramatic floods and droughts. In Huntingdonshire it is expected that nearly 1 in 10 homes will be affected by river flooding by 2100.

**There is a place...** that is defined by its lush, varied natural landscape, with river valleys, woodlands, meadows and fenlands.

**Which could become...** home to an extensive network of nature-based infrastructure which mimics or incorporates natural processes to create resilient urban and natural environments with enhanced biodiversity. Through wetlands, water meadows, green roofs, rain gardens and natural water filtration — we work in step with nature instead of against it.

**But only if...** we repaired and retrofitted ageing infrastructure, supported new nature-based solutions both in the public realm and in private buildings and protected and enhanced existing habitats.

Source: Fairness, nature and communities: addressing climate change in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, CPICC. HDC Climate Strategy

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## Guiding Lights

### Hammarby Sjöstad

New neighbourhoods across the UK and Europe are already leading the way by integrating nature based solutions into urban neighbourhoods.

Hammarby Sjöstad represents a complete infrastructural project in which energy, water, transportation, and waste collection systems were designed to work together as an “eco-cycle”. The integration and remediation of existing water features and incorporating sustainable urban drainage systems achieves greater resilience to extreme climates. The landscapes are designed to be multi-functional, naturally managing flood waters, increasing biodiversity and creating places for informal play.

Source: Hammarby Sjöstad, [link](#)



What could we do?

environmental innovation

1.

### Reduce water consumption

Water is one of our most precious resources, and is particularly vulnerable as the effects of the climate crisis become apparent.

Rainwater harvesting is the process of collecting and filtering rainfall from the roof of residential and commercial buildings. Greywater recycling collects wastewater from domestic appliances such as washing machines, baths, showers and sinks and treats this so it can be re-used. A programme of retrofit and standards for new developments could be investigated to fast track the transition to more sustainable water management, reducing demand whilst delivering savings.

2.

### Promote biodiverse back gardens

Re-wilding doesn't just have to mean nature reserves and large open spaces; back gardens can be home to a diverse range of habitats. A promotional campaign developed with local conservation groups could encourage individuals to take steps in their own homes and neighbourhoods to increase the role of gardens as habitats and green corridors.

This could include building ponds or nesting opportunities for birds, insects and mammals or involve planting species that are great for pollinators, with a wide variety of species that flower throughout the year. Avoiding the use of pesticides, herbicides and insecticides as well as soils containing peat would also reduce harmful environmental impacts.

These steps deliver benefits for humans too, creating beautiful and peaceful spaces that are good for our mental health and teach us about our natural world.

3.

### Retrofit sustainable drainage systems

Sustainable urban drainage solutions mimic natural processes to reduce the risk of flooding. By increasing permeable surfaces and planting, rain and floodwaters are better able to infiltrate into the soils and slow the rate of surface run off.

This involves replacing hard standing with more permeable surfaces, green and blue roofs, restoring wetlands and planting rain gardens.

Guidance for individual homeowners would raise awareness of the benefits and advise on small scale solutions. Planning policy could consider requirements that new developments deliver multifunctional green infrastructure including sustainable drainage. More large scale retrofit projects such as redesigning open spaces in flood prone areas and retrofitting road side raingardens could also be explored.





# all our energy was produced within the district?



## Guiding Lights

**In a world where...** we are faced by the perfect storm of energy, climate and cost of living crisis, we are all feeling the impact. Individual household energy bills are skyrocketing, influenced by global politics. This can make it a challenge to invest in the future even though we know these issues will only get worse.

**There is a place..** that has a strong, aspirational business community, many of which are clustered in networks, as well as flat landscapes and a dry and sunny climate. This includes places and organisations such as Waterside Green Energy that are beginning to implement community energy projects.

**Which could become...** a beacon of community energy production, with local people owning the process and reaping the benefits. From solar, wind and ground source heat pumps to processing reedmead for insulation, we can use our natural resources to power green growth across the district.

**But only if...** we develop new models of investment and ownership, with credible programmes and long-term support for both energy generation methods and retrofitting where possible to increase energy efficiency. Only if we create a mechanism which all people are aware of and can afford to participate in.

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## What could we do?

### 1. Fast-track community energy

Community groups, partners and businesses could be inspired by the Waterside Green Energy Project to come together to develop their own community energy projects, taking collective action to reduce, purchase, manage and generate energy. These projects have an emphasis on local engagement and control and the local community benefits collectively from the outcomes.

This could be achieved through collaboration between partners and businesses to exploit funding and opportunity for local power generation. Toolkits could also be prepared that set out steps required to get different types of energy projects up and running, including information on grants and funding streams, advice on governance arrangements or organisational structures and lists of resources or help available.

### 2. Embed renewable energy generation

We could investigate the delivery of renewable energy generation through new developments. The appropriate technique would be dependent on the local context and scale of the schemes. For example a network of ground source heat pumps could be more appropriate for larger developments, small wind turbines may be more appropriate for rural communities and solar PV's could be required on rooftops.

New and innovative approaches to renewable energy generation should be encouraged where appropriate. There could also be support programmes in place to encourage sensitive retrofit of existing homes and places.

### 3. Promote multi-functional agricultural land

Huntingdonshire's wide flat landscapes and dry sunny climate are ideal conditions for renewable wind or solar energy generation and there are many initiatives already in place. Huntingdonshire is well placed to become a leader in the transition to net zero by expanding this energy generation in the right places.

Given the significant role of agriculture in the district, renewable energy could be delivered in tandem with agricultural practices such as innovative stacking systems where arable and pastoral farming take place under solar panel systems. Green waste could also be converted through anaerobic digesters into gas for use in cooking and heating as well as a fertiliser.

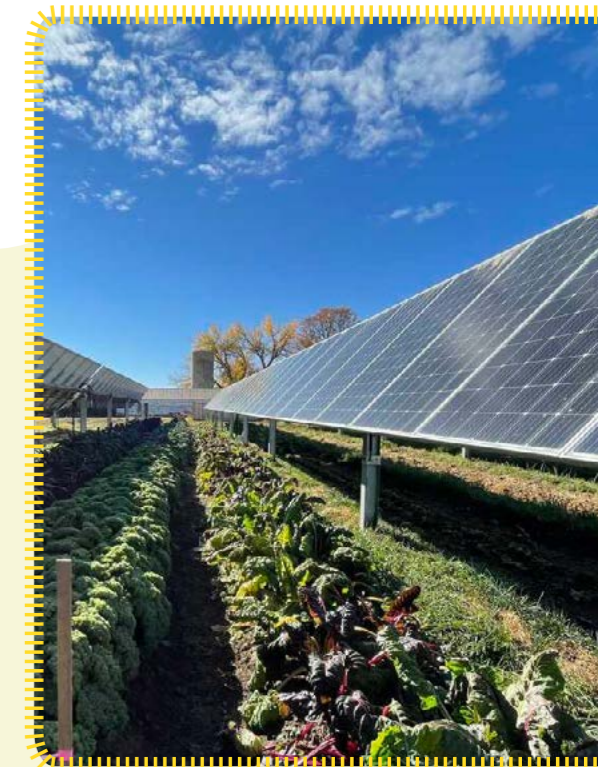


## Waterside Green Energy

Communities in Huntingdonshire are already taking initiative, developing local, resilient, zero carbon energy projects.

Waterside Green Energy project is a charitable cooperative established in 2020. It seeks to develop and implement local renewable energy projects to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. In particular, it is exploring how to implement hydropower generation on the River Great Ouse near Little Paxton. This has the potential to generate 860,000 KW hours per year equivalent to the energy required by over 300 homes whilst saving 257 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year.

Source: Waterside Green Energy, [link](#)





# we accelerated climate action?

**In a world where...** climate change is beginning to impact every aspect of society, young people are leading the shift in mindset and lifestyle. 78% agreed that looking after the environment was important to them but do not feel that enough is being done.

**There is a place...** that has great schools, community and business networks where many people, particularly the young, are in touch with the natural world through our abundant green spaces and where steps, such as Eco Councils, are already underway.

**Which could become...** a place where children and young people lead the net zero revolution. Where young people drive decision making and where the necessary steps to fast track change is clear for residents, businesses, the voluntary sector and communities and they are all held accountable.

**But only if...** action planning involves all stakeholders, reflects local capabilities and addresses inequalities. Decision making on how to balance sometimes competing priorities should be transparent and reflect local opinion, and young people who will be most impacted by these choices are meaningfully involved in the decision making process.

Source: The Children's People and Nature Report, [link](#)

## Guiding Lights

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### Our City, Our World

Schools across Brighton & Hove have worked together to produce a climate change, sustainability and environmental education programme.

The council, schools and local groups work collaboratively to develop and implement a Sustainability, Climate Change and Environmental Curriculum across all phases and types of school. This enables young people to learn about the environment, develop skills to investigate their environment and learn how to make intelligent, informed decisions to care for the environment and support climate justice.

There are also steps to develop action plans to become leading sustainable institutions.

Source: Our City Our World, [link](#)



## What could we do?

## environmental innovation

1.

### Establish a Youth Climate Council

A Youth Climate Council could be established made up of interested representatives from children and young people across the district. They would come together on a regular basis to formulate policy proposals or review directions and decisions.

These would then be included in internal processes to create a direct link between policy makers, politicians and the people most likely to be affected by decision making.

The Youth Climate Council could also collaborate with other networks or Youth Councils at different scales, to extend their remit beyond local government.

2.

### Provide business support and training

There is a wealth of expertise and understanding in our community about sustainable business practices and how to facilitate business models towards the circular economy. Huntingdonshire District Council could lead on or partner with existing providers to encourage and support businesses in improving the sustainability of their work practices.

This could include training opportunities and establishing networks with the business community to deliver sustainability improvements through cooperation and knowledge sharing. We could also establish metrics and targets to understand progress, and provide incentives for the transition.

3.

### Develop advice, training and awareness programmes

Education providers across the district could develop dedicated courses and information material on various aspects of sustainability and better integrate sustainability into the existing curriculum. This could also include providing guidance on small steps local people, community groups, the voluntary sector and businesses can make to reduce their impact.

This could build upon the expertise that already exists across Huntingdonshire, linking with existing organisations, businesses and groups. For example, courses on ecology, rewilding and green infrastructure could link with the Great Fen project. Training on the circular economy could partner with businesses at Alconbury Weald. Training in construction could focus on low carbon methods such as modular housing, cross laminated timber or more traditional building methods such as rammed earth.



## Journey Five

Greener, smarter and a lot more fun — the future of travel in Huntingdonshire will transition away from the car. We welcome effective public transport, on-demand travel options, a sustainable distribution and an attractive cycling and walking network.

### You said...



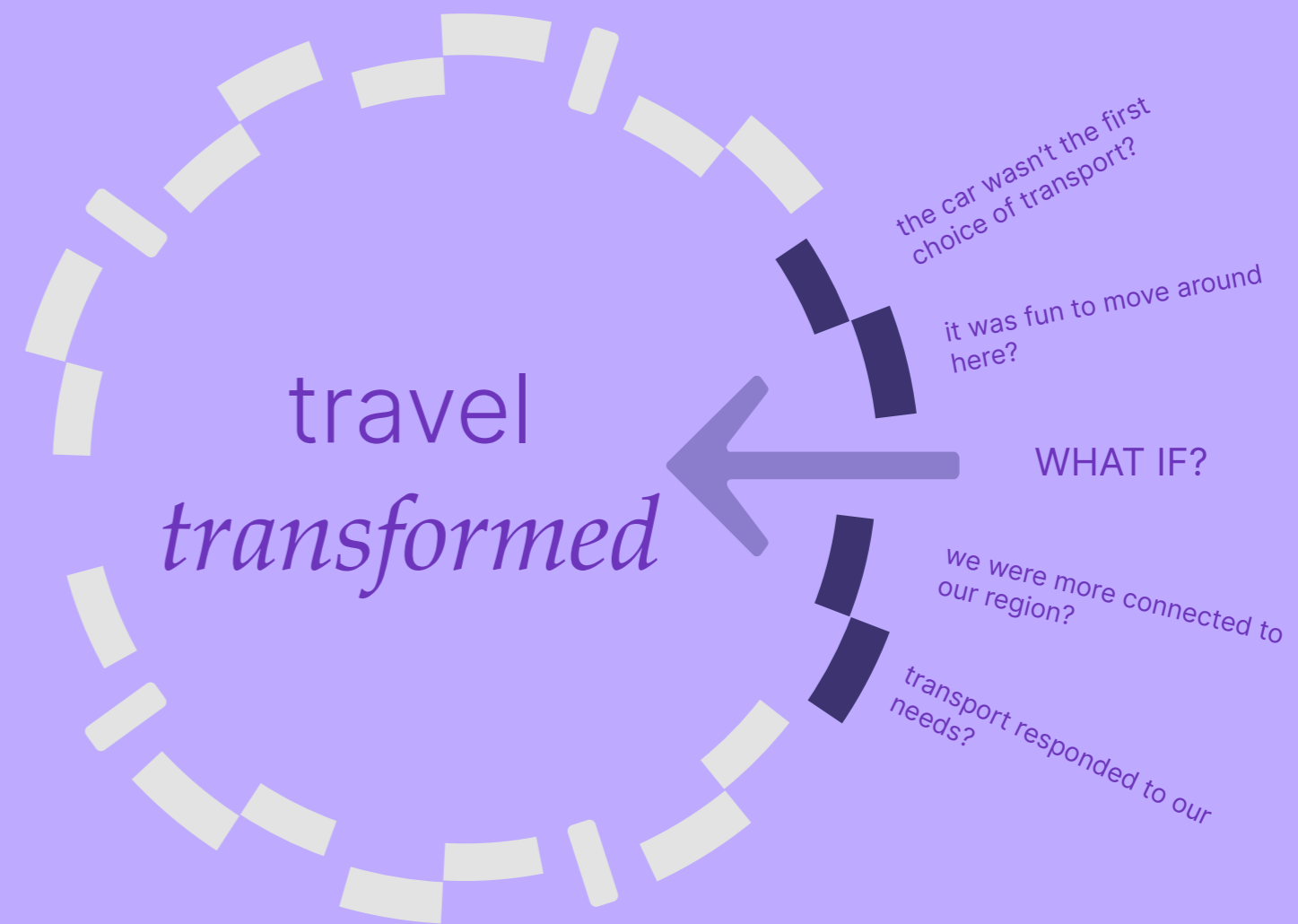
'Public transport needs to be frequent, cheap and reliable otherwise it won't work.'



'More needs to be done to create a network, rather than just a hodge potch of paths.'



'The river is lovely; it would be great to see paddleboards and rowers on it more often.'



## Guiding Lights

**In a world where...** petrol prices are high, further exacerbated by the energy crisis, we need new modes of getting around. Public transport is inadequate and the car remains a necessity to get around, especially in rural areas. The impacts of car-led carbon emissions on the environment are alarming and Huntingdonshire is currently the most polluting district in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in terms of road transport emissions.

**There is a place...** home to communities who genuinely care about the climate crisis. The district has green picturesque landscapes and flat towns perfect for cycling and is already trialling new approaches to public transport including the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway and the on demand Vectare Bus.

**Which could become...** a place where it is easy to make trips by green, zero-carbon public transport that is fast, frequent, reliable and affordable; where short trips are only made by walking or cycling through safe picturesque routes; and where bus stops provide a sheltered, comfortable hub, equipped with cycle parking and charging facilities and which provide real time bus information.

**But only if...** we invest in our public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure and transform it into a sustainable, efficient and convenient system which is subsidised and bus affordable to all.

Source: Huntingdonshire BEIS Emission Data, 2020

## What could we do?

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### 1. Upgrade the bus service

Buses serve the district as the key public transport mode. The most regular bus services are to the key service centres, the market towns. Nevertheless, the more rural parts of the district are less well connected to service centres.

The provision of more frequent and reliable bus routes to villages and rural settlements, every day of the week and from early in the morning until late in the evening, will help reduce reliance on the car. The service should also be affordable to become a better alternative to the car.

The timetables of these routes should be integrated with the wider bus, Guided Busway and rail services to create a fully integrated service.

### 2. Trial car free days

To support the transition away from car dominated travel, special car free days could celebrate sustainable travel choices.

The concept of giving streets back to residents can promote wider and longer term positive effects. The council can support residents in closing streets to traffic over weekends to create play streets and parklets and encourage local groups to organise neighbourhood cycle rides or walking routes. People can be reminded of the joys of active travel and discover desirable walking or cycling routes which they could utilise in their daily lives.

The days can also be used to trial options and approaches, before committing to expensive projects or to work out gaps in the network.

Source: Living Streets, [link](#)



### Every village, every hour

The rural region of North Hesse in Germany boasts a bus network that reaches every village of more than 200 residents, at least every hour, with the ambition to double public transport use in the region by 2030. This is achieved through a mix of public and commercial operators who provide a service for at least 12 hours a day, seven days a week. Overall it runs 32 million passenger trips by bus per year. The bus service is in alignment with the rail timetables, offering an integrated system.

Source: Every village, every hour - A comprehensive bus network for rural England, 2021, [link](#)



### 3. Establish mobility hubs

Building on the potential expansion of the bus and the Guided Busway network, the establishment of mobility hubs in key stops along their network can enhance the whole-journey experience of people travelling within, into and out of the district.

Mobility hubs concentrate complementary transport modes, which minimise or eliminate the need for car. Bus stops can be co-located with cycle and car hire facilities, sheltered cycle parking, car parking and be equipped with real time bus information, wifi or electric bike charging points. These hubs can substitute the usage of car for the entire journey or parts of it and can serve people travelling from urban and rural locations alike.

What if...

## it was fun to move around here?

**In a world where...** people are rediscovering the pleasure of being out on a bike or going for a stroll, active travel on accessible routes is recognised as not only a fun way to connect with our surroundings, but also an essential part of a healthy lifestyle.

**There is a place...** that is characterised by its picturesque towns and villages with beautiful flat landscapes and expanding network of trails and quietways.

**Which could become...** a joyful, safe and inviting place for everyone, whether 8 or 80, to travel on an extended, safe and fun pedestrian and cycle network that crosses urban areas and beautiful natural landscapes, connecting homes with services, employment, schools and leisure opportunities.

**But only if...** the pedestrian and cycling routes form a comprehensive joined up network including quiet country lanes and riverside routes linking towns, villages and key destinations. This should be supported by infrastructure including bike parking spaces, showers and repair stations. To increase participation, e-mobility hire infrastructure should be widely available and promoted across the district.

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## Guiding Lights

### Joyful Journeys

Waltham Forest is one of the leading Boroughs of the country piloting sustainable transport improvements with funding from Transport for London. Through its 'Mini Holland' scheme, it has delivered 29km of segregated cycle lanes and 62 improved pedestrian crossings. The scheme focuses on creating cycle lanes with safe dedicated space, walking and cycle routes between town centres, cycle hubs and designing new attractive outdoor spaces along the way.

Source: Enjoy Waltham Forest, [link](#)



## What could we do?



1.

### Establish a network of cycle routes

The existing cycling paths which are mainly concentrated within towns and in certain open spaces, are an invaluable asset which can be built on to create a comprehensive and joined up network.

The delivery of cycle paths will be given priority away from main roads, with appropriate signage and lighting. A comprehensive plan of existing and new paths could establish commuting routes in town and village centres.

Apart from the utility routes, leisure routes can take advantage of the district's rich natural assets and traverse its scenic parks and rivers while connecting them to the rest of the district.



2.

### Have fun on the river

The River Great Ouse winds its way across Huntingdonshire connecting market towns and villages. Promoting boating and paddle-boarding on the river could be a slow leisurely way to move about the district and support great quality of life.

Celebrating the river could also be a great way of building local identity and promoting slow sustainable tourism.

3.

### Improve wayfinding and safety

Safe and accessible pedestrian and cycle routes are much more likely to be used for both leisure and commuting purposes. Signage that incorporates strong graphics, simple maps and pointers to interesting landmarks which is co-designed with residents and local interest groups will help to create a clear shared identity for the district. Improved wayfinding should be delivered along with wider accessibility improvements such as better lighting, mobility and visibility impairment adaptations, crossing enhancements and outdoor seating, to aid people of all abilities.

Signage should also be placed in strategic locations including near bus stops, train stations, high streets, mobility hubs, and places of interest.



# we were more connected to our region?



## Guiding Lights

**In a world where...** road traffic is steadily increasing, causing Huntingdonshire to have much higher greenhouse gas emissions than the UK average. And where housing and employment growth put pressure on the region's transport infrastructure.

**There is a place...** that is located at the heart of the UK with links to London, the Midlands and the North, through key routes such as the M11, A1(M), A14, the East Coast Mainline with direct Thameslink Great Northern services to London and the Guided Busway connecting the district to wider Cambridgeshire.

**Which could become...** a place linked to its neighbours, to wider Cambridgeshire and beyond, which makes longer journeys easy, fast and reliable. A place where strategic housing and employment locations and other key attractions of the district are conveniently connected with its surrounding areas, thus drawing people in.

**But only if...** strategic collaborations are secured which raise and direct funding towards regional transport infrastructure improvements.

Source: Huntingdonshire Strategic Transport Study - Baseline Report, Mott Macdonald, 2017. Image to the right: Thameslink railway

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## What could we do?

### 1. Expand the Guided Busway

The Cambridgeshire Guided Busway has proven its success by connecting housing to employment locations and residents to central places. The Busway is already linked to Huntingdonshire with three frequent and high quality services into and out of Cambridge to St Ives but less frequently to Huntingdon and the bus network also misses out rural locations and key employment hubs outside of market towns.

It will be a key move to expand the bus service across the district and make trips more frequent, reliable and affordable which will encourage more passengers. This upgraded network will effectively connect the entire district and make the bus the more desirable option to the car.

### 2. Improve highway capacity

Given Huntingdonshire's location, its strategic road corridors are vital in accommodating local, regional and even national journeys. Frequently these routes are impacted by heavy traffic, resulting in longer journey times and safety concerns.

Investment in key highway improvements, especially for congestion hotspots, road upgrades, junction enhancements and bypasses, will result in more reliable and safe car trips.

To mitigate their impact, highway improvements should be accompanied by sustainable drainage, green infrastructure and biodiversity corridors.

Source: CPCA Local Transport Plan, [link](#)



## Local Transport and Connectivity Plan

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan outlines the long term strategy towards transport improvements across the region as it aims to bring communities closer together. Travel Demand Management will aim to reduce pressure on the transport system, namely by offering public transport alternatives. A 15% cut in car mileage will also be targeted to help cut carbon emissions. The Plan will even include internet connectivity for all, to enable access to jobs and reduce social inequalities.

Source: CPCA Local Transport Plan, [link](#)  
Image below: Cambridgeshire County Council



### 3. Link up strategic locations

Sustainable housing and employment growth can only be accommodated by directing growth to locations well connected with public transport, and by strategically planning for mobility infrastructure in accordance with growth needs.

In addition to housing and employment, other key attractors, such as natural spaces, should also be part of the regional transport network.

This way, the district's residents get closer to the wider region and its opportunities, and conversely the district becomes more attractive to people from outside, for living, working and leisure.



# transport responded to our needs?

**In a world where...** people are reliant on cars, especially in rural regions, traditional public transport options are often lacking. Yet new digital services and technologies mean that individual car ownership is being reassessed.

**There is a place...** that is predominantly rural, with villages and towns scattered around expansive landscapes, but shows that change is possible with pioneering public transport options including the Vectare Bus service (previously the Ting Bus) and the Guided Busway.

**Which could become...** a place where reliable, responsive and affordable on-demand mobility options with joint ticketing mean that it is easy to live and move around without your own car. The district could become a hub for on-demand mobility with car-sharing, ride-sharing, bike-sharing and the extended Vectare Bus serving all our urban and rural neighbourhoods.

**But only if...** communities, businesses, developers and transport authorities collaborate to attract and support mobility investment and commit to using different forms of mobility. In addition, on-demand options should be widely encouraged and promoted, so people know it is an easy option. We must allow for sufficient time and testing to create a system that is easy, affordable and effective.

Top image: Voi e-bikes

## Guiding Lights

### Fflecsi Flexible Bus Service

Fflecsi is an on-demand bus service provided in partnership with Transport for Wales. Through the app, the website or by calling, customers can book their trips at their desired times, including pick-up and drop-off locations. The bus's route is updated in real time to reflect passenger demands as they arise. The service is particularly valuable for rural communities, where public transport is limited.

The app even provides information on other public transport options to help customers decide the best means of travel for them.

Source: fflecsi, [link](#)

## What could we do?



### 1. Grow the Vectare Bus coverage

The Vectare Bus is currently one of the uncelebrated heroes of the district. It provides an on demand service currently only in West Huntingdonshire, 6 days a week until 8pm. This service connects some of the most rural parts of the district with towns such as St Neots and Huntingdon.

The pilot could become a permanent service and extended to the entire district, especially with an expanded service on Sundays and later in the night. The App makes it easy to instantly book trips on the phone and get picked up at the chosen time. Promoting the service to more residents would increase its passenger numbers and solve many transport issues faced by rural areas.



### 2. Promote cycle sharing

Access to cycling does not have to depend on owning a bike. Cycle share is an effective way to attract more people to embrace cycling without the commitment and investment. A commercial or community bike share pilot can be established with bikes and stations in key locations and especially close to bus stops, the Guided Busway and mobility hubs. This could include a mix of traditional bikes, e-bikes and cargo bikes to meet diverse needs.

One-way cycling trips could increase and become the preferred mode for last-mile travel combined with other means of transport for short amenity trips. In order to be successful, the service has to be complemented with the right cycling infrastructure, creating integrated networks of safe routes with clear signage.

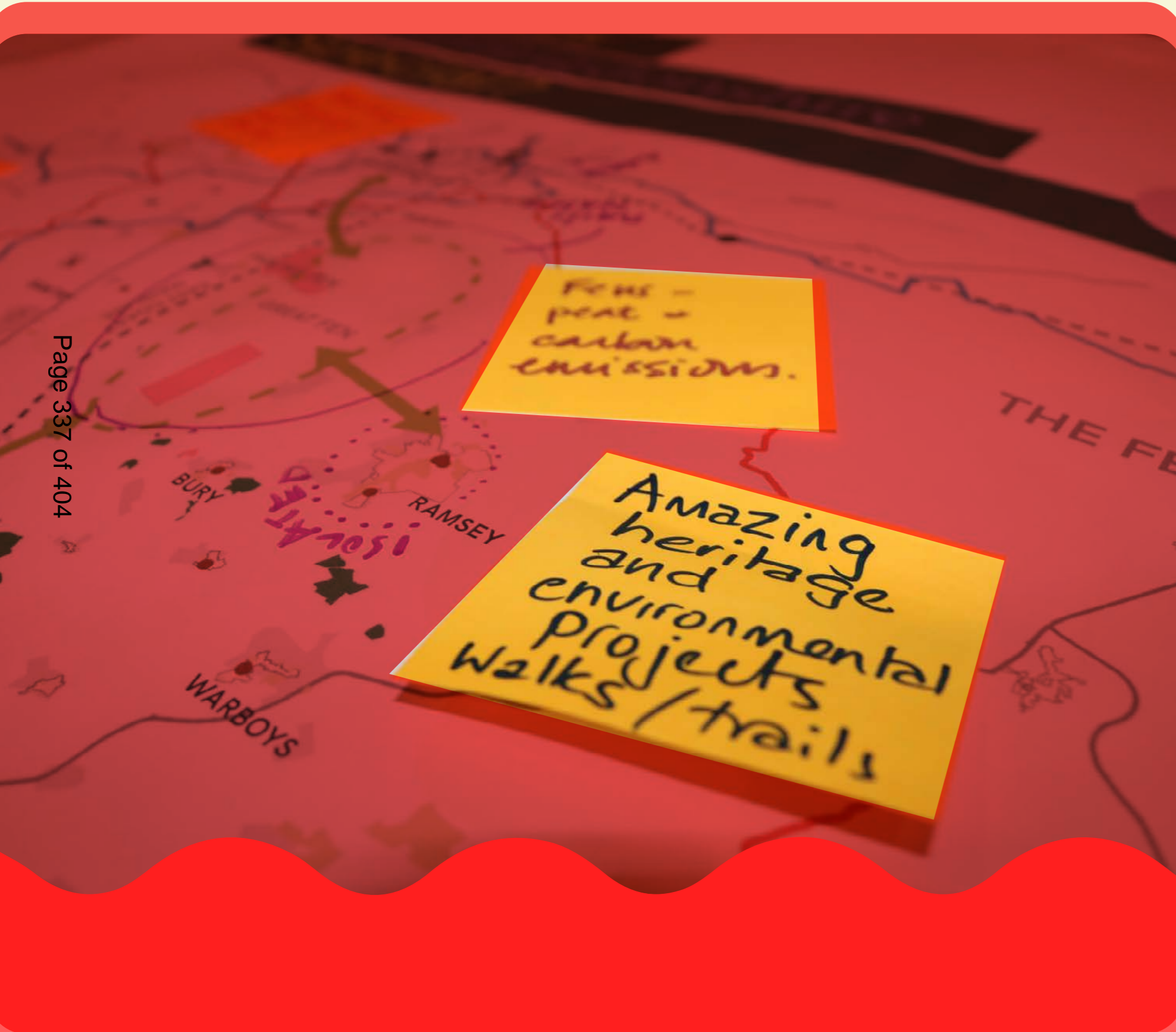
### 3. Establish a car club

The rural parts of the district depend heavily on the car due to public transport deficiencies, while the urban areas are frequently congested and face parking problems. Some trips will always be more convenient by car, nonetheless they do not have to depend on car ownership.

Establishing a car club through a partnership between the community, businesses and local authorities, could cover this need. An appropriate provider can be attracted and supported through dedicated parking spaces in convenient locations, charging facilities and signage. A marketing campaign could be rolled out to inform the district of the benefits, money savings, convenience and environmental advantages of car clubs.







## Taking the Vision Forward

This is just the start



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## this is just the start

In this world of change, we need big ideas and bold thinking to inspire us to look beyond the status quo as we head out on this journey together.

Huntingdonshire Futures has brought together a community of people who truly believe that our district has a brilliant future ahead. Together we have defined what that destination is and how we might travel there.

This process has drawn on our heads and our hearts. It's taken imagination and creativity to look beyond the realms of the here and now and inspire ideas that get people excited. It's also involved picking apart those ideas to figure out how we might achieve them in a way that feels achievable, sustainable and practical.

So, we invite you to continue on the next steps of this journey as together we look at the practical actions that we can deliver to deliver a Brighter Future for Huntingdonshire.

This is just the start...

# Huntingdonshire

FUTURES

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

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Title/Subject Matter:** Corporate Plan 2023-2028

**Meeting/Date:** Cabinet – 21 March 2023  
Council – 29 March 2023

**Executive Portfolio:** Councillor Sarah Conboy, Executive Leader

**Report by:** Business Intelligence and Performance Manager

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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### **Executive Summary:**

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the development of a new Corporate Plan for 2023-2028 and to present proposed priorities and outcomes to Council for approval. Key actions and operational performance indicators are also set out for 2023/24 and these will be reviewed annually.

This replaces the interim, transitional Corporate Plan adopted for 2022/23. The new Corporate Plan for 2023-2028 establishes three priorities for the Council, with related outcomes set out through detailed outcome statements. These are accompanied by a list of actions and operational performance indicators. Progress in delivering on our priorities and outcome statements will be measured against these as well as through qualitative updates and reviews of contextual measures about how the district and our residents' experiences are changing.

The actions will be reviewed annually and amended where work has been completed or new approaches have been identified as a result of engagement with partners and residents. Performance reporting will also continue to evolve with new measures to be proposed where better indicators can be identified.

### **Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet is

#### **RECOMMENDED**

To endorse the Corporate Plan for 2023-2028 to Council (attached at Appendix A).

The Council is

#### **RECOMMENDED**

To approve the Corporate Plan for 2023-2028 (attached at Appendix A).

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The report is intended to update Members on the development of a new Corporate Plan for 2023-2028 and to present proposed priorities, outcomes, actions and operational performance indicators to Council for approval.

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

- 2.1 The Council needs a Corporate Plan setting out our priorities, desired outcomes and how we plan to achieve these. The previous Corporate Plan was an interim, transitional plan intended to be replaced with a longer-term plan following 2022's programme of engagement with residents. To reflect what we have heard from residents, businesses and other stakeholders, a new Plan is needed which will set out our strategic response to this. The Plan details the immediate actions we have planned for 2023/24 and the performance indicators we will measure success against next year. It aligns with the newly co-developed Huntingdonshire Futures place strategy and connects the 'golden thread' running between individual service plans and Huntingdonshire Futures' shared vision for the district.
- 2.2 This reports also explains a new approach to performance reporting, including plans to monitor and report on a range of contextual "outcome measures" which will show how outcomes for the district and its residents are changing. We will not have direct control over their performance, but monitoring will identify trends over time and changes we may need to react to as our actions and work to enable and influence others have effect.

## **3. THE NEW CORPORATE PLAN**

- 3.1 The new Corporate Plan is bold and ambitious in the outcome statements it sets out to achieve, while also being clear on what it is we can do, what we can enable and what we can influence as a district council. This will be critical as this Corporate Plan calls on the Council to play more of an enabling role, to make more use of partnership working and to empower people to reduce demand for traditional public services. The challenges we face can only be solved through working collaboratively and the responsibility is not the district council's alone. An example of this is our role as a statutory partner in developing the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System (ICS), working together to improve the health and wellbeing of local people throughout their lives.
- 3.2 The Corporate Plan sets out three key priorities:
- Improving quality of life for local people
  - Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations
  - Deliver good quality, high value for money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations
- 3.3 To achieve these priorities, we must be a council that takes time to listen and to really understand where people need the help and support to make a real difference to their lives. In line with changes across the public sector system, we need to make prevention a core way of working across the

Council. This is fundamental to our “Improving the quality of life for local people” priority, which does not just focus on helping those already experiencing crisis but sets out earlier outcomes we want to achieve - keeping people out of crisis and, even more broadly, improving the happiness and wellbeing of our residents.

3.4 Whilst looking to the future, we must not lose sight of the day to day but must also continue to deliver good quality services and set an excellent example to our community of the standards we expect for our residents. Our third priority will keep our focus on delivering quality, value for money services and ensuring that what we do enables local people to thrive.

#### 4. HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

Organisational priority	Outcome statement	Operational performance measures (examples): “Do”	Outcome actions (examples): “Do” and “enable”	Strategic direction: “Enable” and “influence”
<b>Priority 1 – Improving quality of life for local people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improving quality of life and well-being</li> <li>- Preventing crisis</li> <li>- Helping in a crisis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of One Leisure Facilities admissions</li> <li>- Benefits processing</li> <li>- Homelessness prevention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deliver financial vulnerability programme</li> <li>- New Residents Outcome Strategy</li> </ul>	Employment, Mental Health, Older isolation
<b>Priority 2 – Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improving housing</li> <li>- Forward-thinking economic growth</li> <li>- Lowering our carbon emissions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Housing completions</li> <li>- Planning applications</li> <li>- Fleet driving efficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refresh tenancy strategy</li> <li>- Local Plan refresh</li> </ul>	Environmental, housing, planning
<b>Priority 3 – Deliver good quality, high value for money services</b>	Delivering good quality efficient and effective services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Website uptime</li> <li>- Missed bins</li> <li>- Council Tax collection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customer Service project</li> <li>- New Workforce Strategy</li> </ul>	Doing the basics really well
<b>Reason</b>	Provides an outcome target for our operational performance, and a goal for strategic activity	Ensuring we are delivering consistent service at good value for money	Annual scoped actions that will move us closer to the outcome we are aiming for	Longer term engagement around Huntingdonshire Futures place strategy themes

- 4.1 The preceding table shows how the structure of the Corporate Plan hangs together. While there will be an immediate focus on actions for the next year, and operational performance measures which we will continually monitor and report on quarterly, delivery of the longer-term ambitions set out in our outcome statements will not be forgotten.
- 4.2 Quarterly updates to Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet will show progress on actions against milestones and key deliverables set out in project plans, while also allowing for other achievements and activities to be highlighted through qualitative updates for each priority. Quarterly reports will also show how services have delivered against their targets for operational performance indicators, with trends and comparisons to previous periods shown where possible. Commentary to accompany performance data provides an opportunity for services to explain over- or under-achievement against targets (e.g., increased demand affecting turnaround times).
- 4.3 Officers responsible for each outcome under Priority 1 and Priority 2 will also be working with colleagues and partners to identify appropriate contextual measures to show progress in delivering on the outcome statements' ambitions, and related ambitions in the Huntingdonshire Futures place strategy. It is likely that results for many of these measures will be from external data sources and only be updated annually (e.g., the Huntingdonshire district's carbon emissions) so a year-end update on these measures will allow us to monitor progress made as our activities, and work to enable and influence others, take effect. Since the outcomes themselves are not within the sole control of the Council, we will report on changes and direction of travel but not set targets for these measures.
- 4.4 Both quarterly and year-end reports will be published via our Overview & Scrutiny (Performance & Growth) Panel and Cabinet meeting agendas and on our website.
- 4.5 Aligning service plans with the new Corporate Plan enables us to closely align actions and operational performance indicators with individual services. This helps us to ensure services are working to the same priorities, aiming to deliver the same outcomes and measuring their performance in a consistent way, where possible. The new Corporate Plan 2023-2028 provides a 'golden thread' throughout the organisation, linking activity at strategic levels to activity in service plans, ultimately filtering through to objectives set for individual employees.
- 4.6 Managers will continue to monitor progress on their service plan aims and Members will receive reports on some of this activity where actions or measures are significant enough to be included in the Corporate Plan.

## **5. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

- 5.1 The Panel discussed the Corporate Plan Report at its meeting on 1st March 2023.



- 5.2 Arising from a question asked the last time the Corporate Plan was submitted, Members' attention has been drawn to the differences between the current Plan and the previous one.
- 5.3 Following a question on the measures associated with the mental health aspects of Priority 1, it has been pointed out that many areas of the Plan constitute preventative measures rather than aimed at solving existing issues. Furthermore, some areas, including this one, are the responsibility of partner organisations, so measures will be developed in conjunction with them. Given the importance of having suitable targets for operational performance measures that are both realistic and stretching, the Panel has requested sight of proposed targets for 2023/24. Having received agreement to this request, the Panel has recommended the Cabinet to approve the Corporate Plan for 2023-2028.
- 5.4 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for the Cabinet to make a decision on the recommendations.

## **6. KEY IMPACTS**

- 6.1 The key impact of adopting the Corporate Plan is that everyone in the Council will be clear about the Council's key priorities, outcomes and the actions and indicators to be used to measure progress towards delivering on them.
- Officers will be clear about what is important and how their role contributes towards this, as identified through individual objectives.
  - Financial planning will be more clearly linked to corporate planning
  - Service plans will be more clearly linked to corporate planning
  - Members will know what information they will get and when
  - Portfolio Holders will be able to hold Officers to account
  - Overview and Scrutiny will have the information they need to hold Portfolio Holders to account
  - Links between our actions and the aims set out in the Huntingdonshire Futures place strategy can be identified and communicated with partners as we work together towards our destination of a brighter future for Huntingdonshire

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

- 7.1 Following Cabinet, the new Corporate Plan 2023-2028, including actions and operational performance indicators for 2023/24, in Appendix A will be submitted for approval by Council. If approved, a final version of the Corporate Plan 2023-2028 will be made available to all employees through the Intranet, published on the Council's website and promoted externally to our residents and partners.
- 7.2 Work to deliver new actions will begin as planned while business as usual activity will continue. Progress on the actions and results for operational performance indicators will be reported to Overview and Scrutiny and

Cabinet every quarter, accompanied by a qualitative update for each outcome, as detailed in section 4. An annual report at the year-end will provide information on contextual measures relating to each priority.

- 7.3 Opportunities to improve service delivery, work with partners and bid for external funding will continue to be explored. With partners, we will work to prioritise the aims and actions required in the Huntingdonshire Futures place strategy and these are likely to inform next year's Corporate Plan.

## **8. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

- 8.1 The proposed developing Corporate Plan at Appendix A is intended to replace the previous plan and set out the Council's key priorities and outcomes for 2023-2028

## **9. CONSULTATION**

- 9.1 This Corporate Plan has been informed by 2022's programme of engagement, which included both public and stakeholder consultations to help develop both the Huntingdonshire Futures place strategy and the Council's new Climate Strategy.

- 9.2 The new Corporate Plan includes a number of actions involving further engagement with partners to deliver joint ambitions as well as an action to listen to local residents and respond to their input on service delivery.

## **10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The Council's 2023/24 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2027/28 was approved by Council in February 2023. The proposed actions and performance measures have been informed by the approved service budgets and savings and growth proposals. It is anticipated that there will be no additional resource implications as a result of adopting the new priorities, outcomes, actions or indicators.

## **11. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Under our first priority, we have set out an outcome statement for the outcome "improving quality of life for local people" which specifically references 'good health' as one of the foundations of a good life. Actions planned to help improve the health of local residents include a new Residents Outcome Strategy and work we will do to influence others via the Integrated Care System. The new Corporate Plan does not take any focus or resources away from existing services that support the health of our residents and operational performance indicators relating to both One Leisure Facilities and One Leisure Active Lifestyles services are included to ensure we continue to monitor and manage their performance.

## **12. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 The Corporate Plan supports the approach set out through our new Climate Strategy and commits us to applying a “green lens” to our decision making – embedding the climate and green agenda through all we do and considering environmental impacts and opportunities to improve the environment when making all decisions.
- 12.2 Within the “Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations” priority, we want to deliver the outcomes of “improved housing”, “forward thinking economic growth” and “lower our carbon emissions”. Actions planned under each of these outcomes should reduce carbon emissions and help to improve the district’s environment. 2023/24 actions include some actions from the new Climate Strategy action plan, while others will follow in later years. New actions will also continue to be developed, with new opportunities and funding streams considered as they arise, to help the Council tackle climate change and care for the environment.
- 12.3 Proposed operational performance indicators relating to the environment are those we are currently confident we can report quarterly however further work during the year is expected to identify additional measures, including some that may only be reportable annually at the year-end. There will also be contextual measures relating to the environment, including the district’s carbon emissions from all sources as included in the Climate Strategy.

## **13. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 13.1 As outlined in section 7, this report is seeking endorsement from Cabinet and approval from Council for the Corporate Plan 2023-2028. This will set out the Council’s priorities and desired outcomes as well as actions and operational performance measures for the next year. The new Plan will provide the basis of the ‘golden thread’ between our service plans and the Huntingdonshire Futures place strategy and will inform everything we do as we refocus our vision, review our priorities and work with staff, residents, partners, communities and businesses to lead Huntingdonshire into the future with confidence.

## **14. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

Appendix A – Corporate Plan 2023-2028, including proposed actions and operational performance measures for 2023/24

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# Corporate Plan 2023–2028



## Foreword

We all want to live in a place with the highest possible quality of life. A place that people are drawn to, where all feel included and can aspire to something. A place that people are proud to call home.

This Corporate Plan to 2028 will inform everything we do as we refocus our vision, review our priorities and work with staff, residents, partners, communities and businesses to lead Huntingdonshire into the future with confidence.

It won't always be easy. With a decreasing pot of government funding, rising costs and inflation, and greater pressure on our services we will need to find ways to save money or generate income in order to continue providing high quality services.








We are also facing the threat of climate change. This requires decisive action and fundamental changes in how countries, cities and communities live and work. Our Climate Strategy and action plan set out how we can be better prepared to adapt to the impacts of climate change at a more local level. We will apply a "green lens" to our decision making – embedding the climate and green agenda through all we do, considering environmental impacts and opportunities to improve the environment when making all decisions.

As we grapple the real issues facing us, we must be bold and set aspirational targets that challenge us to make a difference, whether that is by doing things directly ourselves or trying to influence change on a wider scale.

With that in mind, this Corporate Plan outlines our three key priorities:

1. Improving quality of life for local people
2. Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations
3. Delivering good quality, high value for money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations

The first two priorities are each split into three outcomes as shown below. Outcome statements setting out our ambitions are detailed on pages 5-8.

Improving quality of life for local people	Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Improving the happiness and wellbeing of residents</b></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Keeping people out of crisis</b></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Helping people in crisis</b></p> </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Improving housing</b></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Forward-thinking economic growth</b></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Lowering carbon emissions</b></p> </div> </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 60%;"> <p><b>Delivering good quality, high value for money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations</b></p> </div> <div style="width: 35%; text-align: center;">  </div> </div>	

To achieve these priorities, we must be a council that takes time to listen and to really understand where people need help and support to make a real difference to their lives. In line with changes across the public sector system, we need to make prevention a core way of working across the

council. This is fundamental to our “Improving the quality of life for local people” priority, which does not just focus on helping those already experiencing crisis but sets out earlier outcomes we want to achieve - keeping people out of crisis and, even more broadly, improving the happiness and wellbeing of our residents.

With that said, ‘Working together’ is an overarching principle for the council. We cannot go it alone. The challenges we face can only be solved through working collaboratively and the responsibility is not the council’s alone. An example of this is our role as a statutory partner in developing the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System (ICS), working together to improve the health and wellbeing of local people throughout their lives.

‘Do, Enable, Influence’ is a key phrase for us as this Corporate Plan calls on the council to play more of an enabling role, to make more use of partnership working and to empower people to reduce demand for traditional public services. In doing so, it seeks to make sure that everyone can realise their potential and share in Huntingdonshire’s success. Our role is to help residents and businesses thrive, but that is not something we can do to people, only do with them. We see our role as making Huntingdonshire an easy place to have a good life and make choices that benefit you and your family.

We have already started on this journey. Over the last year, we have brought together a wide range of partners to develop our Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy which creates a shared vision and a plan of goals and actions for Huntingdonshire up to 2050.

Whilst looking to the future, we will not lose sight of the day to day. We must keep delivering good quality services and we must set an excellent example to our community of the standards we expect for our residents.

It is by doing these things that we will create a place people are proud to call home.



***Councillor Sarah Conboy,  
Executive Leader***



***Councillor Tom Sanderson,  
Deputy Executive Leader***



***Councillor Sam Wakeford,  
Assistant Executive Leader***

## About Huntingdonshire

Huntingdonshire is a large (900 square kilometres) and predominately rural area, however over 40% of the population live in our three largest market towns of St Neots, Huntingdon and St Ives.

With an estimated 180,800 residents and 76,900 households in 2021, the population has grown significantly over recent decades (up by 47% since 1981). The district has an ageing population with 36,500 residents aged 65 plus, up by 33% since 2011 alone.



The latest estimates indicate that the number of residents in the district born outside the UK was 22,400 at March 2021 (12.4% of all residents). Poland is now ranked as the most common non-UK country of birth for the district's residents, followed by the United States and Romania.

Most people in the district identified their ethnic group within the 'White' category (92%) in 2021. Around 3% identified their ethnic group within the 'Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh' category, 2% within the "Mixed or Multiple" category, 2% within the 'Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African' category and the remaining 1% identified their ethnic group within 'other ethnic groups'.

The average household size is now 2.3 persons per household, down from 2.4 in 2011 and below the latest England average of 2.4. More people are now living alone, with the number of one person households up by 22% since 2011. 28% of all occupied households are now one person households.

70% of households in Huntingdonshire owned their home in 2021, just over one in six (17%) rented their accommodation privately and 13% of Huntingdonshire households lived in a socially rented property. 2% of the area's occupied households had fewer bedrooms than required (overcrowded).

In 2021, most of the district's residents described their health as at least 'good' (84%), around 12% self-reported their health as 'fair', with the remaining 4% of the population describing themselves as having 'bad' or 'very bad' health. An estimated 16% of the population were disabled in 2021, with 6%<sup>1</sup> stating their day-to-day activities were limited a lot. Around 4% of usual residents in 2021 said they provided at least 20 hours of unpaid care in a typical week. *Note: all figures in this paragraph are age-standardised proportions which allow comparisons between populations over time and across geographies as they account for differences in the population size and age structure.*

There are pockets of higher deprivation within the district, but most areas have relatively low levels as measured by the 2019 Indices of Deprivation. Economic activity (64% of those aged 16+) and employment rates (61.6% of those aged 16+) are both higher than the national average.

Most Huntingdonshire residents in 2021 travelling to a workplace or depot travelled more than 10 kilometres (51%) and just over half (52%) of those who travelled to work were drivers or passengers in a vehicle. Just over 6,000 residents travelled to work on foot (7%).

Across Huntingdonshire, 33.4% of usual residents aged 16 years and over indicated their highest level of qualification was Level 4 or above in 2021 – slightly lower than the England average of 33.9%. However, 15.6% had no qualifications, also lower than the England average of 18.1%. Apprenticeships were the highest qualification for 5.5% of usual residents aged 16 and over.

*Source: unless otherwise stated, all data on this page is from the 2021 Census © Office for National Statistics, 2022/23*



## Our priorities

What sits behind our priorities is a desire to focus the efforts of the council on the important things that matter to our residents, whilst not neglecting the performance of the day-to-day services that they rely on. What we do is important, but how we deliver services and places that support our communities to take the decisions in their own long-term interests, and how we work with partners to deliver joined up services that make sense to residents, is critical. Our priorities are broad and ambitious and are supported by clear plans and strong working relationships. At their heart is a belief that creating success, or stepping in to prevent an issue developing, is always better than having to deal with a problem.

### Priority 1: Improving quality of life for local people



#### Improving the quality of life and well-being for everyone

We want the highest possible quality of life for the people of Huntingdonshire. It will be a place which attracts employers and visitors, and that residents are proud to call home. We will be evidence-based, responsive and support the foundations of a good life. This includes personal independence, prosperity, social connection, community and good health.



#### Keeping people out of crisis\*

We will identify the root causes that lead people into crises and find ways to prevent them. We will do this through our own actions. We will also work in partnership with residents, businesses, community groups, charities and our public sector partners.

*\* Crisis – A life changing event, or series of significant events within a short period of time that can threaten or harm an individual's life experiences, often needing support to prevent further negative consequences*



## Helping people in crisis

Where a crisis has already happened, we will work holistically to understand the issues, the cause of these issues and what opportunities exist to address them. We will seek to prevent multiple personal crises becoming entrenched and unmanageable by addressing root causes.

## Priority 2: Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations



## Improving housing

We want everyone to live in a safe, high-quality home regardless of health, stage of life, family structure, income and tenure type. Homes should be energy efficient and allow people to live healthy and prosperous lives. New homes should be zero carbon ready and encourage sustainable travel.



## Forward-thinking economic growth

We want our local economy to attract businesses that prioritise reducing their carbon footprint. A place where businesses choose to start-up, grow and invest in high-value jobs so they, and our residents and high streets can flourish and thrive. Local people should be able to develop their skills to take advantage of these opportunities, with businesses and education providers working more closely together to deliver an inclusive economy.



## Lowering our carbon emissions

We will take positive action to reduce carbon emissions and become a net zero carbon council by 2040. We will enable and encourage local people and businesses to reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity across Huntingdonshire.

## Priority 3: Delivering good quality, high Value For Money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations



Around 80% of our resources are aligned to 'business as usual' service delivery and our third priority focuses on delivering good quality, high value for money services with good control and compliance with statutory functions. While new activities will mostly focus on delivering outcomes under our two outward-facing priorities, we will continue to provide a wide range of existing statutory and important services and seek to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

## How we will measure success

Organisational priority	Outcome statement	Operational performance measures (examples): “Do”	Outcome actions (examples): “Do” and “enable”	Strategic direction: “Enable” and “influence”
<b>Priority 1 – Improving quality of life for local people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improving quality of life and well-being</li> <li>- Preventing crisis</li> <li>- Helping in a crisis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of One Leisure Facilities admissions</li> <li>- Benefits processing</li> <li>- Homelessness prevention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deliver financial vulnerability programme</li> <li>- New Residents Outcome Strategy</li> </ul>	Employment, Mental Health, Older isolation
<b>Priority 2 – Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improving housing</li> <li>- Forward-thinking economic growth</li> <li>- Lowering our carbon emissions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Housing completions</li> <li>- Planning applications</li> <li>- Fleet driving efficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refresh tenancy strategy</li> <li>- Local Plan refresh</li> </ul>	Environmental, housing, planning
<b>Priority 3 – Delivering good quality, high value for money services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delivering good quality efficient and effective services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Website uptime</li> <li>- Missed bins</li> <li>- Council Tax collection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customer Service project</li> <li>- New Workforce Strategy</li> </ul>	Doing the basics really well
<b>Reason</b>	Provides an outcome target for our operational performance, and a goal for strategic activity	Ensuring we are delivering consistent service at good value for money	Annual scoped actions that will move us closer to the outcome we are aiming for	Longer term engagement around Huntingdonshire Futures place strategy themes

We will stand accountable for performance against these priorities through an annual action plan, which lays out the steps we will take to deliver, and the performance measures that will accompany, this Corporate Plan. It will be refreshed annually to reflect work completed and the development of new approaches informed by our ongoing engagement with partners and residents.

In reporting on our progress and achievements, we will be transparent about what we can be held to account for but will also be setting out how we will measure success where we have great ambitions but more limited control over results.

We will measure the performance of our services, and their contribution to our priorities, through “operational performance indicators”, with quarterly updates to show performance against targets and giving commentary explaining steps taken or planned to address recent or anticipated issues.

Performance in completing actions will also be reported quarterly to show progress against significant milestones.

Qualitative updates will be provided for each priority and outcome statement which will give further detail of progress made in achieving our ambitions. Ensuring that there is a clear link between projects and the action against which they are delivering.

Regular reports on our performance will incorporate results for operational performance indicators, progress on actions and qualitative updates. These will be published via our Overview & Scrutiny (Performance & Growth) Panel and Cabinet meeting agendas and on our website.

We will also be reporting on a range of contextual “outcome measures” once a year to show how outcomes for the district and its residents are changing. Most outcome measures will be based on external data sources published less frequently than our own operational performance indicators. Results for these outcome measures will be presented against our preferred direction of travel but will not have targets since we will not have direct control over performance. However, monitoring these will identify trends over time and changes we may need to react to as our actions and our work to enable and influence others have effect. The question here will be: are the actions a sensible response to community needs and the priorities we hold?

We will continue to evolve our operational performance measures and reporting processes over time. As we develop our plans to deliver the Corporate Plan’s outcomes, new measures of performance will be developed to ensure that not only are we measuring performance now, but we will also continuously improve how we are held to account against our promises.

Work to engage with partners to identify their priorities and areas of interest and scope out opportunities to drive forward the Huntingdonshire Futures place strategy will be ongoing throughout the Corporate Plan period as actions progress and priorities are reviewed.

## Our Values (icare)



# icare

Why do we need Values? The Council wants staff to deliver its activities and services effectively and efficiently, and to provide excellent service to its customers by 'Putting the Customer First'. To deliver this, the Council needs to have values that drive improvement on a continuous basis and support staff as they go through changes in how services are delivered. These values will help to guide our decision-making in all that we do.

Our values, known as **icare**, will be embedded into the organisation. icare fits with the future ambitions of the Council and will be a key enabler so that we can deliver the Corporate Plan.

How we spend our budget (note: 2022/23 data currently shown, to be updated when information for 2023/24 is available)

**Huntingdonshire District Council provides services to every household in the District**

It costs £0.71 a week per household to collect your waste and recycling

**Operations & Refuse Collection Services £4.48m**

- Collecting rubbish from over 78,000 properties every week
- Recycling 58% of our rubbish
- Managing town car parks with 3,834 spaces
- Monitoring 481 CCTV cameras

**Strategic Planning and Housing Services £1.08m**

- Enabling 1041 new homes, including 253 affordable homes, to be completed in the District
- Enabling gross completions of over 20,500 square metres of employment floorspace

The District manages 6 parks and nature reserves and other green spaces costing £0.14 per household per week

**Leisure & Health Services -£0.03m**

- Providing Leisure & Health services and facilities across the district which cater for a wide range of users including schools, clubs and private organisations and the general public.

**Chief Operating Officer Services £4.92m**

- Enabling people to live in their own homes by providing 150 grants and providing relocation grants to enable 3 applicants to move to more suitable accommodation
- Re-housing 600 households
- Awarding Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support to over 8,000 people
- Dealing with over 2,600 planning applications

We spend £0.21 per household per week to keep streets and public places clean

**Technical and Support Services £11.06m**

- Managing elections (e.g. European, Parliamentary, District and Parish) and various referendums
- Provision of IT, Legal, Procurement, Financial, Audit, HR and Corporate support services to over 650 staff
- Delivery of Treasury, Insurance and other Corporate Financial Management
- Supporting the Democratic process and the 52 Council Members

## Proposed Actions for 2023/24:

<b>Priority:</b>	<b>Improving quality of life for local people</b>
<b>Outcome:</b>	<b>Improving the quality of life and well-being of the general population</b>
HDC Action (doing)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Refresh</b> Huntingdonshire's Community Strategy via a new Residents Outcome Strategy – linking Community and Health, building on the Place Strategy findings.</li> <li>2. <b>Deliver</b> the skills and employment workstream of the UK shared prosperity programme.</li> <li>3. <b>Run</b> a pilot with new movers to the area which seek to support positive outcomes from residents first arrival in Huntingdonshire.</li> <li>4. <b>Listen</b> to local residents and respond to their input on service delivery.</li> </ol>
HDC Enabling Others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Formally build</b> assessments of the impact on the Corporate plan priorities into Council decision making.</li> <li>2. <b>Refresh</b> our Social Value Procurement Policy, and work with other local anchor institutions to encourage them to do the same.</li> </ol>
HDC Influencing Others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Work</b> via the Integrated Care System, to seek to embed an approach which places a focus on activity in the long-term interests of residents in ways of working across system partners.</li> <li>2. Continue to <b>work with</b> statutory partners to secure improvements to transport options for Huntingdonshire, including active travel.</li> <li>3. <b>Formally engage</b> with relevant stakeholders, residents and businesses to explore how place strategy priorities are transformed into practical delivery.</li> <li>4. <b>Explore</b> a campaign which seeks to extol the virtues of spending local and being physically active. Reviewing the benefits that places like Preston, Wigan and East Ayrshire have gained from this approach.</li> </ol>

<b>Priority:</b>	<b>Improving quality of life for local people</b>
<b>Outcome:</b>	<b>Keeping people out of crisis</b>
HDC Action (doing)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Resource and lead</b> a key change programme which reviews the way we support residents in need across a range of local providers. This will see us work with partners to review and define ways of working, particularly around financial distress. Seeking to develop more holistic support which address root causes and prevent issues escalating.</li> <li>2. <b>Develop proposals</b> to pilot activity to use council debt data to target those before they enter crisis.</li> </ol>
HDC Enabling Others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Recognise</b> that community sector partners are often the first point of call for those in a community, and as such we will <b>work with</b> community groups to explore appetite and define shared ways of working.</li> <li>2. <b>Deliver</b> our health inequalities project in partnership with our community and continue to work with health to <b>seek</b> funding opportunities and <b>identify</b> ways to maximise the contribution of our leisure service to health improvements.</li> </ol>



<b>Priority:</b>	<b>Improving quality of life for local people</b>
<b>Outcome:</b>	<b>Keeping people out of crisis</b>
HDC Influencing Others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Work with partners to explore</b> options to how we use early warning signs as opportunities to seek to offer support, with a view to preventing needs escalating.</li> <li>2. <b>Formally engage</b> with relevant stakeholders, residents and businesses to explore how place strategy priorities are transformed into practical delivery.</li> <li>3. <b>Work proactively</b> with partners to promote safety and address issues at the earliest opportunity.</li> </ol>

<b>Priority:</b>	<b>Improving quality of life for local people</b>
<b>Outcome:</b>	<b>Helping people in crisis</b>
HDC Action (doing)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to <b>support</b> those impacted via the cost-of-living crisis via a partnership approach which seeks to deal with not just the presenting issue, but wherever possible the cause of it.</li> <li>2. Continue to <b>support</b> refugees and other guests, seeking to support good community relations and smooth transition into long term residency or return home.</li> </ol>
HDC Enabling Others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Formally propose to partners</b>, that we build financial, social and physical solutions into crisis management. Reducing the likelihood of crises repeating in the future.</li> </ol>
HDC Influencing Others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to <b>champion</b> WeAreHuntingdonshire.Org and other cross cutting sources of information to deliver services that are convenient for the resident rather than structured around the organisation delivering them.</li> <li>2. <b>Formally engage</b> with relevant stakeholders, residents and businesses to explore how place strategy priorities are transformed into practical delivery.</li> </ol>

<b>Priority:</b>	<b>Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations</b>
<b>Outcome:</b>	<b>Improving Housing</b>
HDC Action (doing)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Complete</b> Mid Term Review of the Housing Strategy. The Housing Strategy was completed in 2020, this review will enable us to take into account recent studies of need and Census data.</li> <li>2. <b>Adopt</b> First Homes Policy. Until the update of the Local Plan is completed it is necessary to complete a position statement on First Homes.</li> <li>3. <b>Adopt</b> new Tenancy Strategy to support people to live healthy and independent lives.</li> <li>4. <b>Maximise</b> use of Council owned sites to deliver housing, for example working with the Longhurst Group.</li> </ol>

<b>Priority:</b>	<b>Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations</b>
<b>Outcome:</b>	<b>Improving Housing</b>
HDC Enabling Others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Maintain</b> the level of new housing delivery, that meets the needs of Huntingdonshire residents, including the type of home and tenure (open market and social housing).</li> <li>2. <b>Work in partnership</b> to look at best practice and funding to improve housing conditions, including retrofit programmes in social and private housing.</li> </ol>
HDC Influencing Others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Work with</b> Registered Providers to improve conditions in existing accommodation through regeneration schemes.</li> <li>2. <b>Work with</b> Health and Social Care Providers to explore future models of housing, support and care enabling people to live independently for longer.</li> </ol>

<b>Priority:</b>	<b>Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations</b>
<b>Outcome:</b>	<b>Forward-thinking economic growth</b>
HDC Action (doing)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Promote</b> Huntingdonshire as a destination for high value inward investment, prioritising businesses that are proactively reducing their carbon emissions. Annual report on activity produced.</li> <li>2. <b>Deliver</b> year 1 of a programme of UKSPF funded business support activities including Green Business Grants, support for start-ups &amp; SMEs to grow.</li> <li>3. <b>Scope</b> the refresh of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Strategy and produce Quarterly economic insights report.</li> <li>4. Continue to <b>deliver</b> of the Market Town Programme, including completion of the Accelerated Programme, ongoing delivery of Future High Street projects in St Neots, development of new Retail Hub activity in Ramsey, and delivery of UKSPF funded Vibrant Communities project.</li> <li>5. <b>Commence</b> the update to the adopted Local Plan including refreshing the evidence base, starting community engagement and a call for sites.</li> </ol>
HDC Enabling Others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Work with</b> intermediaries, professional service networks, investors and developers to understand the health of the economy, develop responses and attract investment.</li> </ol>
HDC Influencing Others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Work with</b> the CPCA and partners to complete a review of the future demand for FE provision in the St Neots area and development of the Local Skills Implementation Plan prioritising connections between FE provision and local employers aligned to core growth sectors.</li> <li>2. <b>Influence</b> the implementation of the CPCA Economic Growth Strategy and commissioning of future business support provision.</li> <li>3. <b>Influence</b> delivery of infrastructure including East West Rail, A428, A141 Strategic Outline Business Case and future Transport Strategies.</li> </ol>

<b>Priority:</b>	<b>Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations</b>
<b>Outcome:</b>	<b>Lowering our carbon emissions</b>
HDC Action (doing)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Review</b> our assets to improve energy efficiency and reduce the carbon impact of our buildings.</li> <li>2. <b>Deliver</b> Fleet review plan for lower carbon alternatives for service delivery.</li> <li>3. <b>Deliver</b> Energy Strategy.</li> <li>4. <b>Establish</b> Climate Conversation to openly account against the Climate Action Plan, listen to feedback from local people, evaluate priorities, develop actions towards Environmental Innovation (Place Strategy).</li> <li>5. <b>Review</b> Local Plan (ensuring plan for Biodiversity Net Gain referencing the National Planning Policy Framework).</li> </ol>
HDC Enabling Others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Deliver</b> EV Charging Strategy.</li> <li>2. <b>Pilot</b> Community Carbon Reduction Plans.</li> <li>3. <b>Deliver</b> Biodiversity for All (2023-2025) to enable community action and support green skills development.</li> <li>4. <b>Commission</b> Active Travel Studies (UKSPF) to influence/inform future investment priorities.</li> </ol>
HDC Influencing Others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Develop</b> the Council's procurement rules to further embed social and environmental value.</li> <li>2. <b>Expand</b> the current Green Business Awards Scheme, celebrating great practice and sharing knowledge.</li> <li>3. <b>Deliver</b> Huntingdonshire Plan for Nature and contribute to the regional (LNRS) to guide greater biodiversity and nature restoration in the District.</li> </ol>

<b>Priority:</b>	<b>Delivering good quality, high Value for Money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations</b>
HDC Action (doing)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Refresh</b> our Commercial Investment strategy to develop proposals for future strategic investments</li> <li>2. <b>Deliver</b> a renewed Workforce Strategy to prepare the Council for the changing skills needed in our future workforce, and to ensure that we can continue to attract, retain and nurture talent</li> <li>3. <b>Refresh</b> of operational performance management to deliver improvement and provide consistent and transparent tracking of what we do and how we do it</li> <li>4. <b>Undertake</b> Customer Services improvement programme to ensure that our customers are always at the heart of what we do</li> <li>5. <b>Deliver</b> the Council Tax Support project to ensure we offer the best support to those that need it</li> <li>6. Ensure that the Additional Funding for Energy Bill Rebate is <b>delivered</b> to those who are eligible</li> <li>7. <b>Undertake</b> the Development Management Improvement programme to improve the performance of the planning service</li> <li>8. <b>Implement</b> the review of the collection of Green waste and <b>develop proposals</b> for the collection of Food waste</li> </ol>

<b>Priority:</b>	<b>Delivering good quality, high Value for Money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations</b>
	<p>9. <b>Progress delivery</b> of Civil Parking Enforcement across the District, to enforce on-street parking activity</p> <p>10. <b>Deliver</b> the enhancement of visitor facilities at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park</p> <p>11. <b>Upgrade</b> path and cycleways at Riverside Park St Neots.</p>
HDC Enabling Others	<p>1. Do these things well to enable local people to thrive and take new opportunities</p> <p>2. Enabling our brilliant volunteers in our parks, nature reserves and elsewhere to continue to improve the quality of those spaces</p>
HDC Influencing Others	<p>1. Our well-run Council will act as a model for our peers.</p>

Proposed Operational Performance Measures for 2023/24  
(new items and amendments are in purple text):

<b>Priority:</b>	<b>Improving quality of life for local people</b>	
<b>Proposed Measures:</b>	<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	
Number of attendances at One Leisure Active Lifestyles programmes (cumulative year to date)	Taylor	
Number of One Leisure Facilities admissions – swimming, Impressions, fitness classes, sports hall and pitches (excluding Burgess Hall and school admissions) (cumulative year to date)	Taylor	
NEW PI. Average time (in weeks) between date of referral and practical completion of jobs funded through Disabled Facilities Grants (cumulative year to date)	Ferguson	
NEW PI. The number of residents enabled to live safely at home and prevented from requiring care or a prolonged stay at hospital due to a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) (cumulative year to date)	Ferguson	
Average number of days to process new claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support (cumulative year to date)	Ferguson	
NEW PI. Average number of days to process changes of circumstances for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support (cumulative year to date)	Ferguson	
Number of homelessness preventions achieved (cumulative year to date)	Ferguson	
NEW PI. Number of households housed through the housing register and Home-Link scheme (cumulative year to date)	Ferguson	
NEW PI. Number of households in Temporary Accommodation (snapshot at end of each period)	Ferguson	

<b>Priority:</b>	<b>Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations</b>	
<b>Proposed Measures:</b>		<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>
Net change in number of homes with a Council Tax banding (cumulative year to date)		Wakeford
Number of new affordable homes delivered (cumulative year to date)		Wakeford
Percentage of planning applications processed on target – major (within 13 weeks or agreed extended period) (cumulative year to date)		Sanderson
REVISED PI. Percentage of planning applications processed on target – minor or other (within 8 weeks or agreed extended period) (cumulative year to date)		Sanderson
Percentage of planning applications processed on target – household extensions (within 8 weeks or agreed extended period) (cumulative year to date)		Sanderson
NEW PI. Number of planning applications over 26 weeks old where there is no current extension of time in place (total at end of each quarter)		Sanderson
NEW PI. Efficiency of vehicle fleet driving – Energy Efficient Driving Index score for the Waste service (cumulative year to date)		Taylor

<b>Priority:</b>	<b>Delivering good quality, high Value for Money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations</b>	
<b>Proposed Measures:</b>		<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>
Percentage of household waste reused/recycled/composted (cumulative year to date)		Taylor
Percentage of sampled areas which are clean or predominantly clean of litter, detritus, graffiti, flyposting, or weed accumulations (cumulative year to date)		Taylor
Number of missed bins (cumulative year to date)		Taylor
The number of programmed food safety inspections undertaken (cumulative year to date)		Ferguson
NEW PI. Percentage of calls to Call Centre answered (cumulative year to date)		Ferguson
NEW PI. Average wait time for customers calling the Call Centre (cumulative year to date)		Ferguson
NEW PI. Council Tax collection rate (cumulative year to date)		Ferguson
NEW PI. Business Rates collection rate (cumulative year to date)		Ferguson
NEW PI. Staff sickness days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) (rolling 12-month total)		Hassall
NEW PI. Staff turnover (rolling 12-month total)		Hassall
NEW PI. HDC website percentage uptime (cumulative year to date)		Hassall

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

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Title/Subject Matter:** UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update

**Meeting/Date:** Cabinet – 21 March 2023

**Executive Portfolio:** Cllr Sam Wakeford, Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing

**Report by:** Pamela Scott, Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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### **Executive Summary:**

This report provides an update on the programme of activity funded through the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in Huntingdonshire.

### **Recommendation(s):**

Cabinet is requested to:

- Note the progress made in developing this new programme of UKSPF activity to support the delivery of the best outcomes for our residents, businesses and place.

## **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.0 To provide an update on the proposed activities to be delivered through the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme in Huntingdonshire that supports the delivery of council priorities and alignment with other external funding streams to maximise opportunities to deliver the best outcomes for our residents, businesses and place.

## **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The UKSPF is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment by March 2025. All areas of the UK will receive an allocation from the Fund via a formula. The Fund will allow areas to target funding where it is needed most; building pride in place, supporting high quality skills training, supporting pay, employment and productivity growth and increasing life chances against the three UKSPF investment priorities of:
- **Communities and Place:** enabling places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities and thus support in building pride in place.
  - **Supporting local business:** enabling places to fund interventions that support local businesses to thrive, innovate and grow.
  - **People and Skills:** enabling funding to help reduce barriers to employment and support people to move towards employment and education.

## **UKSPF Funding Allocations & Approvals**

- 1.2 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLHUC) oversee the Fund at UK level. The lead Authority in Cambridgeshire is the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) with the CPCA in receipt of core UKSPF allocation to 2024-25 of £9,872,624. This includes a fixed 4% of the allocation for programme administration and should cover legal, finance and staff costs. A further £3,999,186 has also been allocated to the CPCA to support the government's flagship Multiply programme, to support adults to improve their numeracy skills.
- 1.3 Across Cambridgeshire an agreed allocation model has resulted in Huntingdonshire District Council receiving £1,878,645.43, after a fixed 4% programme admin is removed, this 4% is to be split equally between the council and the CPCA. In addition, £304,749.89 of the Huntingdonshire allocation has been set aside to support Cambridgeshire wide priorities as summarised in Table 1 below.



**Table 1. Funding breakdown**

	<b>Amount</b>
Huntingdonshire Allocation (minus fixed 4% admin fee)	£1,878,645.43
Contribution to Cambridgeshire wide priorities	£304,749.89
Remaining for Huntingdonshire based activity	£1,573,895.54

- 1.4 The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Investment Plan, which included proposed activities in Huntingdonshire was submitted to Central Government in August 2022 following approval at the CPCA Board on [27 July 22](#). The Investment Plan which was approved by Central Government on the 5 December 2022 outlines the rationale for investment, activities and output and outcome indicators.
- 1.5 In late December 2022 the council received a draft Funding Agreement from the CPCA. At the time of writing this Funding Agreement remains subject to negotiation as is the case for all District Councils. Delegated approval to enter into this Funding Agreement was granted at the Cabinet meeting on the 12 December 2022.

### **Initial UKSPF Project Activity**

- 1.6 A total of eight projects are scheduled to be delivered through the UKSPF investment in Huntingdonshire. The projects are listed below with fuller detail on the proposed activities and progress to date at Appendix 1.
- **Green Business Grants** – Support for SMEs to move towards net zero by reducing carbon emissions and energy costs.
  - **Start Up & Entrepreneurship** - Support for pre-start and early-stage ventures to help entrepreneurs gain the skills and knowledge needed to apply for funding and launch their new business idea.
  - **Business & Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC)** - Support to the BIPC in Huntingdon to provide free access to resources, intelligence, databases and services to early-stage start-ups, new start-ups and SMEs.
  - **Manufacturing Digitisation** – Continuation of a dedicated support programme for our heritage and foundation sector of manufacturing, supporting local SMEs in the sector to improve productivity and efficiencies.
  - **Active Travel Feasibility Studies** - To produce up to five route feasibility studies to support future external funding bids for new active and sustainable travel routes in Huntingdonshire.
  - **Ramsey Great Whyte Improvements** – Delivery and promotion of proposed new Market/ Agriculture Hub and surrounding public realm improvement, community development events and activities alongside capital funding secured separately from the CPCA.

- **Vibrant Communities** - To support events (arts, culture, skills, seasonal & environmental events) in town centres and large villages as part of a wider package of activity to increase footfall and build on the success from the Welcome Back Fund
- **Community Based Employment & Skills** - Engaging the economically inactive via key community nodes providing tailored and targeted support, including a focus on mental health & wellbeing, volunteering as a route to employment and progression pathways to further develop skills and employment through existing mainstream provision.

## **RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND**

- 1.7 In September 2022, Government announced a further element of UKSP, Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), known as the Rural Fund to improve productivity, strengthen the rural economy and rural communities. This funding is again routed through the CPCA, with Huntingdonshire being allocated £957,788.00 for the period 2023 to 2025. This is capital funding only. There are some additional interventions available, but the priorities are limited to the UKSPF Communities and Place and Local Business Investment priorities. Details of the fund can be found here [Gov.uk: Rural England Prosperity Fund: prospectus](#).
- 1.8 On the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022 the proposed activities to be funded across eligible Districts in Cambridgeshire were submitted to DLHUC by the CPCA.
- 1.9 The Rural Fund is different to the initial UKSPF allocation in that match funding is required, via an intervention rate for each business or organisation in receipt of REPF.
- 1.10 The proposed activities for Huntingdonshire are shown below, the exact scope of the projects are still being developed. Therefore these descriptions, outputs and outcomes measures are taken from the REPF guidance to indicate areas of focus.

**Table 2: Proposed REPF activities**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Description / Objectives</b>	<b>Indicative Funding</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
Rural Businesses	Capital grants for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas to boost jobs, community cohesion and private sector investment. This could for example include capital funding for net zero infrastructure, diversification and conversion of farm buildings to other commercial uses.	£350,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of businesses supported</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jobs created/safeguarded</li> <li>• New businesses created</li> <li>• Businesses adopting new technology/processes</li> </ul>
Rural Communities	Capital grants for investment and support for digital infrastructure for community facilities to strengthen social	£258,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of organisations receiving grants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jobs created/safeguarded</li> </ul>

	fabric and fostering pride in place. Activities must align with Cambridgeshire's Gigabit Programme.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of facilities supported</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase users of facilities</li> <li>• Improved perceptions</li> </ul>
Rural Communities	Capital grants for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups. Activities could include community energy schemes, EV charging points, nature-based solutions	£300,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of EV charging points</li> <li>• Number of community energy projects funded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved perceptions of facilities or amenities</li> </ul>

- 1.11 The council is working with the CPCA and eligible District Councils to identify potential delivery routes and opportunities for joint procurement activity. Confirmation that the Rural Fund submission to Central Government has been successful is still to be received.
- 1.12 Further work is required to develop the Rural Fund project. This includes dialogue with key partners to refine the scope of the projects. At the time of writing staff resource has been prioritised on developing those UKSPF projects where funding has been confirmed.
- 1.13 The council will ensure that the UKSPF and the Rural Fund allocation is effectively managed as a programme ensuring spend against agreed funding profiles and delivery of agreed outputs, with regular reporting to the CPCA in line with Funding Agreement.

### **COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

- 1.14 This update report is being provided at the request of the Performance and Growth Scrutiny Panel from the meeting on the 7 December 2022.
- 1.15 The Panel discussed the Huntingdonshire UK Shared Prosperity Funding Update Report at its meeting on 1st March 2023.
- 1.16 Members have commented that the programme resourcing and for timeline appear to be challenging. Councillor Gray has also been advised that funding for the activities listed in Table 2 has not yet been confirmed.
- 1.17 A request has been made for details of the geographical locations of all of the activities.
- 1.18 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for the Cabinet to make a decision on the recommendations.

### **KEY IMPACTS / RISKS**

- 1.19 **Budget management risk:** At a time of rapidly rising costs it is important to ensure spend within budget, in line with the agreed funding profile and that financial regulations are complied with. Mitigation measures include

individual project funding profiles which will be agreed along with an overall programme funding profile. Ongoing monitoring of actual spend versus profile will inform financial claims submitted in accordance with DLUHC and CPCA claiming and reporting requirements.

- 1.20 **Programme Timescales risk:** This is an ambitious programme of delivery, however the timescales in Huntingdonshire are the same across the country. Mitigation measures include individual project plans which will inform an overall programme plan incorporating design to delivery. This will be continually reviewed and will incorporate key delivery and funding milestones.
- 1.21 **Programme Resources risk:** The programme itself has multiple projects which have to be managed simultaneously and via different delivery mechanisms. Mitigation measures include programme management resource established, staff assigned clear roles and responsibilities, high level programme resource plan developed, reporting via agreed governance routes and communications strategy with stakeholders.

#### **LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

- 1.22 The delivery of the UKSPF aligns to Huntingdonshire District Council's Corporate Plan which sets out the council's objectives, key actions and performance measures. The current 2022/23 Corporate Plan is a transitional, interim plan at the start of a new four-year administrative term. The council's objectives are:
- **Tackling Climate Change and caring for the environment** with UKSPF investment looking at future active sustainable travel routes and supporting businesses to reduce their carbon emissions through business advice and grants to deliver physical improvements to buildings.
  - **Enhancing employment opportunities and supporting businesses** with UKSPF activity supporting residents who want to start a business, through entrepreneurship programmes and SMEs in the manufacturing sector being assisted to improve productivity and digital technologies.
  - **Supporting needs of residents** through a programme of engagement and support focussed on Employment & Skills engaging economically inactive through community based groups and community locations.
  - **Strengthening our communities** by investing UKSPF to support vibrant communities.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 1.23 The council are in receipt of a draft Funding Agreement. This has been reviewed by the council's legal team, senior officers and members in line with the delegation recommendations and is awaiting final issue by the CPCA.
- 1.24 Individual contracts with delivery partners will also be subject to review by the council's legal team, senior officers and members in line with the delegation recommendations.

## **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 1.25 There are a number of delivery mechanisms for the individual projects. In the main, projects will be managed by existing staff resource or via additional resource built into project costs, with some funded from UKSF or other sources given the alignment of some activities. The council will receive £39,138.44 to support overall programme management over three years. This is the maximum amount available and staff time spent on programme management will be claimed from this.
- 1.26 The UKSPF programme will be managed by the Regeneration & Strategic Housing Team alongside the Market Town Programme. This brings together expertise in the delivery of external funding. Individual project managers will lead projects from different teams within the council with clear reporting and working through established programme and project management reporting structures.

## **HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

- 1.27 As set out in the Community (Transition) Strategy 2021-23, Huntingdonshire District Council are committed to supporting residents through a positive and ongoing working relationship with local communities. Delivery of the Community and Skills employment based project will support economically inactive residents via key community nodes providing tailored and targeted support, including focus on mental health & wellbeing, volunteering as a route to employment and progression pathways to further develop skills and employment through existing mainstream provision. Support in these areas will directly contribute to positive health outcomes.

## **ENVIROMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 1.28 The council has a duty to ensure we continue to promote an environmentally positive recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic. We also have a duty to deliver sustainable place making. The council has direct control of only a tiny proportion of all the carbon emissions within Huntingdonshire. We can however adopt a key role to influence the district, demonstrating good practice, whilst setting policies and strategies to influence businesses and communities to tackle climate change at the same time as enabling sustainable living and growth. These principles are embedded within the identified UKSPF investment priorities.
- 1.29 In October 2022 the council passed a Cost of Living and Climate Change motion that recognises that the current cost of living and climate crises require joint attention to support the wellbeing of residents and businesses. In passing this motion, the council committed to not only the delivery of a Climate Strategy but also that in making decisions on investment and delivery we will wherever possible seek to contribute to positive environmental and social benefits. In February 2023 the council will formally approve the recognition of a Climate Crisis and Ecological Emergency, the adoption of the council's Climate Strategy in response to the Climate Emergency and the adoption of the initial Climate Action Plan.

## **EQUALITIES**

- 1.30 The council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 1.31 Good planning and effective regeneration can improve environments and opportunities for communities experiencing disadvantage. Planning which does not adequately engage with or consider the needs of local communities is unlikely to improve their life chances and may further entrench area-based disadvantage.

## **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 1.32 To provide an update on the development of the Huntingdonshire UKSPF Programme as requested by the Performance and Growth Scrutiny Panel at their meeting on the 7 December 2022.

## **LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

Appendix 1: Overview of Huntingdonshire District Council UKSPF Project Activity

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

UK Government guidance on UKSPF is available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus>

CPCA UKSPF Investment Plan is available at: [Agenda Item No \(cmis.uk.com\)](#), [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#) and [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

Cabinet Paper, December 2022: [Report Template for Cabinet / Committee Reports \(huntingdonshire.gov.uk\)](#)

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

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## Appendix 1: Overview of Huntingdonshire District Council UKSPF Project Activity

Project Title	Funding	Brief Description	Start/ End Date	Outputs to be delivered	Outcomes to be delivered	Delivery Method	Progress Update Mid Feb 2023
Green Business Grant  UKSPF Priority: Supporting Local Business	£320,000	To help SMEs reduce carbon emissions and energy costs.	Start Q1 2023-24  End Q4 2024-25	100 businesses supported to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase business sustainability</li> <li>Reduce Greenhouse gas</li> <li>Installation of zero carbon energy infrastructure</li> </ul>	100 businesses receiving non-financial support  Min. 34 businesses receiving grant funding	Commissioned (led by Cambridge City)	Joint procurement and legal conversations underway.
Start Up & Entrepreneurship  UKSPF Priority: Supporting Local Business	£100,000	To support for pre-start and early-stage ventures to help entrepreneurs gain the skills and knowledge they need to apply for funding and launch their new business idea.	Start Q1 2023-24  End Q4 2024-25	100 potential entrepreneurs supported	30 jobs created  30 new businesses created	Commissioned (HDC)	Business case for procurement completed procurement activity due to start.
Business & Intellectual Property Centre  UKSPF Priority: Supporting Local Business	£75,000	To continue to support the Business and IP Centre in Huntingdon that provides free access to resources, intelligence, databases and support services to early-stage start-ups, new start-ups and SMEs.	Start Q1 2023-24  End Q4 2024-25	75 businesses supported, with 10 businesses receiving grants	10 jobs created  10 new businesses created	Direct Award	Procurement waiver submitted for internal approvals. Working with supplier on delivery, milestones and agreed governance. Collaborative conversations and partnership approach adopted with South Cambs and East Cambs.
Manufacturing Digitisation	£280,000	Continuing a dedicated support programme for our heritage and foundation sector of manufacturing by	Start Q1 2023-24  End	100 businesses supported with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased sustainability</li> </ul>	10 jobs created  20 jobs safeguarded	Commissioned (HDC)	Discussions with market providers and businesses to inform business

UKSPF Priority: Supporting Local Business		supporting local SMEs in the sector to improve productivity and efficiencies.	Q4 2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge transfer</li> <li>• Grant funding</li> <li>• Improved productivity</li> <li>• Peer-peer networking</li> </ul>	40 businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes		case for tender commenced.
Active Travel Feasibility Studies  UKSPF Priority: Place & Communities	£150,000	To produce up to five route feasibility studies to support future external funding bids for new active and sustainable travel routes in Huntingdonshire.	Start Q1 2023-24  End Q2 2024-25	Up to five feasibility studies produced	Greenhouse gas reductions  Improved perceived/ experienced accessibility  Improved perception of facility or infrastructure project  Increased use of cycleways or paths	Commissioned (HDC)	Engaging with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and partners to develop scope for tender.
Romsey Great Whyte Improvements  UKSPF Priority: Place & Communities	£220,835	To provide funding to promote the proposed new Market/ Agriculture Hub and surrounding public realm improvement, to support community development and events and activities.	Start: Q1 2023/24  End: Q4: 2024/25.	25 people receiving support to gain employment  6 volunteering opportunities supported	8 jobs created  5 jobs safeguarded  Increased visitor numbers  Improved perceived experienced / accessibility  Improved perception of facilities/ amenities  New Market Produce Hub and	To be agreed	Options for delivery of Hub building currently being explored. This will be focused on utilising Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), for example, modular, off-site construction, which can result in cost savings and improved construction speed. Hub operation



					<p>enhanced 600m2 of Public Realm</p> <p>Improved perception of facility and infrastructure project</p> <p>Increased affordability of events/entry</p> <p>Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support</p>		<p>solutions are being reviewed, this includes HDC management and/or working with a local partner.</p>
<p>Village Communities</p> <p>URSPF Priority: Place &amp; Communities</p>	£155,000	To support events (arts, culture, skills, seasonal & environmental events) in town centres and large villages as part of a wider package of activity to increase footfall and build on the success from the Welcome Back Fund	<p>Start: Q4 22/23</p> <p>End: Q4 23/24</p>	<p>People receiving support to sustain employment</p>	<p>0.5 Jobs created</p> <p>2 Jobs safeguarded</p> <p>Increased footfall</p> <p>Increased visitor numbers</p> <p>Improved perceived or experienced accessibility</p> <p>Improved perception of facilities/ amenities</p> <p>Increased affordability of events/entry</p>	<p>Allocations to towns &amp; villages (see MTP paper, item 5 at Cabinet 12 Dec 2022)</p>	<p>Briefing meetings scheduled for later February for Town and Parish Councils included in the scheme. One-page proforma will be provided on revenue projects for partners to set out proposed activities. This will be reviewed ahead of approval by the end of March 23. Project activities can then commence in April. Whilst the funding is mostly made up of revenue, a small amount of capital is available (£20K)for</p>

					<p>Improved engagement numbers Improved perception of events</p> <p>Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support</p>		<p>spend by the end of March 2023. HDC is working with partners at pace in St Neots and Huntingdon to deliver activities with this funding,</p>
<p>Community Based Employment &amp; Skills USPF Priority: Race &amp; Communities</p> <p>Page 378 of 404</p>	£273,061	Engaging economic inactivity via key community nodes providing tailored and targeted support, including a focus on mental health & wellbeing, volunteering as a route to employment and progression pathways to further develop skills and employment through existing mainstream provision.	<p>Start: Q1 23/24</p> <p>End: Q4 24/25</p>	<p>250 economically inactive people engaging with keyworker support services</p> <p>250 people supported to engage in job-searching</p> <p>130 people receiving support to gain employment</p> <p>130 people receiving support to sustain employment</p> <p>90 people supported to engage in life skills</p>	<p>Initial contact with 3200 people</p> <p>60 volunteering opportunities as a result of support</p>	Allocations to Recognised Organisations (ROs)	<p>Project manager identified and meetings with key stakeholders scheduled for late February/early March.</p> <p>Lessons learned being compiled from warm spaces pilot that will inform detailed delivery plans, and the opportunities that exist to tailor the engagement to local contexts – community, jobs clubs and integrated neighbourhoods.</p>
	£1,573,895.54						

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

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Title/Subject Matter:** Market Towns Programme – Spring Update

**Meeting/Date:** Cabinet – 21 March 2023

**Executive Portfolio:** Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing

**Report by:** Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager

**Ward(s) affected:** All Wards

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report provides the 2022/2023 Q4 update on the Market Towns Programme (MTP).

The MTP is an ambitious programme of economic led interventions to support Huntingdonshire's town centres recover from the Covid-19 Pandemic, whilst also looking forward to renewing and reshaping our town centres and high streets in a way that promotes growth, improves experiences, and ensures sustainability in the future.

The MTP is funded through a combination of external funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC), Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and National Highways.

This update particularly highlights:

- Progress on activity in St Neots:
  - Market Square (Transport Projects)
  - Old Falcon Inn
  - Priory Centre
  - St Neots CPCA legacy funding (masterplan phase 1)
  
- Delivery of existing and new planned activity in Ramsey:
  - Civic Hub
  - Market Produce Hall & Pedestrianisation (Capital)
  - Market Produce Hall (Revenue)
  
- Town Centre Masterplans– next steps
- Smarter towns project
- Digital Wayfinding options
- CPCA funding: Maximising use of remaining unallocated / accelerated delivery funding
- New UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSF) Vibrant communities' project

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Cabinet is requested to:

- Note progress on the Market Towns Programme (MTP) over the last quarter.
- Delegate authority to the Corporate Director (Place) or the Managing Director in Consultation with the Section 151 Officer, Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing and Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources to enter contractual arrangements, as necessary, to facilitate the completion of the St Neots Market Square renewal project.
- Delegate authority to the Corporate Director (Place) or the Managing Director in Consultation with Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing to approve initiation of the Wayfinding (Digital Information System) project, or alternatively return the funding allocation to CPCA as per the requirements of the Accelerated Projects Funding Agreement.

## **1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

- 1.1. To provide an update on activity across the strands of the MTP. The report also updates on external funding grants, particularly noting activity on the outcome of the funding application to CPCA Local Growth Fund for delivery of the Market Produce Hall in Ramsey, the use of unallocated funding from the CPCA and legacy CPCA funding in respect of St Neots town centre masterplan delivery,

## **2. UPDATE ON MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME**

### **ST NEOTS PROGRAMME:**

#### **Market Square (Transport Projects)**

- 2.1. Construction of this scheme will begin in late Summer 2023 and will take up to about 12 months to complete. The scheme's detailed design is currently being refined, prior to the procurement of a construction partner. This is scheduled to commence in March 2023.
- 2.2. The Council will be publicising the final scheme designs in the Spring with residents, businesses, and local partners. This will include the interim arrangements necessary to facilitate construction, whilst ensuring minimum impact on local businesses and the Town Market. Regular project updates on this Project and other activities will also be provided through social media and the Market Town Programme Newsletter, which has a readership of over 400 registered residents and businesses.

#### **The Old Falcon Inn**

- 2.3. The Old Falcon Inn is a Grade II listed building and holds a prominent position in the Market Square. It is under private ownership and has been vacant for almost 20 years. The current owner is keen on bringing the building back into active use and following significant engagement from Council staff wishes to work in partnership with the Council towards this objective.
- 2.4. This is a complex scheme, which also includes an element of risk in terms of the current building condition and status, given the prolonged period since the property was in active use.
- 2.5. The MTP team are continuing to work with the existing owner, alongside internal teams, external technical experts and DLUHC to develop a viable proposition for the regeneration of the Old Falcon Inn and its return to active use.

#### **Priory Centre**

- 2.6. The objective of the Priory Centre project is to deliver a much enhanced and financially sustainable multi-use community facility, capable of providing a wide range of facilities and services to the people of St Neots. The Project will be delivered utilising funds allocated from the Future High Street Fund and Community Infrastructure Levy, subject to final proposals being approved.
- 2.7. The Council owns the freehold for the premises and is working closely with the building tenant, St Neots Town Council, on developing a project specification and tender documentation which sets out the key deliverables required from this scheme. The initial guiding objectives in this regard, include:
  - Increasing the occupancy levels and thus financial viability of the Centre, through an improved commercial offering which better maximises the available space, for example, enhanced audio-visual equipment to support theatre and live music performances.

- Improving the community facilities available, for example, linking the café function and Centre more closely with the Riverside, enhancing the main theatre or function hall by investing in the venue seating capacity, décor, and access arrangements.
  - Reconfiguring the Town Council occupied office space to reduce waste and increase efficiency, e.g., replacing the 2 separate reception areas for the Town Council and Centre with a single reception / welcome point.
  - Investing in energy efficiency to reduce energy costs and reduce carbon impact.
  - Consider options for expanding the Centre's commercial and community space above the current floorspace capacity.
  - Consider options for improving the exterior of the Centre and its links to the adjacent Oast House and Public Library.
- 2.8. The project specification set out above will form the basis for an open tender to procure architectural expertise and associated construction guidance to develop scheme options up to RIBA level 4 (technical design). Subject to this stage being completed satisfactorily, a second procurement exercise will be undertaken to appoint a construction partner.
- 2.9. During December 2022, the Town Council consulted independently with Centre users and, based on responses received, produced a paper setting out which aspects of the Centre it considers to be the most critical areas for investment. This paper will be used to inform the option development process.
- 2.10. We anticipate completing the tender process for architectural support during March, with initial options for the Centre produced for review in April. These options will be refined into a preferred option following appropriate consultation. The format of the preferred option will be based on a progressive model, so that works can be delivered in phases which are aligned to the available budget.
- 2.11. The rationale for this approach is to maintain continuity in Centre operation and ensure that funding from the Future High Street programme, which has a spend by deadline of March 2024, can be fully used as part of phase 1 works. Further phases following these works will be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy, which does not have a restrictive spend by date. This approach ensures no external funding is lost and ensures improvements best meet the needs of current as well as future centre users.
- 2.12. It should be noted that at its meeting on the 10th of January 2023, the Town Council, subject to the negotiation of an appropriate sales price, has approved the acquisition of the Oast House. This building is adjacent to the Priory Centre, and should this acquisition be completed, we will seek to factor in the Town Council's proposals for the Oast House, as far as is practicable, in terms of the final preferred design option for the Priory Centre. This acquisition could potentially provide for greater efficiencies in the Priory Centre scheme, leading to either reduced costs or an improved service offering.

#### **St Neots CPCA Legacy funding (masterplan phase 1)**

- 2.13. In 2019, HDC was awarded £609,655 capital and revenue funding focused on St Neots town centre. These funds were intended to support the first phase of the St Neots masterplan. The funds were allocated to a wide range of projects including footfall cameras and marketing with these works all delivered.
- 2.14. However, the Business Improvement District element of the original project plan was not taken forward due to a lack of support and changing circumstances. Consequently, there is £260,000 of these funds still available for investment in St Neots. Over the last quarter, the MTP team has been working with key local partners on options for maximising this funding. Several options have been produced including:

- Development of a stage / entertainment area (including built in audio infrastructure to support events) within the renewed Market Square, which can also provide a multi-use space, e.g., café seating.
  - Public art within the town centre, to be developed as part of a local competition, managed by St Neots Town Council.
  - Extension of wayfinding digital screens into St Neots (subject to confirmation overall programme proceeds).
  - Supporting improved physical signage into St Neots
  - Co-retail space, providing an opportunity for the sale of products by local independent traders / product creators in a shared retail space.
- 2.15. Work has been undertaken to ensure that all the projects proposed above are revenue neutral to HDC. In practice, some of the projects will be delivered entirely by partners, whereas others will involve the transfer of assets and management and maintenance responsibilities at an agreed point.
- 2.16. The St Neots Masterplan Steering group, which was established to support delivery of this programme, has been consulted and have provided their support to these proposed projects. A change control request form outlining the proposed projects will now be submitted to the CPCA Board for their approval. Subject to this being provided, delivery of the revised programme will begin from April 2023.

### **Ramsey Civic Hub**

- 2.17. The Ramsey Civic Hub is a new facility being delivered by Ramsey Town Council. The Town Council is refurbishing the former TSB premises on the Great Whyte utilising funding, which was originally awarded to HDC. These funds have since been novated to the Town Council, who will own and operate the Hub. Works are underway, with a completion date of March 2023. Major works recently completed include the installation of a new roof.

### **Ramsey Market Produce Hall & Public Realm improvements (capital funding)**

- 2.18. The Council has successfully secured capital funding of £1.15 million from the Local Growth Fund to design and develop a Market Produce Hub in the Great Whyte area of Ramsey town centre. These funds were approved by the CPCA Board during December 2022. The overall project value is £1.45 million and includes an earlier allocation of funds (£300K) for enabling works, including public realm improvements,
- 2.19. The purpose of the Market Produce Hub is to revitalize the town centre by providing a new attraction for shoppers that can also serve as a start-up hub for market traders or other small-scale independent retailers. Preparatory work has already been undertaken, including site visits with the Highways Authority. Briefing meetings and discussions with local partners including the Town Council will be arranged before the project is formally launched.
- 2.20. This scheme will require external technical and construction partners. HDC Officers are currently investigating procurement options including the potential use of the Crown Commercial Services Framework to procure the relevant expertise and suppliers.

### **Ramsey Market Produce Hall (revenue funding)**

- 2.21. As part of the overall funding package, the Council has also secured £221K in revenue funding as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund HDC Project Proposals.
- 2.22. These funds will be used to support the operation and initial launch of the Market Produce Hub. How the Hub will be managed and operated is actively being reviewed currently. HDC will be consulting with local organisations, including Ramsey Town

Council, on options for this and how we can maximise local input and support. Recommendations in this regard will be submitted to members for their consideration as the project is developed in detail.

### **Town Centre Masterplans – next steps**

- 2.23. A core part of the original Market Town Programme was the development of conceptual Masterplans for our major town centres. The final stage of this work focused on Huntingdon, Ramsey and St Ives is in the process of being completed, following the completion of a local consultation programme
- 2.24. A presentation of the consultation feedback and next steps was provided to Huntingdon Town Council on the 12th of January. Further presentations have been scheduled for the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> March with St Ives and Ramsey Town Council, respectively. Where masterplan project options can be progressed towards delivery, such as the Ramsey Market Produce Hub, the feedback provided at this stage will guide initial project development and approach. However, further opportunities for engagement with residents and others will be provided as projects are developed to a detailed stage. For example, a working group is being established with Ramsey Town Council to co-ordinate the management and delivery of the new Produce Hub. This working group will also look at future management arrangements which could involve Ramsey Town Council taking a leading role.
- 2.25. Draft masterplans for each town centre were produced during 2022. Residents, businesses, and partner organisations were consulted on the Masterplans during October and November last year. 234 online responses were submitted to HDC as part of this consultation. This level of response compares favourably with similar consultations in comparable locations. The breakdown by town is shown overleaf:

<b>No of submissions</b>	<b>Town</b>
56	Huntingdon
71	Ramsey
107	St Ives
<b><u>234</u></b>	

- 2.26. In addition, 25 responses were provided by organisations. This included governmental bodies such as the Environment Agency in addition to Town Councils in each of the three towns.
- 2.27. Most responses received were positive and supportive of the broad masterplan objectives and key projects, and with some excellent suggestions and recommendations, however, concerns and challenges relevant to projects were also particularly useful. We are grateful for the time and care taken in very many of the responses. The feedback received as part of this consultation is now being used to finalise the masterplan documents. The final masterplans will be published during March, alongside a summary of the feedback received during the consultation stage.
- 2.28. Whilst the masterplans provide a vision of our ambitions for Huntingdon, Ramsey, and St Ives town centres, it is important to underline that these documents are conceptual only and are not intended as detailed delivery plans.

### **Smarter Towns**

- 2.29. The purpose of the Smarter Towns project is to deliver a standard based Low Power Wide Area (LPWA) network within Huntingdon, Ramsey, and St Ives, based on a



network of gateway routers. This network will form the basis for the deployment of Internet of Things (IoT) devices by the council, businesses, and community groups.

- 2.30. The installation of gateway routers, which will be used to communicate with deployed sensors, is underway. River level/ flood sensors have also already been installed in St Neots. As reported in local press, the St Neots Rowing Club is part of the initial pilot trial, which will not only provide early warnings of flooding, but will also provide information on water temperature. Sensors in additional locations in both St Neots and St Ives are currently being installed.
- 2.31. Additional sensors including ground water flooding, footfall and air quality sensors are currently being considered for acquisition and installation. The adoption of footfall sensors, for example, could provide a more financially sustainable means to monitor the health of our town centres whilst minimising ongoing revenue costs, which apply to alternative systems such as footfall cameras.
- 2.32. This scheme is being delivered in partnership with Connecting Cambridgeshire and will be completed by March 2023. Funding for the scheme is provided by the CPCA.

### **Digital Wayfinding Project**

- 2.33. The Digital Wayfinding approach seeks to make best use of the latest Information Technology systems to provide up to date information to residents, visitors, and other interested parties, in high footfall locations such as town centres. The Council was previously awarded funding of £200K from CPCA to deploy a Wayfinding system to St Ives, Ramsey, and Huntingdon. The scheme was intended to provide digital screens in each town centre, with locally specific information being displayed.
- 2.34. In addition to the provision of digital screens, existing physical signage was also to be reviewed to assess whether improvements were necessary, or whether new signage was appropriate. This also would have included an element of decluttering old or redundant signage.
- 2.35. Whilst work began on Digital Wayfinding in 2021, the scheme was paused early in 2022. This was primarily due to concerns as to how the screens would be used and maintained and what the overall benefits would be. Officers have been asked to review the options for this project, which may or may not lead to the scheme being recommissioned. If the project does not proceed, under the terms of our funding agreement with CPCA, the funds will be returned.
- 2.36. The original project proposal was developed in partnership with Connecting Cambridgeshire (CC). Initial discussions have been held with CC concerning the project, focused on potentially rescoping the specification and subject to developing an acceptable approach, recommissioning. CC have confirmed their interest in revisiting the project, and subject to this review, taking a leading role in delivering the scheme. The rescoping of the project will also consider the merits of extending the scheme to St Neots town centre, which did not form part of the original project specification.
- 2.37. HDC will therefore be working with CC to reassess the project, clearly identifying the benefits that could be delivered, and seeking to address issues concerning future maintenance and operation. Upon this review's completion, members will be consulted on formally restarting work on the project.

### **Unallocated CPCA Accelerated Delivery Funding**

- 2.38. Whilst the majority of the original Accelerated Fund programme has been completed, there remains £802K of funding which is available for project delivery across Huntingdon and St Ives town centres.

- 2.39. This funding has not previously been allocated to any specific projects. Work has recently begun on developing options for scheme delivery in Huntingdon and St Ives, ensuring we utilise these funds within required timescales. Key considerations in this regard include projects outlined within the draft Huntingdon/St Ives masterplans, the feedback received on these documents from residents and partners and the recent work on the new Huntingdonshire Place Strategy, Huntingdonshire Futures.
- 2.40. The proposed project options have been reviewed for alignment with HDC strategy, local priorities and needs and deliverability. The preferred projects are:
- St Ives Broadway Cycle Link and Highways improvements – This highways scheme will be delivered in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council.
  - St Ives Bandstand - This is a community driven and majority funded project which will provide a new bandstand for St Ives that will be used to support events in the town.
  - Shop Front grant scheme / Visual Merchandising support – this scheme will provide grants to businesses in both St Ives and Huntingdon for the purpose of improving shop fronts and how services/retail is marketed – This scheme will be delivered in partnership with Huntingdon BID (Business Improvement District).
  - Expansion and improvement of the Cromwell Museum to improve visitor amenities and facilities – delivered in partnership with the Cromwell Museum.
  - Huntingdon Visitor Centre – this new facility will be developed and managed by Huntingdon BID. Its purpose will be to promote the town centre, the retailers and services that can be found there and expanding the role and function of the BID to meet the needs of the local area and business community.
- 2.41. HDC will consult with CPCA on the acceptability of the proposals outlined above. Subject to CPCA's initial review, the preferred projects will be submitted to the CPCA Board for their consideration in March. If approved, project delivery will commence in the new fiscal year.

#### **New Vibrant Communities Project (UK Shared Prosperity Fund)**

- 2.42. The Vibrant Communities programme will provide funding allocations from HDC's UK Shared Prosperity Fund Plan to our main Town's and large Villages to promote these local areas as places to visit and support local businesses. Funding has been allocated to specific settlements (representing towns/large villages) based on a mixture of Local Plan status and population.
- 2.43. Briefing meetings with local partners have been scheduled for the 22nd of February 2023 to provide advice and guidance about the fund. A Project Plan will be required for HDC to approve proposed activities. This Plan is based on a simple proforma and the deadline for submissions of draft plans to HDC is the 22nd of March with final plans submitted by the 7th of April, to allow sufficient time for member consultations. Activities will be delivered during the 2023/24 fiscal year. The total funds available are £135,000 in revenue.
- 2.44. The fund will also provide £20,000 in capital for expenditure during the current fiscal year (2022/23). Given the short timescale for delivery, the Council has been working with partners in Huntingdon and St Neots to progress projects already fully formed but lacking funding for delivery.
- 2.45. In St Neots we are working with a local community group to refurbish information displays throughout the town centre. The displays will be leased to the community group for 10 years. They will take over management of the displays, making them available to all community members to promote local activities, services, and events. We are also working with Huntingdon Town Council and BID to deliver improvements to the public realm through new decoration and displays in event areas.

### **3. FINANCE UPDATE**

- 3.1. The overall sources of confirmed funding for the MTP are shown below in Table 1. For the first time and moving forward we will be reporting spend against funding streams. All funding identified below has been secured and is subject to contractual obligations and must be spent within the agreed guidelines and allocations only.
- 3.2. Where CPCA funding is being proposed for reallocation within this report, it should be noted that this is subject to approval by CPCA.

**Table 1: Overall MTP funding sources and status**

<b>Market Towns Regeneration</b>				
<b>Funding sources</b>	<b>£ Grant secured</b>	<b>£ Spend to date</b>	<b>£ Grant balance</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>St Neots Regeneration</b>				
Future High Street Funds (MHCLG now DLUHC)	£3,748,815	£823,221	£2,925,594	Progress on spend commitment and activity is report to DLUHC on a quarterly basis.
HDC Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	£4,829,943	£0	£4,829,943	As per HDC cabinet decision. Schemes which have a mixture of funding sources inc CiL, will utilise time limited funds before CiL.
CPCA	£3,100,000	£0	£3,100,000	As per Funding Agreement (Dec '21). Expenditure is scheduled to Q3 and Q4 2023/24.
National Highways	£3,493,218	£0	£3,493,218	Funding agreement finalised January 2023. Drawdown of funding from NH will be in three tranches, scheduled for December 2023, May 2024, and November 2024.
CPCA Masterplan phase 1 St Neots *	*£609,655	*£305,099	*£304,556	Remaining spend is subject to a CPCA change control request, approval due March 2023.
<b>St Neots Regeneration Sub-total</b>	<b>£15,781,631</b>	<b>£1,128,320</b>	<b>£14,653,311</b>	
<b>Huntingdon, St Ives &amp; Ramsey</b>				
CPCA Masterplans & Accelerated Funding	£3,000,000	£1,957,106	£802,150	Funding programme was due to conclude by March 2022.  Ongoing work with CPCA to confirm rollover of unallocated funding of £802,150 into 2023/24. Proposed projects will

				be considered by CPCA Board in March 23.  £240,744 which was allocated to specific projects that have now been delivered, was not required. These funds cannot be rolled over.
<b>Sub-total</b>	£3,000,000	£1,957,106	£802,150	
<b>Staff revenue funding – overall MTP programme</b>				
UK Shared Prosperity Fund **	£221,000	£0	£221,000	Funding confirmed. Expenditure profiled for Q3/Q4 in 2023/24.
<b>Sub-total</b>	£221,000	£0	£221,000	
<b>Ramsey Market Produce / Retail Hub</b>				
Local Growth Fund (CPCA) **	£1,153,525	£0	£1,153,525	Funding awarded December 2022./ Funding agreement currently being finalised.
<b>Sub total</b>	£1,153,525	£0	£1,153,525	
<b>PROGRAMME TOTAL</b>	£20,156,156	£3,085,426	£16,829,986	

\*This programme was previously managed separately and has now been incorporated into the MTP.

\*\*Funding included in this report for the first time as this has now been confirmed.

#### 4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4.1 The Panel discussed the Report at its meeting on 1st March 2023.

4.2 During its deliberations on the report the Panel has focussed on St Neots Market Square. In response to a question on whether the Panel will be consulted on the detailed design of the Market Square, Members have been advised that any such input will be through the local consultation process. On the same line, Members have sought assurances that the stakeholder database is fit for its purpose and any engagement is on the final iteration of the design.

4.3 The Panel has requested that any projects that are amber or red are reported to future meetings.

4.4 At the conclusion of its deliberations on the report the Panel has recommended the Cabinet to approve the recommendations.

- 4.5 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for the Cabinet to make a decision on the recommendations.

## **5. KEY IMPACTS/RISKS**

- 5.1 There are several risks associated with delivering an ambitious programme of this size and complexity, the notable risks are:

### **5.1.1. Budget management risk**

The projects that sit within the MTP are at various stages and therefore, as work progresses to detailed level, cost reliability and accuracy increases, the level of risk is more certain. We will continue to review the individual projects viability and programme impacts, identifying any areas of risk, as scheme progress. The construction industry has seen materials and labour costs significantly increase in cost over the past 18 months. Inflation continues to increase. Therefore, as we move from design into delivery any decisions on proposed options will require agreement that they can be funded within the approved Market Towns programme budget. Mitigation: We will continue monitoring the programme funding profile and anticipated spending against budgets, updating to Cabinet quarterly. We will also seek to engage Contractors as part of an early-stage pre-procurement process to assess 'buildability' and a sense check of construction costs based on current market activity. The MTP team continue to provide regular updates to funding bodies, briefing them on estimated costings, risks, issues, and inter-dependencies.

### **5.1.2. Programme Timescales risk**

This is an ambitious programme of delivery, with the funding for St Neots of £3.748m from the FHSF required to be spent by March 2024. The CPCA funding of £3.1m also has a deadline of March 2024, they recognise the strategic importance of this programme, and it is anticipated there will be some flexibility in the delivery timescales. National Highways have also indicated that they expect their funding of £3.49m within the 2024/25 fiscal year. Mitigation: The detailed programme plan covering feasibility, design, and delivery phases, will be continually reviewed ensuring focus remains on hitting funding milestones, claim dates and delivery milestones. The MTP team continue to provide regular updates to funding bodies, briefing them on progress, risks, issues, and inter-dependencies.

### **5.1.3. Programme Resources risk**

The MTP requires different skills, expertise, and external technical support at various stages of the project delivery. The programme itself has multiple projects which must be managed simultaneously identifying all interdependences across the programme. There is significant internal and external stakeholder management and detailed consultation with partners and resident/ business groups. This could result in competing priorities across organisations that will require careful consideration. Mitigation: As part of the project, a detailed resources plan and communications strategy with stakeholders has been developed to ensure the management of expectations and information being shared promptly. The HDC's website is regularly updated with the progress across the core programme sites, more time is being invested in engaging stakeholders, a greater presence on social media and revamping of the newsletter.

### **5.1.4. Reputational Risk**

The MTP is a high priority for the Council, so monthly reporting, governance and timely decision-making are critical to ensure the programme is successfully delivered. Mitigation: The programme governance and reporting lines will be continually monitored to ensure that the key programme milestones are managed and achieved.

A full MTP programme risk register is in place along with individual project risk registers. Given the size and complexity of the MTP it features on the Council's Strategic Risk register, along with the mitigating actions.

## **6. LINK TO CORPORATE PLAN 2022-2026**

- 6.1. The delivery of the MTP is aligned with the principles and key objectives of the emerging HDC Corporate Plan which sets out the Council's objectives.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. The Council, based on previously successful funding bids and Cabinet decisions, has entered into several grant agreements with associated delivery and outputs frameworks.
- 7.2. All Funding Agreements and contracts are subject to review by HDC legal team and senior officers and members as appropriate. In the most recent quarter, a contract with National Highways was entered into concerning funding provision for the Market Square (transport projects) scheme. Over the next quarter it is anticipated that further Funding Agreements / Contracts may require legal review. This includes the Ramsey Market Produce Hall, for which we expect to receive a draft funding agreement before the end of the fiscal year.
- 7.3. There will be a requirement for ongoing legal input to support the further development of project options, this will include the Ramsey Market Produce Hall, Old Falcon Inn, and Priory Centre. Other areas include future land and property advice relating for example to leasehold acquisitions and may be required should there be any contractual disputes. Noting there are none currently within the programme.

## **8. EQUALITIES**

- 8.1. The Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 8.2. Good planning and effective regeneration can improve environments and opportunities for communities experiencing disadvantage. Planning which does not engage with or consider the needs of local communities is unlikely to improve their life chances and may further entrench area-based disadvantage.

## **9. ENVIRONMENTAL**

- 9.1 The Council has a duty to ensure we continue to promote an environmentally positive recovery in Huntingdonshire following the impacts of COVID 19. We also have a duty to deliver sustainable place making. In December 2021, the Council adopted a core set of environmental principles. In October 2022, the Council passed a Cost of Living and Climate Change motion that recognises that the current cost of living and climate crises require joint attention to support the wellbeing of residents and businesses. In February 2022 Council formally recognised the Climate Crisis and Ecological Emergency, adopted the Council's Climate Strategy underlining the organisations commitment to:

- setting a positive example through its actions to be a net carbon zero Council by 2040
- an enabler supporting action within our communities and across our partners
- an encourager to those that live, work, and visit Huntingdonshire to take climate action and reduce carbon emissions

- 9.2. The Council has direct control of only a tiny proportion of all the carbon emissions within Huntingdonshire, but we can adopt a key role to influence the district, demonstrating good practice whilst setting policies and strategies to influence businesses and communities to tackle climate change whilst enabling sustainable living and growth. These principles are embedded within the MTP.

## 10. APPENDICES

N/A

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to Cabinet (FHSF) 13th February 2020 can be found [here](#)

Report to Cabinet (FHSF) 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020 - EXEMPT

Report to Cabinet (Market Towns Accelerated Programme) 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 can be found [here](#)

Report to Cabinet (FHSF) 23<sup>rd</sup>. February 2021 can be found [here](#)

Market Towns Programme Spring 2022 Update to Cabinet, 17 March 2022 can be found [here](#)

Market Towns Programme Summer 2022 Update to Cabinet June 2022 can be found [here](#)

Market Towns Programme Autumn 2022 Update to Cabinet September 2022 can be found [here](#)

Market Towns Programme Winter 2022 Update to Cabinet December 2022 can be found [here](#)

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