A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH)** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **WEDNESDAY, 4 JANUARY 2023** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

AGENDA

APOLOGIES

1. **MINUTES** (Pages 5 - 12)

   To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) meeting held on 7th December 2022.

   Contact Officer: B Buddle
   01480 388008

2. **MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

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

   Contact Officer: B Buddle
   01480 388008

3. **NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS** (Pages 13 - 22)

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

   Contact Officer: H Peacey
   01480 388169

4. **HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW AND PROPOSED UPDATE** (Pages 23 - 36)

   The Panel are invited to comment on the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Review and Proposed Update.

   Contact Officer: C Bond
   01480 388274

5.   STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (Pages 37 - 78)

The Panel is invited to comment on the Statement of Community Involvement Report.

Contact Officer: F Schulz
01480 388432

6.   SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL SCOPING REPORT (Pages 79 - 290)

The Panel is invited to comment on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

Contact Officer: N Elworthy
01480 388433

7.   GREAT GRANSDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION OUTCOME AND PROGRESSION TO REFERENDUM (Pages 291 - 402)

The Panel is invited to comment on the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan Report detailing the outcome of the Examiner's report and proposed progression to referendum.

Contact Officer: N Elworthy
01480 388433

8.   HUNTINGDONSHIRE PLACE STRATEGY UPDATE (Pages 403 - 462)

To comment on the Huntingdonshire Place Strategy Update.

Contact Officer: K McFarlane
01480 388332

9.   OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 463 - 466)

   a) The Panel are to receive the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme
   b) Members to discuss future planning of items for the Work Programme

Contact Officer: B Buddle
01480 388008

22 day of December 2022

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 Mrs Beccy Buddle, Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny), Tel No. 01480 388008/e-mail Beccy.Buddle@huntingdonshire.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee/Panel.

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

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

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the District Council's website.

Emergency Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit.

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH) held in Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 7 December 2022.

PRESENT: Councillor C M Gleadow – Chair.

Councillors A M Blackwell, S Cawley, S J Corney, I D Gardener, J A Gray, J E Harvey, S A Howell, R Martin, Dr M Pickering, R A Slade and N Wells.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors B A Mickleburgh, T D Sanderson and S Wakeford.

42. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

43. **MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor S Howell declared an other registerable interest in Minute 22/45 as a Director of Social Echo.

44. **NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Panel received and noted the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions (a copy of which has been appended in the Minute Book) which has been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st December 2022 to 31st March 2023.

45. **HUNTINGDONSHIRE UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUNDING**

By means of a report by the Corporate Director (Place) (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Huntingdonshire UK Shared Prosperity Funding Report was presented to the Panel.

Councillor Gardener queried whether the Active Travel Feasibility Studies were purely for cycleways, in response to which, the Panel heard that all active travel suggestions were encouraged. The Panel heard about a specific example of the cycleway alongside the A1 from Brampton to Alconbury which did not link into Alconbury village, following which the Panel were assured that the lack of integration had been previously flagged with the County Council.

It was observed by Councillor Corney that the £150,000

earmarked for studies would not stretch far across the district, who then enquired whether any partnership working with local walking and cycling groups had been considered to ensure studies were not duplicated. The Panel heard that the Executive were keen to achieve viable routes for residents and partnership opportunities would be considered.

It was clarified to the Panel that the Council would look to support local businesses in decreasing their utility costs following an observation from Councillor Cawley regarding the wording of the report.

The Panel heard that the Council would look to support local businesses through specialist advice and were developing an action plan to maximise funding opportunities to businesses in both the short and long term.

Councillor Gray stated that whilst broadly supportive of the thrust of what is overall hoped to be achieved, he had concerns over the lack of detail contained within the report, expressly concern that all proposals were completely underdeveloped. It was further stated that greater detail alongside the business plans would be desirable before authority be delegated to others for decision making. The Panel were informed that external funding brought challenges of tight timescales but that this was something that the Executive were happy to reflect upon and come back with.

The Panel requested that the Cabinet consider adding the following recommendation to their report;

- To provide an update on the Huntingdonshire programme of activity to both the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet within three months.

With the addition of this recommendation, the Panel

RESOLVED

to encourage Cabinet to endorse the remaining recommendations within the report.

46.   **MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME - WINTER UPDATE**

By means of a report by the Corporate Director (Place) (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Market Towns Programme, Winter Update Report was presented to the Panel.

Following an enquiry from Councillor Pickering on the Wayfinding project, who expressed concerns that the project may become a white elephant, the Panel heard that the project was one of the last remaining accelerated projects and is linked

to other planned projects allowing cohesion between multiple schemes. It was further stressed that the Joint Administration felt merit in continuing this project whilst also extending the project to include St Neots, it was felt that the project would help provide useful signposting for residents and visitors whilst providing each town with its own brand. Councillor Pickering further enquired about anticipated maintenance costs which may be associated with the project in the medium to long term and the Panel were advised that partnership working and advertising revenue would be sought to fund anticipated costs. Councillor Harvey observed that Huntingdon had previously had digital signage which had often been broken, and further questioned what appetite there was for such a board given the use of smart phones. Councillor Gardener agreed with the comments made by other Panel members and suggested that the funding could be spent on other matters given the current economic climate. The Panel heard that the previous administration had shelved the Wayfinding project but that the Joint Administration felt the project had value and had thereby reinstated it.

Councillor Corney requested clarification surrounding the various funding pots available for the projects identified in Ramsey and the Panel heard that the intention was to combine the funding available to give the projects the best opportunity to succeed.

Councillor Wells thanked Officers for their support with the work in St Ives, and requested updated timescales following the consultation extension. The Panel heard that the deadline had been extended to allow for the received responses to be given full consideration. It was further advised that minimal amends were anticipated for Ramsey and Huntingdon but amends were expected for St Ives to incorporate further information following the analysis of the responses.

Councillor Gardener observed that due to the number of feasibility studies having been undertaken in St Neots recently, the available funding could have been impacted and thereby not able to fulfil what originally hoped.

Following questions from Councillor Gardener, the Panel heard that the Council were working closely with St Neots Town Council to ensure cohesion between the Priory Centre project and the potential purchase of the Oast House property by St Neots Town Council.

Councillor Gray observed the tight deadlines for the Priory Centre project and queried the confidence of the administration in delivering the project on time. The Panel were advised that the project would be focusing on realistic deliverables and the team had established working relationships with partners to

ensure funding was secure and not jeopardised.

Following the discussion, the Panel observed that whilst they were generally in support of the recommendations they would like to see more detail on the Wayfinding project which it did not support.

It was thereupon

RESOLVED

that Cabinet be encouraged to consider the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel when making their decision on the recommendations.

47.   **INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT**

By means of a report by the Chief Planning Officer (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Community Infrastructure Levy Spend Allocation was presented to the Panel.

Following an enquiry from Councillor Gray on the delays relating to the allocated CIL funds, the Panel were advised that due to the economic climate and international supply issues, capital projects were experiencing delays nationally.

Councillor Pickering queried the funding marked for land north of St Neots and the Panel heard that this was Section 106 money relating to the Loves Farm development, further detail would be sought on this and communicated to the Panel.

Following the discussion by the Panel, it was

RESOLVED

that Cabinet be encouraged to endorse the recommendations within the report.

48.   **GREATER CAMBRIDGESHIRE PARTNERSHIP "MAKING CONNECTIONS" CONSULTATION**

By means of a report by the Chief Planning Officer (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Greater Cambridge Partnership Making Connections Consultation was presented to the Panel.

Councillor Gray complemented the Officer on the proposed response which was felt to strike to the heart of the issues and concerns shared by all. Following a question from Councillor Gray regarding the development of further park and ride sites within the district, the Panel heard that the Executive Councillor

agreed with the sentiment that there is a need to remain realistic about what may be achievable within the district and within the reach of the Greater Cambridge Partnership. The Panel were assured that the enquiry regarding development and infrastructure of park and ride sides was noted and the response would be adjusted to strengthen this suggestion.

Councillor Martin expressed concerns over the proposed charging within the area of the Addenbrookes hospital site, particularly that those using this route are potentially at a loss of income from illness or caring for a relative, additionally it was observed that those accessing this site for long term treatment may be unable to use public transport alternatives due to vulnerable health. This sentiment was echoed by Councillors Cawley and Gardener who added that they had jointly spoken to over 25 Parish Councils who also shared these concerns. The Panel heard that whilst sympathetic to these concerns, the Executive Councillor was not clear on an alternative option for this site due to the continued growth of the area and the impact this would have on its infrastructure.

Following an observation from Councillor Corney that more could be made of connecting rural areas, and the suggestion that to expand the response to have more emphasis on routes from both the north and west of the district to Huntingdon being included, the Panel heard that the response was aiming to be realistic in its expectations of what would be achievable.

Councillor Gardener suggested that improvements to local bus routes with regular and reliable services from rural areas into the towns would assist in connecting residents to Cambridge without the need for additional park and ride infrastructure. The Panel heard that the public transport responsibility lies with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, who are the Transport Authority and following a number of transport related consultations recently it remained important to continue to share feedback and concerns from the Council. It was observed that communication between the GCP and CPCA on this matter would be helpful.

Following the discussion, the Panel observed that they were generally in support of the response but would like to see stronger wording regarding waiving charges for those accessing the Addenbrookes sites and the development of park and ride sites within the district. It was thereupon

RESOLVED

that Cabinet be encouraged to consider the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel when making their decision on the recommendations.

49. **FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23 QUARTER 2**

By means of a report by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Finance Performance Report 2022/23 Quarter 2 was presented to the Panel.

Following questions from Councillors Pickering and Gray relating to the drop in parking revenues and whether that trend was expected to continue, the Panel were advised that this was linked to the delay in the Civil Parking Enforcement Act but that further detail would be sought and communicated to the Panel.

Councillor Gray observed that the figures relating to One Leisure were concerning and questioned the Executive Councillor on his confidence in the recently approved plan to increase fees and charges across the leisure centres. The Panel were advised that One Leisure had been heavily affected by the increase in energy costs and the recent rise in minimum wage, but that significant debate had been had surrounding the increase to fees and charges. Councillor Gray reflected that this report had been published after the decision on fees and charges had been taken and thereby queried how the Cabinet had been able to make the decision without the supporting information. The Panel were assured that by applying the proposed fees and charges to the available Quarter One figures, the Cabinet had been able to forecast the impact this would have. The Panel were further assured that the figures would continue to be monitored so that further action could be taken to remedy lost revenue and footfall through commercial strategies or alternative pricing structures in the future.

Following a question from Councillor Blackwell relating to the reduction in Court Fees linked to Housing Benefit, the Panel were advised that the Officer would investigate the detail on the subject and communicate that back to the Panel.

Following the discussion, the Panel observed that they were generally in support of the recommendations being endorsed but requested that the Executive Councillor for Leisure attend a future meeting of the Panel to help answer questions on the financial details behind the decision to raise One Leisure fees and charges. It was thereupon

RESOLVED

that Cabinet be encouraged to endorse the recommendations within the report.

50. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT 6 MONTH PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

By means of a report by the Director of Finance and Resources

(a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Treasury Management 6 Month Performance Review was presented to the Panel.

Following a question from Councillor Harvey on lost income due to the early repayment of the Luminus loan, the Panel heard that anticipated income from interest payments on the loan had been reduced, however the early repayment option had been a clause in the original loan. It was further advised that some financial benefit had been received by repaying the loan to PWLB early and this would be shown in the next update of the report.

Councillor Gray questioned the figures shown in Table 6, specifically what the amount £2.8 million related to as it was thought to be too low for the whole portfolio. The detailed response to this will be sought by the Officer and reported back to the Panel.

Following the discussion, the Panel

RESOLVED

that Cabinet be encouraged to endorse the recommendations within the report.

51.   OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

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

Chair

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

Prepared by:	**Councillor Sarah Conboy, Executive Leader of the Council**
Date of Publication:	**22 December 2022**
For Period:	**1 January 2023 to 30 April 2023**

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

Councillor Details		Councillor Contact Details
Councillor S J Conboy	Executive Leader of the Council and Executive Councillor for Place	Cloudberry Cottage 9 Earning Street Godmanchester Huntingdon PE29 2JD Tel: 01480 414900 / 07831 807208 E-mail: Sarah.Conboy@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor L Davenport-Ray	Executive Councillor for Climate & Environment	73 Hogsden Leys St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 6AD E-mail: Lara.Davenport-Ray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor S Ferguson	Executive Councillor for Customer Services	9 Anderson Close St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 6DN Tel: 07525 987460 E-mail: Stephen.Ferguson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Agenda Item 3

Councillor M Hassall	Executive Councillor for Corporate & Shared Services	Care of Huntingdonshire District Council St Mary's Street Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 3TN Tel: 07825 193572 E-mail: Martin.Hassall@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor B Mickelburgh	Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources	2 Grainger Avenue Godmanchester Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 2JT Tel: 07441 392492 E-mail: Brett.Mickelburgh@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor B Pitt	Executive Councillor for Community & Health	17 Day Close St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 6DF Tel: 07703 169273 E-mail: Ben.Pitt@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor T Sanderson	Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Planning	29 Burmoor Close Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 6GE Tel: 01480 436822 E-mail: Tom.Sanderson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Councillor S Taylor	Executive Councillor for Leisure, Waste & Street Scene	66 Wren Walk Eynesbury St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 2GE Tel: 07858 032076 E-mail: Simone.Taylor@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor S Wakeford	Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy and Housing	4 Croft Close Brampton Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE28 4TJ Tel: 07762 109210 E-mail: Sam.Wakeford@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Notice is hereby given of:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Community Chest Grant Aid Awards 2022/23	Grants Panel	11 & 18 Jan 2023 1 &15 Feb 2023 1, 15 & 29 Mar 2023		Claudia Deeth, Community Resilience Manager Tel No: 01480 388233 or email: Claudia.Deeth@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B Pitt & M Hassall	Environment, Communities & Partnerships
Place Strategy Update	Cabinet	24 Jan 2023		Kate McFarlane, Corporate Director (Place) Tel No: 01480 388719 or email: Kate.McFarlane@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Conboy	Performance & Growth
Climate Strategy	Cabinet	24 Jan 2023		Neil Sloper, Assistant Director Strategic Insights and Delivery Tel No: 01480 388635 or email: Neil.Sloper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		L Davenport-Ray	Environment, Communities & Partnerships

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Local Plan Review and Proposed Update	Cabinet	24 Jan 2023		Clara Kerr, Service Manager - Growth Tel No: 01480 388430 or email: Clara.Kerr@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		T Sanderson	Performance & Growth
Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report***	Cabinet	24 Jan 2023		Clara Kerr, Service Manager - Growth Tel No: 01480 388430 or email: Clara.Kerr@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		T Sanderson	Performance & Growth
Statement of Community Involvement***	Cabinet	24 Jan 2023		Clara Kerr, Service Manager - Growth Tel No: 01480 388430 or email: Clara.Kerr@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		T Sanderson	Performance & Growth

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan Examination Outcome and Progression to Referendum***	Cabinet	24 Jan 2023		Natalie Elworthy, Assistant Planning Policy Officer Tel No: 01480 388433 or email: Natalie.Elworthy@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		T Sanderson	Performance & Growth
Final 2023/24 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (2024/25 to 2027/28) including Capital Programme	Cabinet	7 Feb 2023		Karen Sutton, Director Finance and Corporate Services Tel No: 01480 387072 or email: Karen.Sutton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B Mickelburgh	Performance & Growth

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
2023/24 Treasury Management, Capital and Investment Strategies	Cabinet	7 Feb 2023		Karen Sutton, Director Finance and Corporate Services Tel No: 01480 387072 or email: Karen.Sutton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B Mickelburgh	Performance & Growth
Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief Policy	Cabinet	7 Feb 2023		John Taylor, Chief Operating Officer Tel No: 01480 388119 or email: John.Taylor@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Ferguson	Environment, Communities & Partnerships
Market Towns Programme - Spring Update	Cabinet	21 Mar 2023		Pamela Scott, Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager Tel No: 01480 388486 or email: Pamela.Scott@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Wakeford	Performance & Growth

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Place Strategy	Cabinet	21 Mar 2023		Kate McFarlane, Corporate Director (Place) Tel No: 01480 388719 or email: Kate.McFarlane@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Conboy	Performance & Growth
Corporate Plan	Cabinet	21 Mar 2023		Dan Buckridge, Business Intelligence and Performance Manager Tel No: 01480 388065 or email: Dn.Buckridge@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Conboy	Performance & Growth
Huntingdonshire UK Shared Prosperity Funding - Update	Cabinet	21 Mar 2023		Kate McFarlane, Corporate Director (Place) Tel No: 01480 388719 or email: Kate.McFarlane@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Wakeford	Performance & Growth

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Tenancy Strategy	Cabinet	18 Apr 2023		Pamela Scott, Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager Tel No: 07874 887465 or email: Pamela.Scott@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Ferguson	Performance & Growth

Public (Part2)
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Huntingdonshire Local Plan Review
and Proposed Update

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny (Performance and Growth)
– 4 January 2023

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Planning

Report by: Chief Planning Officer

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

RECOMMENDATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on the recommendations
to commence an update to Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 from the
Cabinet report attached.

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Public (Part2)
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Huntingdonshire Local Plan Review
and Proposed Update

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) –
4th January 2023
Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Planning

Report by: Chief Planning Officer

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

Executive Summary:

The report is one of three inter-related reports presented to this meeting which collectively seek to commence a full update to Local Plan and agree publication for public engagement of the Statement of Community Involvement and the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, both of which will shape the way a future Local Plan is prepared.

Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires the Council to complete a review of the Local Plan within 5 years of adoption and to reach a conclusion on whether it requires a full, partial or no update. Changes to national legislation and the National Planning Policy Framework since adoption of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 indicate that the plan is now dating.

This report explains the rationale for commencing work on a full update to Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036. The report outlines the anticipated timescales for the preparation of a full update to the Local Plan. The report also highlights the risks of not commencing and the potential impacts on decision-making on planning applications.

This is an important Council document, as an updated Local Plan will set the statutory planning framework for the district, shaping development through into the 2040s. An updated Local Plan also provides opportunities to introduce policies that can help to deliver the Council's priorities and further explore ambitions raised during public engagement on the Place Strategy and Environment and Climate Strategy. It directly delivers against the 2022/23 Corporate Plan 2022/23 objective 'Improving the housing situation', with the first action being to 'Commence an update of the Local Plan'.

A formal decision is sought to commit to preparing a full update to the adopted Local Plan.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet/Committee is

RECOMMENDED

a) To agree to the preparation of a full update to the adopted Local Plan.

b) 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.

c) To require the preparation of an updated Local Development Scheme to formally outline the scope of the update to the adopted Local Plan and an indicative timetable for its preparation.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report proposes that work is commenced on a new Local Plan to replace Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 An analysis of the current Local Plan against requirements of the 2021 version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other recent national legislation has been undertaken. The outcome indicates that key elements of the current Local Plan do not fully align with up-to-date national policy and increase the risk, for decision making, of policies being deemed out of date (NPPF 2021, paragraph 11). It is also recognised that a new Local Plan needs to reflect ambitions of the Joint Administration including the emerging Place Strategy and emerging Climate Strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

What is a Local Plan

2.1 A Local Plan is defined in the NPPF as:
'The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community'. The purpose of the Local Plan is to provide a framework for sustainable development within Huntingdonshire including the identification of land for development to deliver the homes, employment and services needed and to set out local policies against which decisions on all planning applications are made. The Local Plan is the main basis for making planning decisions. Planning decisions should be in accordance with the Development Plan, including the Local Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

2.2 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (HLP2036) was adopted on 15th May 2019. It was prepared under the NPPF 2012 and submitted on 30th March 2018 for examination in public by the Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State, under transition arrangements put in place following the introduction of the then updated NPPF 2018. It identifies sufficient land for 20,100 new homes and 14,400 new jobs along with supporting facilities, infrastructure, and open space. It sets the context for neighbourhood and community planning and supports delivery of priorities of the Council and partners. It was prepared through a number of stages and full details of the preparation and background documents of the HLP2036 can be found here.

National Planning Policy

2.3 National policy has evolved substantially since the HLP2036 was prepared. Three more iterations of the NPPF have been published and another is forthcoming. In summary, the primary changes arising from the NPPF affecting the HLP2036 are:

- o A changed methodology for calculating local housing need from a locally led approach to a national one. This has resulted in an uplift of approximately 20% above the HLP2036 target of 804 new homes per year. Housing delivery will be judged against this higher figure from 15th May 2024 when the HLP2036 reaches 5 years from adoption.

o Introduction of a requirement to allocate 10% of new homes on sites of no more than 1 ha.

o An expanded definition of affordable housing to include discounted market sales homes, such as those provided through the First Homes scheme, which should form at least 25% of all affordable home provision.

o The need to set a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas reflecting the overall strategy and scale of development of the Local Plan.

o A requirement to recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different employment sectors, including making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries, and for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.

o To work proactively to plan for public service infrastructure and to promote public safety.

o An enhanced emphasis has been placed on responding and adapting to the impacts of climate change in conjunction with scheduled changes to Building Regulations.

o Introduction of mandatory biodiversity net gain, set at a minimum requirement of 10% through the Environment Act 2021.

Local Plan Update

2.4 Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) states that:
'A local planning authority must review a local development document within the following time periods –
a) in respect of a local plan, the review must be completed every five years, starting from the date of adoption of the local plan, in accordance with section 23 of the Act (adoption of local development documents)'

2.5 The purpose of the review is to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community. Once a Local Plan has been reviewed there are three potential outcomes.
a) It is decided that no changes are required to the plan and the Council publishes a statement to that effect setting out the reasons for the decision, or
b) It is decided that some changes are required, and work commences on a partial update to the plan, or
c) It is decided that more substantive changes are required, and work commences on a new plan/ full update.

2.6   If the review concludes that the Local Plan is not up-to-date, an update is required, planning decisions will continue to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan and the degree of weight to be attached to individual policies will be a matter for the decision maker in light of the outcome of the review. However, if policies are deemed to be out-of-date for decision making as an outcome of the review or by way of an appeal against refusal of planning permission, then the risks to the Council are significant, and immediate. These are elaborated upon in section 5.

3. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT LOCAL PLAN AND NATIONAL POLICY CHANGES

3.1   The Local Government Association's Planning Advisory Service provides a Local Plan Review Toolkit to test the HLP2036 against current requirements, particularly, the NPPF 2021. That methodology has been used in assessing the HLP2036 against aspects such as conformity with national planning policy requirements, 5 year housing land supply, delivery against the strategy and objectives, changing economic conditions and their impact on viability, the effectiveness of policies for decision-making and changing political contexts.

3.2   Changes to national legislation and the NPPF since adoption of the HLP2036, as summarised above, indicate that the plan is now dating. Of particular importance is the introduction of a new 'standard method' for calculating the local housing need figure against which housing delivery is tested nationally through the annual housing delivery test and the need to maintain a 5 year housing land supply. The Council can currently demonstrate a reasonable 5 year housing land supply. However, the figure is revised annually and can fluctuate significantly in response to changes in economic circumstances.

3.3   Delivery of the spatial strategy is currently on track. However, since adoption of the HLP2036 review of the military estate by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation has determined that the USAF will remain at RAF Alconbury for the foreseeable future. Therefore, SEL1.2 RAF Alconbury is no longer going to be made available for development of 1,680 new homes, a primary school and supporting social and community facilities originally anticipated will come forward later in the plan period. Delivery of HU 1 Ermine Street, Huntingdon which is allocated for 1,440 new homes, local retailing, supporting community facilities and strategic green infrastructure has been delayed by transport infrastructure challenges relating to the A141 although work is in progress by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to bring forward transport infrastructure improvements to facilitate this site.

3.4   The national definition of affordable housing has also changed since the HLP2036 was prepared. Completions monitoring indicates that delivery of affordable housing within planning proposals has been below target largely as a result of viability challenges relating to the scale of infrastructure provision requirements on the two strategic expansion locations of Alconbury Weald and St Neots East. No First Homes schemes have been

built as of October 2022. An updated Local Plan would provide opportunities to explore different approaches to provision of affordable housing across the district and to investigate up-to-date viability issues.

3.5   Economic uncertainty has arisen from Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic. Changes in the nature of demand for employment and retailing sites has recently been experienced with increasing interest in proposals for logistics and advanced manufacturing. The potential approach towards the local economy will need to be explored through the future evidence base that would support any new Local Plan.

3.6   The environmental context for the Local Plan has changed significantly since preparation of the HLP2036 with enhanced emphasis at both local and national levels on responding to the climate emergency and protecting and enhancing the natural environment. An updated Local Plan would enable local policies to align with the more ambitious national approaches to enhance the local environment and respond to the climate emergency by introducing up-to-date policies with full statutory weight to shape new development proposals throughout the district.

3.7   Major infrastructure improvements have been approved or introduced since the HLP2036 was prepared. Again, an updated Local Plan would enable Huntingdonshire to explore how maximum benefit might be obtained from the investment in these. The A14 and associated works within Huntingdon are now completed, these give rise to opportunities to explore local improvements relating to the scheme. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority are currently preparing the strategic outline business case for a substantial upgrade to the A141 around the north of Huntingdon and addressing works within St Ives. These propose highway and active travel infrastructure improvements. The development consent order for a significant upgrade to the A428 from the Black Cat A1 roundabout through to Caxton Gibbet was approved in August 2022. Whilst the prospects for East West Rail remain uncertain the proposed timescale would see the route opened in the early 2030s. All these infrastructure improvements may open opportunities to be explored through an updated Local Plan.

3.8   In December 2021 the Council adopted the OxCam Arc environmental principles along with the aspiration of Huntingdonshire being a net zero carbon district by 2040. These are not reflected in the HLP2036. The Joint Administration formed in May 2022 has established objectives relating to climate change and the environment, employment and business, residents' needs, housing and communities. A full update of the Local Plan would provide opportunities to explore the introduction of local policies reflecting up-to-date priorities, such as those regarding provision of land for highly skilled jobs, diverse affordable housing tenures, more proactive climate change responses and enhanced biodiversity and green infrastructure provision. Any such policies when adopted would have full statutory weight in decision-making on planning applications.

3.9   Taking in to account the factors listed above, it has been concluded that substantial changes are required to accord with the NPPF 2021 (or

successor document) and work should commence on a full update of the Local Plan.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

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

5. RISKS

5.1 The review of the HLP2036 ensures that the Council fulfils its statutory obligation to do so. The recommendation is to prepare a full update of the Local Plan. Given this conclusion there are several risks faced by the Council. Firstly, there is the reputational risk of not complying with the statutory requirement to update a Local Plan identified as being in need of updating. Secondly, there is the risk that multiple policies within the HLP2036 may be declared out of date from May 2024, reflecting 5 years after the adoption date.

5.2 Given the nature of changes to national policy since the HLP2036 was prepared it will become increasingly vulnerable to challenge from promoters of sites that do not accord with the strategy or policies adopted in it seeking to obtain planning permission. The Council could be exposed to increased risks of planning appeals, including potential public inquiries. These are costly, divert substantial officer time from other duties and remove from local control decision making on where development should be located and what form it will take. It is recognised that Plan making is resource intensive and must be balanced against the Council's ambitions for place making and minimising, where possible, placing the Council in a vulnerable position in relation to Plan-led decision making.

5.3 From May 2024 there will be an uplift in the housing number (from 804 to 950 new homes per year) against which the Council will be judged in terms of housing delivery and five year housing land supply is a significant factor in determining whether the housing related policies of the Local Plan remain up-to-date. If the required figures cannot be demonstrated, then there is a very strong likelihood of paragraph 11d) of the NPPF being invoked. This is commonly known as the 'tilted balance' as the balance in decision-making is strongly weighted in favour of granting permission. This means that a refusal of planning permission would likely be unsustainable for any relevant development, primarily new housing, unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or national policies that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusal.

5.3 Loss of a 5 year housing land supply would put the Council into a significant position of risk from being forced to invoke the 'tilted balance' when determining planning applications. Immediate commencement of an updated Local Plan is the most effective mechanism for minimising this risk as it would work towards bringing forward new site allocations to contribute towards an ongoing housing supply.

5.4   Risks are also posed by potential changes to national planning legislation and policy in the event the Government sets a new change in direction and/or any changes to Government at a national level These may result in some revisions or additional work to comply with new approaches which may increase costs to the Council through the lifetime of the Local Plan. This is to be expected given the duration over which a Local Plan is prepared. Previous plans prepared for the Council have also faced this and have either adapted in response or taken advantage of transitional arrangements where they have been available and coincided effectively.

5.5   It is recognised that HDC has signed up to regional objectives, including the Ox-Cam environmental agenda. In the event the wider regional agenda gains momentum, an update to the Local Plan enables HDC to have regard to the wider ambitions of the corridor and respond accordingly.

6. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

6.1   Preparation of a full update to the Local Plan is a lengthy process. Initial timings are largely within the Council's control but are heavily influenced by the scale and nature of public engagement and the volume of responses received.

6.2   This report is supported by two further reports relating to commencement of a full update to the Local Plan. These are the Statement of Community Involvement and the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

6.3   Subject to the recommendation to commence preparation of a full update to the Local Plan being accepted, it is proposed public engagement on the latter two documents will commence in February 2023 and run for 6 weeks. This would be the first of a series of public engagement opportunities on approaches and issues that will shape the full update to the Local Plan which would be proposed through future reports during Spring 2023. These would be expected to include opportunities to shape the approaches taken to assessing sites submitted through a call for sites, the approach to devising a future settlement hierarchy and consideration of the wide range of issues identified through the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report as being of significance in the future planning of the district.

6.4   A Local Development Scheme would also be prepared to formally notify the scope and intended timetable for preparation of the replacement Local Plan. It is anticipated that initial issues, methodological approaches and a call for sites will be undertaken in 2023. Further issues and options would be explored and engaged on in 2024 and that a Preferred Options full draft of the replacement Local Plan would be produced for engagement in 2025.

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

7.1   A replacement Huntingdonshire Local Plan would assist in the delivery of all 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

7.2   Within the objective 'Improving the housing situation', proposed key action 1 is to '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'.

8. ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

8.1   The NPPF statement emphasises early engagement in plan preparation. A statutory of consultation is required through section 18 of the planning and compulsory purchase act 2004 which details the steps of engagement. This presented for consideration through a linked report. Options on engagement and consultation will vary according to the stage of preparation the updated local plan has reached. Engagement on early phases it expected to emphasise inclusivity and identification of priorities and options. Engagement responses received through preparation of the place strategy, environment and climate strategy and the market town masterplans will be reviewed to consider their implications for preparation of an updated local plan.

8.2   Local Plan preparation involves substantial ongoing engagement with local communities, businesses, organisations and individuals. Whilst not directly transferrable, due to Local Plan procedural requirements set out in national regulations, engagement responses obtained by the Council through preparation of the Place Strategy, the Masterplans for Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey and the Environment and Climate Strategy can inform the initial exploration of issues that would take place amongst the first phase of public engagement on an updated Local Plan.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1   The requirement to review a local plan is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) under regulation 10a. The preparation of a full update to the Local Plan will need to be carried out in accordance with the relevant planning acts,

including the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Planning Act 2008, Localism Act 2011, Climate Change Act 2008 and Environment Acts 1995 and 2021. It will also need to adhere to all necessary regulations regarding content, preparation processes and public engagement.

9.2   The government has announced its intention to make changes to the planning system. However, these will require new legislation to be introduced for which no timetable has yet been set out. Any changes will need to be taken into account when they are published. The government has strongly reinforced the message that local authorities should not delay local plan updates to await national changes.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

10.1   A Local Plan reserve is held and contributed to annually in recognition of the scale of costs incurred in preparing a replacement Local Plan, in particular through engagement activities, commissioning of evidence base material from specialist consultants, legal advice and the examination in public. The current budget is expected to be sufficient to bring forward a replacement Local Plan fit for purpose in ensuring that the Council have an up-to-date, nationally compliant plan. However, additional funding would likely be required to meet a significant uplift in engagement approaches or exploration of multiple approaches to issues that are later abandoned. Most of the work would be carried out by the Planning Policy team with specialist input from the Implementation and Strategic Planning teams. Additional support will also be required from other teams across the Council, as necessary including but not limited to the Communications team, Economic Development, Operations and Housing Strategy.

11. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1   A full update to the Local Plan provides opportunities to engage with local healthcare providers and commissioners to identify future requirements and discuss ways in which the planning system may contribute towards achieving their delivery. Policies may also be included reflecting control of air and noise pollution which may have health benefits. Policies may also contribute towards raising standards of new and retrofitted development to support improved living and working environments. Policies and the overall strategic approach may seek to support active travel modes and provision of green infrastructure and sports facilities all of which have potential to offer health benefits.

12. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

12.1   An updated Local Plan will create opportunities to explore and develop policies which promote a stronger environmental and climate change response across the district. This aligns with national efforts to reach net zero. This would take a science-based approach, informed by local evidence that would be commissioned from specialist consultants.

13. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

13.1 An updated Local Plan will provide a robust statutory framework for planning decision-making across Huntingdonshire. It offers opportunities to explore up-to-date policies providing a stronger environmental and climate change response as well as those reflecting changing economic demands and practices. It will provide for new homes of a range of tenures to meet local residents' needs. It will provide additional employment locations to support businesses and provide job opportunities for residents.

14. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED
None

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Full Council 15th May 2019 Adoption of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036

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Public/Confidential(Part2)*
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Statement of Community Involvement

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) –
4 January 2022

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Planning

Report by: Chief Planning Officer

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

RECOMMENDATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on the recommendations
for the Statement of Community Involvement from the Cabinet report attached.

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Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Statement of Community Involvement 2023

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) – 4th January 2022
Cabinet – 24th January 2022

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Planning

Report by: Chief Planning Officer

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

Executive Summary:

A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how local planning authorities will engage with the community on planning matters. This SCI covers planning matters such as involving the community in the production of planning policy documents, neighbourhood planning and involving the community in the planning application process.

The requirement to produce a Statement of Community Involvement is set out in section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Regulations require the SCI to be reviewed at least once every five years. Failure to meet the identified actions in the SCI could (on rare occasions) result in a legal challenge to planning related decisions.

The SCI has been reviewed and updated to reflect the Council's approach to the upcoming Local Plan preparation and consultation stages and reflects changes to the Council's planning application procedures, processes and decision-making.

The first stage of the Local Plan review includes a formal review of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 accompanied by a request to commence preparation of an update to the Plan as presented in a separate but inter-related report. This sits alongside the production of a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and Statement of Community Involvement which have been produced ready for public engagement. It is proposed that the first stage of public engagement will commence in February 2023 and run for 6 weeks.

Agreement is sought for to the contents of the SCI and for it to proceed to public engagement.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet/Committee is

RECOMMENDED
- To approve the contents of the Statement of Community Involvement 2023

- To agree that the Statement of Community Involvement can be published for public consultation commencing in February 2023 and running for 6 weeks.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report sets out the purpose and content of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and asks that Cabinet approve contents of the Statement of Community Involvement and agree that it can be published for public engagement commencing in February 2023.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The requirement to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is set out in Regulation 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and also referred to in Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 (as amended). Further guidance for local authorities is also set out in National Planning Practice Guidance in the Plan-Making section.

2.2 The SCI must reflect the Council's commitment to consultation and engagement, equality and data protection whilst also focussing on how this is undertaken specifically in relation to planning matters.

2.3 The SCI must be reviewed at least once every five years as set out in Regulation 10a of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This ensures that the procedures remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 It is recommended that local planning authorities review and update their SCI at the same time as reviewing and updating a plan to reflect what action will be taken to involve the community in any changes to the Local Plan.

3.2 There is no requirement for local planning authorities to consult when reviewing and updating their Statement of Community Involvement. However, engaging with local communities on the SCI will enable residents, communities and businesses to be involved and informed of how they can contribute to the planning process. It will give the opportunity to suggest alternative views which could be taken on board and implemented subject to the availability of resources and implications for progress on preparation of documents and determination of planning applications.

4. STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

4.1 The Statement of Community Involvement covers the following planning matters:
- Involving the community in the production of planning policy documents
- Neighbourhood planning
- Involving the community in the planning application process
- Brownfield Land Registers
- Monitoring and Review

4.2   To provide a more comprehensive overview of the planning system a chapter has been introduced on 'What is Planning?' (Chapter 2, pages 2-3 of the SCI, Appendix 1). The planning system can be overly complex at times with multiple organisations having responsibility for different aspects of planning. This chapter is designed to provide a signposting service across the wider planning spectrum for members of the public.

4.3   Chapter 3 'Involving the Community in the Production of Planning Documents' (pages 4 to 15 of the SCI, Appendix 1), sets out the process of Local Plan preparation and consultation requirements. It sets out the Council's Statutory obligations, methodology and stages for consultation and public involvement in the development of planning policy documents such as the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents. It also identifies how public comments are processed and taken into account in the development of documents.

4.4   Some engagement methods are specified as 'the Council may', these are not a statutory requirement, but provide a list of the methods that the Council may want to undertake allowing for an element of flexibility dependent on staff, time and financial resources at any particular point in time.

4.5   Chapter 4 covers 'Neighbourhood Planning' (pages 16 to 17 of the SCI, Appendix 1). Unlike other Development Plan Documents such as Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans are not produced by Huntingdonshire District Council. Huntingdonshire District Council is however required to provide neighbourhood planning support and has a statutory requirement to undertake certain elements of consultation, provide guidance (on request) and facilitate the referendum and 'making' (adoption) of the Neighbourhood Plan. This chapter summarises the process and provides links to a more comprehensive Neighbourhood and Community Planning Guide which is specific to Huntingdonshire.

4.6   Chapter 5 (pages 18 to 24 of the SCI, Appendix 1) addresses the topic of 'Involving the Community in the Planning Application Process' and covers aspects such as planning application types, the Council's pre-application service, the planning application process and consultation. Specific focus is also given to decision-making, developer contributions and monitoring, planning appeals and enforcement.

4.7   Chapter 6 (pages 25 to 27 of the SCI, Appendix 1) addresses the Council's 'Brownfield Land Register'. This is register of land that the Council considers is appropriate for residential development. The requirement to produce a register was introduced by Government in April 2017 through The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017. This chapter includes any publicity and consultation procedures that may apply.

4.8   The final two chapters (pages 28 and 29 of the SCI, Appendix 1) provide additional information on 'the monitoring and review process and general complaints procedure.

5. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

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

6. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Public consultation on the SCI is proposed to commence in February 2023 and run for 6 weeks.

6.2 At the close of consultation, the comments made will be assessed and changes made where considered appropriate. A final version of the SCI will then be published on the Council's webpages.

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

7.1 The production of an SCI 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."

7.2 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".

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Internal feedback was requested and received from the Development Management, Implementation and Enforcement Teams (in Planning Services) to ensure that the processes identified within the SCI are correct. Minor amendments were made to reflect changes to the Council's planning application procedures, processes and decision-making.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Statement of Community Involvement must be reviewed at least once every five years as set out in Regulation 10a of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This ensures that the procedures remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the

local community. Failure to meet the identified actions in the SCI could (on rare occasions) result in a legal challenge to planning related decisions

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

10.1 The Statement of Community Involvement must be reviewed at least once every five years as set out in Regulation 10a of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

10.2 Consultation and publication of the SCI is considered essential to meeting the Council's Corporate Plan 2022/23 objective 'improving housing provision' Action 1 'Commence an update of the Local Plan'.

11. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Statement of Community Involvement 2023

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
- Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017
- The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012
- National Planning Practice Guidance
- Huntingdonshire District Council Neighbourhood and Community Planning Guide
- The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017

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Statement of Community Involvement 2023

Statement of Community Involvement 2023

Contents

1 What is the Statement of Community Involvement?

1.1 A Statement of Community Involvement sets out how Local Planning Authorities such as Huntingdonshire District Council (the Council) will engage with the community on planning matters. Engaging with the community is an important part of the planning system; it enables residents and businesses to help shape their communities, the future of their district and provide input into proposed developments in their area. Input from local communities help the council to understand the needs and aspirations of the district whilst also balancing the communities' needs with evidence, research, Government requirements and legislation. This helps the Council to make decisions in the most informed way possible to create sustainable communities.

1.2 The Statement of Community Involvement will approach consultation and engagement in Huntingdonshire through the principles:

- **Representative** - The council will make sure that there are opportunities for local residents, partners and business to get involved in consultation and engagement.
- **Inclusive** - The council understands that successful involvement cannot happen without a good understanding of the make-up, needs and interests of different people and their capacity to engage. An inclusive approach will enable different groups to have the opportunity to participate and help us to fulfil our duties under the Equality Act.
- **Effective** - Effective consultation and engagement means ensuring people's views are used to inform and shape the delivery of services and that council is clear about how views have been taken into account.

1.3 Huntingdonshire District Council's Corporate Plan sets out the Council's objectives, key actions and performance measures and how it will support the needs of residents[1]. In addition, Huntingdonshire District Council is committed to providing equality in policy-making, service delivery and employment and ensuring that it meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty[2] The Council's commitment to equalities is reflected in the Council's Corporate Plan and through the production of Equalities Impact Assessments. As with all Local Planning Authorities the Council is also dedicated to handling personal data in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018[3]

1.4 The requirement to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is set out in regulation 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and also referred to in regulation 13 of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 (these Acts can be amended through the production of other legislation, so it is always useful to find the most up to date versions). Further guidance on SCIs is also set out in National Planning Practice Guidance in the Plan-Making section. The SCI will reflect the Council's commitment to consultation and engagement, equality and data protection whilst also focussing on how this is undertaken specifically in relation to planning matters.

1.5 This Statement of Community Involvement will cover the following planning matters:

- Involving the community in the production of planning policy documents;
- Neighbourhood planning;
- Involving the community in the planning application process;
- Brownfield Land Registers; and
- Monitoring and Review.

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1 Plans and Strategies are updated periodically by the Council and it is always recommended that you check for the latest version
2 Public authorities such as Huntingdonshire District Council are required to have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when carrying out their functions as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
3 For further information you can also visit the Government's Data Protection webpages.

2 | What is Planning?

2 What is Planning?

> "Most new buildings or major changes to existing buildings or to the local environment need consent - known as planning permission.
>
> Without a planning system everyone could construct buildings or use land in any way they wanted, no matter what effect this would have on other people who live and work in their area.
>
> Your local planning authority is responsible for deciding whether a development - anything from an extension on a house to a new shopping centre - should go ahead."
>
> <div align="right">Planning Portal, 2021</div>

National

2.1   Planning in England starts at Government level and is enforced and guided by Statutory Instruments (Orders, Rules and Regulations) and Acts of Parliament (Acts). Examples of these include, but are not limited to The Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development (England) Order 2015, The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017[4]. A more comprehensive list of legislation related to planning can be found on the Planning Portal.

2.2   In addition to Statutory Instruments and Acts of Parliament the Government also produces:

- the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied; and
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), which adds extra detail to national policy requirements.

2.3   For national infrastructure projects such as national transport and energy networks the Government produces National Policy Statements. These statements set out the Government's objectives for the development of nationally significant infrastructure in a particular sector. To find out more about any proposed national infrastructure projects, how they are assessed and how the public can get involved in consultations visit the Government's National Infrastructure Planning webpages.

2.4   The NPPF and NPPG set out processes, procedure and requirements for planning at local level. The documents include information such as what should be taken into account when assessing and making decisions on planning applications and when creating planning policy documents. It also identifies key fixed requirements such as the minimum number of homes required in a particular local authority area.

Regional

2.5   In addition to the above, the Government was also working towards creating a spatial framework for the area called the Oxford - Cambridge Arc. This document would cover the five counties of Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. The Ministry for Housing Communities and local government states that the planning document would focus on:

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4   These Acts and Statutory Instruments can be amended through the production of other legislation, so it is always useful to find the most up to date amendments.

"...the strategic opportunities for growth and environmental improvement that cross local administrative boundaries and require more joined-up thinking across the area – such as strategic approaches to support cleaner air and biodiversity net gain, or a more integrated approach to planning for new transport infrastructure alongside new development. In doing this, we will aim to set a framework that supports better, more sustainable planning and growth at the local level."[5]

2.6   The Spatial Framework would act as a spatially specific national planning policy. This means that district, city and county councils that fall within the area would have to 'have regard' (take into account and adhere to) the Spatial Framework when they were preparing planning policy documents such as local plans, as they do with other national policies and guidance.

2.7   The progress on the Oxford-Cambridge Arc is currently uncertain. However, updates to the project and more information on how you can get involved in the consultation stages of this document if it progresses and any timeframe for future development will be provided by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and not Huntingdonshire District Council.

County

2.8   Cambridgeshire County Council is a local planning authority. The County Council deals with different types of plan-making and planning applications to the district council such as minerals and waste management and county council service developments such as schools and transportation schemes and the production of local transport strategies, more information can be found on the County Council website. The county council produces its own Statement of Community Involvement regarding how it will engage with the community on these matters. However, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority has strategic transport powers and is the Local Transport Authority for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area. The Mayor sets the overall transport strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, called the Local Transport Plan.

Huntingdonshire

2.9   Huntingdonshire District Council is also a local planning authority for the Huntingdonshire district, planning applications are submitted to the Council to be assessed. Applications are required to be submitted for many different types of development including, but not limited to house extensions, new dwellings, construction of new businesses, major developments, development in the countryside. More information on whether you require planning permission, the application process and what is required can be found in Huntingdonshire District Council's Planning Guide and on the Council's Planning webpages. The district council is also responsible for creating the Local Plan and planning policy documents such as Supplementary Planning Documents which are used to help planning officers assess planning applications and to identify to planning applicants what types of development are appropriate and what will be required from that development.

2.10   On a more local level, communities are also allowed to produce Neighbourhood Plans. Neighbourhood planning was introduced by the Localism Act 2011. It allows local communities to develop a shared plan for their local area to shape the development and growth of their own neighbourhood. Once approved, neighbourhood plans are also used to make decisions on planning applications in the area.

2.11   If you are interested in finding out more about planning and the planning system try visiting the Planning Portal.

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5   Oxford - Cambridge Arc.

3 Involving the Community in the Production of Planning Documents

3 Involving the Community in the Production of Planning Documents

Introduction

3.1   There are a number of different planning documents that Huntingdonshire District Council can produce. This chapter sets out some of the main documents that the Council produces, what they do and how Huntingdonshire District Council will engage the community in their preparation (where relevant).

Local Development Scheme

3.2   The Local Development Scheme, or LDS, sets out the timetable for the production of any Development Plan Documents that will be produced by the Council such as the Local Plan. The LDS provides details of the key stages of document production and consultation and estimated dates of when these stages take may take place.

3.3   The Council's Annual Monitoring Report provides updates on the progress of any documents mentioned in the LDS, whether the Council is meeting the targets in the document and why, and outlines any changes to the timetable. The Annual Monitoring Report is published annually on the Council's Monitoring, Research and Evidence Base webpages.

3.4   The LDS is not publicly consulted on however, it must be approved by the Council before it can be published. The document will be taken to Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth)and Cabinet committees to ask for approval for it to be published and to agree that the documents identified in it can be produced. Members of the public are allowed to attend committee meetings and have a right to speak. Further information on how to attend or speak at Council committee meetings can be found on the Councillors, Meetings and Decision Making webpage. The Council may also notify the public of the committee dates using the Council's facebook and twitter accounts.

Development Plan Documents, Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents

3.5   Development Plan Documents (DPDs) are planning documents that help guide development in a specific area. The documents can set out planning policies and sites for development. This helps planning officers assess planning applications and identifies to planning applicants what types of development may be considered appropriate and what will be required from that development. Development Plan Documents can include:

- Local Plans which look at the whole of the district;
- Area Action Plans that look at a specific area within a district; and
- Neighbourhood Plans that are produced at a local community level. Neighbourhood Plans are covered separately in the section 4 'Neighbourhood Planning'

3.6   DPDs such as Local Plans and Area Action Plans are accompanied by a Policies Map. This map shows where policies and site allocations (areas identified for development) are located and may apply within the district and where important landscape areas are, and the boundaries of conservation areas etc. The map may be updated periodically to include the latest information, for example to identify new Neighbourhood Plan areas and land designations, so it is always best to check for the latest version.

3.7   Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are documents that provide extra information relating to policies in Development Plan Documents. SPDs can provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues such as design or developer contributions. A planning officer will take into account the information in an SPD when assessing and making decisions on planning applications.

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Who do we consult?

3.8 [The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, Part 6](#) sets out who Huntingdonshire District Council must and can consult when producing their DPDs. Local Authorities are not required to contact or consult in the same way for Supplementary Planning Documents, however the Council will use the same approach with regards to who we consult for both DPDs and SPDs as set out below.

3.9 The Regulations identify a number of 'Specific consultation bodies' which the Council **must** consult with. These include organisations such as[6]:

- non-departmental public bodies such as Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Homes England;
- transport and energy infrastructure providers;
- infrastructure service providers such as sewerage and water organisations, and the National Health Service Commissioning Board
- neighbouring Local Authorities;
- Parish Councils.

3.10 'General consultation bodies' are identified in the Regulations as bodies who the council **may** consult with if it is considered relevant to the document that is being prepared. These include organisations such as[7]:

- Voluntary bodies, some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the district council's area;
- Voluntary bodies which represent the interests of :

  - different racial, ethnic or national groups in the council's area;
  - different religious groups in the council's area;
  - disabled persons in the council's area;
  - people carrying on business in the council's area.

3.11 Other people and organisations that the Council **considers it is important** to consult with could include, but are not limited to:

- local residents;
- local businesses, or business networks;
- developers and planning agents;
- special interest groups;
- environmental groups;
- land owners.

3.12 When dealing with Gypsy and Traveller issues, we will specifically seek to engage with local Gypsies and Travellers and their representative bodies as well as the settled community.

3.13 Members of the public, businesses and organisations **can also sign up** to the Council's [consultation database](#) so that they can be contacted directly when planning policy documents are consulted upon. Responding to planning policy documents is not a closed consultation process and any individual, group, organisation or business is welcome to submit comments and provide opinions.

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6   See paragraph 3.14 for more information
7   See paragraph 3.14 for more information

3	**Involving the Community in the Production of Planning Documents**

3.14 More detailed information on the exact list of who a local authority should legally consult can be found in [The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, Part 6](#) with the interpretation of the definitions found in *Part 1* under *General* and then *Interpretation* . Regulations can be amended through the production of other statutory instruments so it is advisable to check for the most up to date amendments.

How do we consult?

3.15 The Council will use a broad range of methods to engage and consult with specific consultation bodies, general consultation bodies and other people, groups and organisations that the Council considers appropriate. This is to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to participate in the production and preparation of planning policy documents, share their interests and have their opinions heard.

3.16 It should be noted that the Council has a duty to provide a value for money service for the local community and businesses. Huntingdonshire District Council will implement the most appropriate methods of consultation and engagement ensuring that the scale of this is relevant to the type of document produced and the financial and officer resources available at the time.

3.17 Some of the methods of consultation and engagement that the Council may employ are listed below. However, it must be noted that actual methods used may differ depending on the purpose of the engagement exercise and the target audience. The Council will ensure that government regulation is complied with as an absolute minimum. In the first instance electronic methods of consultation and engagement will be used. We recognise equality issues and will seek to ensure that involvement is open to all, attempts will be made to reach other hard to reach groups by alternative methods where resources allow. Engagement methods may include:

- **Providing updates and information**

  - via the Council's [facebook](#) and [twitter](#) accounts; notification of consultation events
  - via email, newsletters and leaflets / posters
  - via the Council's [Planning webpages](#)
  - via leaflets and posters in key locations where resources allow
  - by offering appropriate advice and information to the public as necessary.

- **Press releases** - Using local news or media to increase local awareness where appropriate. Publishing notices in local newspapers where required.
- **Engaging through meetings and presentations -** Meetings may be held to discuss and gain feedback on key issues and emerging planning policies. Specific groups who may be involved could include Town or Parish Councils, special interest groups, or local communities and businesses. The Council may decide to discuss any outstanding issues or objections with key groups, organisations or partners.
- **Hosting drop in events and exhibitions** - Exhibition events may be digital or in person. Where exhibition material is available we will attempt to publish this on the Council's [planning webpages](#) as a minimum. Other methods for digitally hosting events or exhibitions may become available, but will depend on the resources available at the time. For any in-person drop in events or exhibitions we will recognise equality issues and will seek to ensure that involvement is open to all, for example by choosing accessible consultation venues. Groups that are harder than others to reach include young people and those who work long hours. Where appropriate we will try to have some consultation events in the evening. We will also try, where possible, to avoid the use of jargon.
- **Publishing consultation documents -** Publication of electronic documents will take into account accessibility standards, further information on this can be found by reading the Council's [Accessibility Statement](#). Consultation documents will be published via the following methods:

  - On the Council's [Planning webpages](#)

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- On the Council's consultation portal
- **Making hard copies available at Pathfinder House** for those who do not have internet access and other more local venues when resources allow. Members of the public, businesses, groups and organisations may request a hard copy of consultation documentation from Huntingdonshire District Council however, charges may apply to cover printing and postage costs. Details of any costs to purchase consultation documents will be provided on the relevant consultation webpage or by contacting Planning Policy. Documents can be made available on request in large print, alternative formats and different languages where required.

Councillors and Committees

3.18   In many cases planning policy documents must also be approved by the Councillors before they can be published, adopted or consulted on. Councillors play an important role in the approval and decision-making process forming an additional layer of democracy by representing the views and opinions of the wards that they represent. The Council may undertake the following processes with regard to the production and approval of planning policy documents:

- Hold workshops for Councillors to gather public opinion on what is important in their neighbourhoods.
- Produce briefing notes or hold presentations to update Councillors on the progress of documents, any next stages that may be required or the process of producing a document.
- Development Plan Documents will be taken to Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) and Cabinet for content approval and approval to take out to public consultation. Additionally, 'pre-submission' versions of Development Plan Documents (including arrangements for agreeing any minor modifications before submission) will be taken to Council and final adoption of such documents will also be addressed at this committee.
- Supplementary Planning Documents will be taken to Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) and Cabinet for approval to consult on and to be 'adopted'.

3.19   Members of the public are allowed to attend committee meetings to voice any concerns or opinions. Further information on how to attend or speak at Council committee meetings can be found on the Councillors, Meetings and Decision Making webpage. Members of the public can find out about future committee meetings and what will be discussed via the following methods:

- by visiting the Council's Calendar of Meetings.
- by subscribing to updates
- by viewing the forward plan
- by viewing forthcoming decisions
- The Council will can post updates on the Huntingdonshire District Council facebook and twitter accounts and on Huntingdonshire District Council's planning pages.

3.20   Councillors are also able to act as representatives for their local community that they serve, you can ask your local councillor for advice and discuss local planning matters by contacting them directly. Your local Councillor and their contact details can be found on the council's webpages.

How do you respond?

3.21   The council encourages using the consultation database as the preferred method to receive consultation comments. This means that any comments that you make are summarised in your own words. The consultation database also allows you to:

- keep track of opportunities to get involved with shaping local planning policy;
- register for notifications about new opportunities to get involved;
- make comments on open consultation events;
- view comments made by others.

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3.22   The Council will make every attempt to provide suitable alternative methods available to those who may find it difficult to use the consultation database or who may have limited or no access to the internet. These methods include providing paper copies of response forms on request and providing advice or assistance to the public to submit their comments via alternative methods. It should be noted that this is not an extensive list of alternatives and members of the public may contact the Council to discuss alternative solutions. The Council can also be contacted for assistance, or consultation comments can submitted via the methods below:

- **Post, or in person:** Planning Policy, Huntingdonshire District Council, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN. Opening Hours are currently 8.45am to 5pm every Monday to Thursday and 8.45am to 4.30pm on Friday. Please check the Council's webpages for updates.
- **Telephone:** 01480 388388
- **E-mail:** local.plan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

3.23   At certain stages when producing documents the Council may be asked to provide a summary of the comments made at the consultation stage. You are encouraged to provide a summary of your comments in your own words to ensure that your comments are summarised accurately. However, if you do not provide a summary, the Council will summarise your comments to the best of their ability.

3.24   On occasion instead of receiving comments from individuals, businesses, or community action groups the Council may receive a petition as part of a consultation response. This sometimes happens when a significant amount of people are concerned about a specific topic. The Council is happy to receive petitions although it should be understood that individual names will not be added to the consultation database. The Council asks that a main contact is nominated to be the principle point of contact for all individuals who have signed the petition and that it is accompanied with summary of the petition including what the main areas of concern are and how many people have signed the petition. If a petition is registered directly through the Council's consultation database please ensure where possible, that all personal information such as email addresses, addresses and signatures are redacted before the petition is loaded onto the system and provide a separate unredacted version for Council records. If the petition is emailed or posted to the Council, the Council will register it on the Council's consultation database under the name of the main contact provided. All personal information such as email addresses, addresses and signatures will be redacted before the petition is loaded onto the system and the Council will summarise the main issues or concerns and how many people have signed the petition as part of the consultation response.

What we do with your comments

3.25   The Council will read and confirm your comments so that they are publicly available to view on the consultation database. In circumstances where high volumes of comments are being submitted, it may take a while before your comments can be publicly viewed. Comments will be rejected where they offend equalities legislation, are discriminatory, offensive, racist or threatening in their language. Your name will be published alongside your comments.

3.26   It is advised that you should only include information that you are happy to be made publicly available on the internet, as all comments can be viewed online. In line with the Council's Privacy Statement the Council will attempt to redact any personal data such as email addresses, telephone numbers and signatures where these are provided. Separate more specific privacy statements may be provided alongside consultation document response forms, online, electronically and on paper where they require tailoring to specific circumstances.

3.27   Your comments are important to us, once all comments are registered the Council will read and reflect on all representations submitted and identify key issues. The findings of the consultation alongside any findings from evidence based documents will be taken into account when producing, preparing and amending planning policy documents. The council will produce a Statement of Consultation which will set out what consultation processes have been carried out on development plan documents and supplementary planning documents; and how the documents have evolved as a result of the consultation and engagement and the responses received.

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3.28 Development Plan Documents have an additional layer of scrutiny to Supplementary Planning Documents. For DPDs, the proposed submission version of the document (the version of the document that the Council considers should be used to assess and make decisions on planning applications) must be submitted to the Secretary of State who will appoint a Planning Inspector to carry out an independent examination of the document. This means that all comments received during the 'Proposed Submission' consultation of a development plan document will also be provided to, and read by a Planning Inspector. The Planning Inspector may want to contact you for further information and therefore your name and contact details will be available to them for this purpose.

When do we consult?

3.29 The Council has a legal Duty to Cooperate. This requirement was introduced by the Localism Act 2011, and is set out in section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It requires the Council "to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis" [8] to maximise the effectiveness of Development Plan Documents in the context of strategic cross boundary matters (matters that may cross local authority boundaries or affect nearby local authorities). This legal requirement and engagement will be a continuous process and be addressed throughout the production of both DPDs and other local development documents (where necessary). The Council will update and review its Duty to Cooperate requirements where necessary throughout all stages of the process.

3.30 Throughout the production of Development Plan Documents and where required for other local development documents the Council will also produce and consult on the following documents. These documents have been separated out from the formal stages of document production below as they may be updated, reviewed, consulted on at various stages. Public engagement will be in line with whichever document production stage the reports are published in.

- **A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report -** This report takes place early on in the pre-production and evidence gathering stage. It identifies the how a document will be appraised in terms of sustainability. Amongst other tasks, it collects baseline information, data and relevant plans and programmes which can be used to inform and assess the sustainability implications of the document. It also identifies any sustainability issues and problems with the document and creates a framework for assessment. The Council is legally obliged to consult with the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England.
- **A Sustainability Appraisal -** Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a process for assessing the social, economic and environmental impacts of a plan and aims to ensure that sustainable development (a term which is explained in the NPPF) is at the heart of the document making process. It is a legal requirement that DPDs are subject to sustainability appraisal[9]. In line with good practice, the SA will also include the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The SEA is an assessment of the impacts the document may have on the environment. [10]. More information on SEA and SA can be found on the Government's webpages. The Council is legally obliged to consult with the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England.
- **A Habitats Regulations Assessment -** This is a multi-staged process which assesses whether the document could significantly harm features of a European site such as Special Areas of Conservation , Special Protection Areas , Ramsar sites - wetlands of international importance (both listed and proposed). More information on Habitats Regulations Assessment and the processes required can be found on the Government's webpages. The Council is legally obliged to consult with Natural England.

3.31 For the above documents the Council may also directly contact 'specific consultation bodies', 'general consultation bodies' and any residents or other people conducting business in the local planning authority's area as appropriate. This would ensure that it would not be a closed consultation process and any individual, group, organisation or business could submit comments and provide opinions.

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8   National Planning Practice Guidance - Plan-Making
9   Through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
10   This is a requirement of the European SEA Directive which was transposed directly into UK law through the SEA Regulations The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

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3.32   The tables below set out the potential stages in the production of Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. Regulation numbers e.g. Regulation 18 have been identified in some of stages; where this is the case it means that this is a formal stage of consultation or engagement that is required through the The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Where no regulation is identified this represents additional stages of engagement that the Council may undertake if it is decided that additional consultation and engagement is required. How the Council must consult and engage as a minimum is provided in the table; how the Council may add benefit through potential additional methods is set out under 'How do we consult?'.

Table 1 Stages of Development Plan Document Production

Stage 1: Pre-production and evidence gathering (Regulation 18)
Process and Requirements: This is part of the pre-production and evidence gathering stage for Development Plan Documents. This stage assists the Council in the creation of a final version of the document which will eventually be examined by a Planning Inspector and adopted by the Council as a document that will be used to assess and make decisions on planning applications. **The Council must:** Identify and consult on main issues that the document needs to address and consider alternative policy options. **The Council may:** Consult and/or engage the community on: • Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report • certain issue papers that may help the Council to identify land or growth options within the district such as a 'Call for sites' where members of the community, businesses and developers can submit potential sites for development which may be included a Development Plan Document, or a settlement hierarchy methodology to assess the sustainability of settlements within the district. • a variety of evidence based documents that will identify the main issues within the district and/or assessments on the suitability of potential land for development within the district. • specific development plan options documents which could present policy and/or growth options to be included within a Development Plan Document. • a full draft Development Plan Document This consultation and engagement may take place over an extended period of time and consist of a number of separate consultations. Timetables for the production of documents can be found by viewing the Council's Local Development Scheme and Annual Monitoring Report and by visiting the Council's Planning webpages.
How the Council must engage: The Council must notify the following groups of the subject of a local plan which the local planning authority propose to prepare and ask them to make representations (comment). The Council must consider these comments when producing their document. • specific consultation bodies, • general consultation bodies • residents or other persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area whom the local planning authority considers it appropriate
Stage 2: Pre-Submission (Regulations 19 & 20)
Process and Requirements: At this stage, a final version of the Development Plan Document is produced alongside any evidence based documents to support the document as required through regulation. This is referred to as the Proposed Submission document. These documents are later examined (see stage 3).

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The Council must: Publish the proposed submission and any other documents required through the regulations for a minimum of six weeks. Views will be sought on whether the document is legally compliant and sound (see the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance for more information).

The Council may: Publish additional documents that are not required through Regulation for consultation, engagement or to provide additional context or information to support the proposed submission version of the Development Plan Document.

How the Council must engage: The Council must publicise the proposed submission local plan and any accompanying documents that are named in the regulations to the following groups:

- specific consultation bodies,
- general consultation bodies
- residents or other persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area whom the local planning authority considers it appropriate

A 'statement of the representations procedure' and a statement of where the proposed submission documents are available for inspection including the places and times that they can be inspected should be made available. A 'statement of the representations procedure' provides details on the document that will be sent to the Secretary of State, including, but not limited to what the document is about, what area it covers and consultation details including how people can respond and for how long. A hard copy of the proposed submission document must be made available for inspection at a principle named location. Documents must be available for consultation and viewing for a minimum of 6 weeks.

Stage 3: Examination (Regulation 22 to 25)

Process and Requirements: After Pre-Submission (Stage 2), the Council must submit the Development Plan Document and any evidence based documents to support the document as required through regulation (as well as additional documentation that they Council feels would be useful) to the Secretary of State for an independent examination. The Planning Inspector will decide whether the document complies with legislation and if it is 'sound'. The Council must also provide a summary of any comments made to the pre-submission consultation (Stage 2).

During the examination process there are a number of further opportunities for the public to participate, this includes being invited by the Planning Inspector to provide further information or to appear at a public examination session to voice objections. In addition, if the Planning Inspector suggests that the Development Plan Document requires amendments a public consultation will be held on the 'proposed modifications' to the document allowing people to voice their opinion on the suitability of these modifications.

Further detailed information on the examination process can be found at the Planning Inspectorate.

How the Council must engage: The Council must make available all documents submitted to the secretary of state, this includes:

- The Proposed Submission version of the Development Plan Document
- A Sustainability Appraisal of the Development Plan Document
- A Policies Map
- A Statement of Consultation
- The comments made to the pre-submission consultation (Stage 2)
- Any other supporting documents that the Council thinks provide additional context or information to support the proposed submission version of the Development Plan Document.

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The Council must notify the following people and organisations that the Development Plan Document has been submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by a Planning Inspector.

- specific consultation bodies,
- general consultation bodies
- residents or other persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area whom the local planning authority considers it appropriate
- Any person or organisation who requested to be notified of the submission of the document to the Secretary of State

As part of the examination process the Council must also publicise the date, time and place where examination hearings are to be held and the name of the person who has been appointed to carry out the examination at least six weeks in advance.

If the Inspector recommends modifications to the Development Plan Document the Council will undertake further consultation in compliance with legal requirements,

The Planning Inspector will produce a report that will outline whether the document should be adopted; adopted with recommended modifications (if the council asks the Inspector to suggest modifications to make the document sound); or not adopted. The Council must publish these recommendations and tell those people who requested to be notified of the publication.

Stage 4: Adoption (Regulation 26)

Process and Requirements: If the Planning Inspector has recommended the Development Plan Document for adoption (with or without modifications) the document will taken to Huntingdonshire District Council's Full Council meeting to recommend that it be adopted.

How the Council must engage: If adopted the Council must as soon as possible, make available on the Council's webpage:

- the adopted Development Plan Document
- an adoption statement - this document outlines the date that the document was adopted, includes information on any modifications made to the document, how people can challenge the document if they disagree with its adoption and deadlines for submitting a legal challenge.
- the sustainability appraisal of the Development Plan Document
- details of where the Development Plan Document can be viewed and at what times.

A copy of the adoption statement must also be sent to anyone who requested to be notified of the adoption of the Development Plan Document and the Secretary of State.

Under Regulation 113 of the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) there is a six week period for legal challenge to the High Court. People may challenge the document based on two specific reasons:

1. the document is not within the appropriate power;
2. a procedural requirement has not been complied with.

This information is set out in the document's published adoption statement to ensure that members of the public are aware of their rights.

Stage 5: Monitoring and Review

Process and Requirements:

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Under regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) the Council must review local plans, at least once every 5 years from their adoption date to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community. This requirement is also set out in paragraph 33 of the National Planning Policy Framework and in National Planning Practice Guidance.

A local planning authority may need to gather new evidence to inform their review. Proportionate, relevant and up-to-date evidence should be used to justify a decision not to update policies when undertaking a review to assess if they need updating.

The review of the policies in the Development Plan Document will also be will be published in the Council's Annual Monitoring Report.

How the Council must engage: As with all other stages of Development Plan Document production the Council must consider the Duty to Cooperate.

The Council may need to gather evidence to inform the review to conclude whether the document needs updating and if so whether a full or partial review of that document is required. The Council must publish the reasons for their decision.

3.33   Supplementary Planning Documents have less stages in their preparation. They add further detail to policies in the Local Plan and are not subject to an independent examination.

Table 2 Stages of Supplementary Planning Document Production

Stage 1: Pre-production and evidence gathering
Process and Requirements: This is part of the pre-production and evidence gathering stage of producing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). This stage assists the Council in the creation of a final version of the document which will be adopted by the Council and used in the determination of planning applications. **The Council may:** Collect evidence to inform the creation of the SPD, consider issues and alternatives in the production of a draft SPD, decide whether SEAs, SAs or HRAs are required.
How the Council must engage: There is no legal requirement to consult or engage at this stage. **How the Council may engage:** The Council may carry out informal consultation or workshops and work with relevant groups or organisations depending on the nature, extent or subject matter of the document. The Council may produce or commission further evidence based documents to inform the creation of the SPD. For example an SPD on affordable housing could require input from Social Housing Providers.
Stage 2: Draft SPD (Regulation 13)
Process and Requirements: At this stage a final version of the SPD is produced alongside any evidence based documents to support the document as required through regulation. **The Council may:** Publish additional documents that are not required through Regulation for consultation to support the SPD and provide additional context.
How the Council must engage: The Council must consult for a minimum of 4 weeks on the draft SPD . A hard copy of the draft SPD must be made available for inspection at a principle named location and on the Council's webpages. A statement must be produced setting out: ●   the closing date for the consultation and where comments can be sent to

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- the people, groups or organisations consulted when preparing the supplementary planning document;
- a summary of the main issues raised and how those issues have been addressed in the supplementary planning document;

Stage 3: Adoption (Regulation 14)
Process and Requirements: After Consultation the council will make amendments to the SPD where necessary after which the document will taken to Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) and Cabinet to be approved and adopted. A summary of the consultation process and the main issues raised during the consultation and how those issues have been addressed in the supplementary planning document will also be available to view.
How the Council must engage: Once adopted the Council must publish the adopted Supplementary Planning Document including an Adoption Statement. This document outlines the date that the document was adopted, includes information on any modifications made to the document, how people can challenge the document if they disagree with its adoption and deadlines for submitting a legal challenge. The Adoption Statement should be sent to any person who has asked to be notified of the document's adoption. Under Regulation 113 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 there is a six week period for legal challenge to the High Court. People may challenge the document based on two specific reasons: 1.   the document is not within the appropriate power; 2.   a procedural requirement has not been complied with. This information is set out in the document's published Adoption Statement to ensure that members of the public are aware of their rights.
Stage 4: Monitoring and Review
Process and Requirements: The final SPD is monitored, to make sure it is achieving its aims. The SPD may be reviewed, where necessary. Any review or monitoring of the SPD will be published in the Council's Annual Monitoring Report.

Planning Policy Guidance

3.34   The Council may from time to time publish additional guidance to provide further clarification on certain elements of planning policy. These documents have no official status or requirement to consult and engage with the community, however targeted engagement may be undertaken to ensure that the guidance is easy to understand and covers any frequently asked questions on the specific subject matter. Any guidance will be published on the Council's Planning webpages.

Annual Monitoring Report[11]

3.35   The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) reports on the progress made in the preparation of Development Plan Documents identified in the Council's Local Development Scheme and monitors how these documents are performing, meeting their objectives and how well the policies within them are being achieved and implemented including policies which are not being implemented. The Council must publish this information at least annually and also report on activity relating to the Duty to Cooperate. The report can also include other information such as up to date information on Neighbourhood Plans and Community Infrastructure Levy payments, but these can also be published separately if the Council wishes to do so. Currently the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Infrastructure Funding Statements can be found under the Council's CIL 'Annual Reporting' webpages.

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11   referred to in Section 34 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as Authorities' Monitoring Report

Involving the Community in the Production of Planning Documents   3

3.36   Huntingdonshire District Council publishes a two part Annual Monitoring Report, the first part of which deals with specific matters such as housing delivery, future housing commitments and the ability of the Council to meet Government targets such as the Five-Year Housing Land Supply and the Housing Delivery Test. Part two covers more general policy monitoring, progress against the Local Development Scheme etc.

3.37   The Council will use information in the Annual Monitoring Report to help inform whether there is a need to update any development plan documents (following the procedure set out in Stage 6 of Table 1) and the effectiveness of Supplementary Planning Documents.

Neighbourhood Planning

4 Neighbourhood Planning

4.1   Neighbourhood planning was introduced by the Localism Act 2011. It allows local communities to shape the development and growth of their own neighbourhood area (most often the town/parish area) by preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, a Neighbourhood Development Order or a Community Right to Build Order.

4.2   A Neighbourhood Plan must be produced by Parish or Town Councils or an appointed Neighbourhood Forum, it can include policies and site allocations. Once approved, neighbourhood plans are used to help make decisions on planning applications in the area. Alternatively a Neighbourhood Development Order (which also must be produced by Parish or Town Councils or an appointed Neighbourhood Forum) grants planning permission for specific types of development in a specific neighbourhood area. Whereas a Community Right to Build Order is a type of Neighbourhood Development Order but can be created by a local community organisation and can grant planning permission for small scale development for community benefit on a specific site or sites in a neighbourhood area.

4.3   Unlike other Development Plan Documents such as Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders are not produced by Huntingdonshire District Council. The Plans and Orders are instead created and led by parish/town councils or neighbourhood planning forums. Huntingdonshire District Council is however required to provide neighbourhood planning support. In some cases the Council may have to undertake consultation on Neighbourhood Area Designations (the identified area that a Neighbourhood Plan or Order will cover). However, usually it is only when the 'submission' version of the Plan or Order is produced (the version of the Neighbourhood Plan or Order that the town/Parish considers suitable for adoption) that Huntingdonshire District Council takes the lead. At this stage the Council will organise and coordinate consultation, independent examination, referendum stages and 'make' the Plan or Order. In the case of a Neighbourhood Plan this means that the document can be used to determine planning applications, for Neighbourhood Development Orders this means permission is granted for the development outlined in the Order.

4.4   The Council has produced a Neighbourhood and Community Planning Guide aimed at town and parish councils, which sets out in more detail:

- the range of community planning tools available;
- the council's support for town or parish councils wishing to prepare a neighbourhood plan; and
- signposts to the wide range of advice and guidance currently available.

4.5   A summary of the key stages of neighbourhood planning and what the Council's role will be in terms of advice support, consultation and engagement has been set out below. The Council provides updates on the progress of each neighbourhood plan on its Neighbourhood Planning Webpages and through its Neighbourhood Planning in Huntingdonshire document.

Neighbourhood Planning | 4

taking decisions: at key stages in the neighbourhood planning process, and leading on the formal stages of the neighbourhood planning process
providing advice: providing support in meeting the statutory tests for neighbourhood plans, and commenting on draft versions of the plan
providing assistance: explaining the process, and pointing to evidence and other sources of support

Stage	Step		HDC can...
Getting started	1: Getting organised		Meet with you to discuss your options
	2: Applying for a Neighbourhood Area		Provide a template neighbourhood area application letter and area map
	3: Consultation on the Application		If necessary, run consultation on area application
	4: Designation of the Neighbourhood Area		Formally designate the neighbourhood area
Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan	5: Community engagement and evidence		
	6: Developing Plan or Order Content		Advise about policy writing
	7: Consulting on the Draft Plan or Order		Provide a health-check of your plan or Order before you consult on it
Getting the Plan in place	8: Submitting the Neighbourhood Plan or Order		Provide a health-check of your revised plan or Order before you submit it
	9: Consulting on the Submitted Plan or Order		Run consultation on the submitted plan or Order
	10: The Examination	Appoint Examiner	Appoint the Examiner
		Independent examination	
		Examiner reports	
	11: Progressing to Referendum		Formally recommend that the plan or Order progresses to referendum
	12: The Referendum		Organise and publicise the referendum
	13: Adoption of the Plan or Order		If a majority vote 'Yes', the plan or Order is 'made' by Full Council and comes into force as part of the Development Plan
Delivering the Neighbourhood Plan	Implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan or Order		Decide planning applications in your area in accordance with the district-wide local plan and your neighbourhood plan. Development that is permitted under a Neighbourhood Development Order can then take place without having to apply for planning permission. However, if the order is subject to conditions or limitations, then an 'approvals application' may have to be made to the local planning authority to confirm that each development proposal satisfies the relevant conditions or limitations.[12]

12   See Locality's [Neighbourhood Planning Guides](#) for More information.

5	**Involving the Community in the Planning Application Process**

5 Involving the Community in the Planning Application Process

Planning Applications

5.1   Many different types of development including, but not limited to house extensions, new dwellings, construction of new businesses, major developments and development in the countryside require planning permission.

5.2   There a number of different ways to seek planning permission. The type of planning application(s), notifications, or consent that you will need to submit to the Council will depend on the type of development you are proposing. Some of the main types of planning permission are listed below[13]:

- **Outline Applications** - These applications seek to gain approval on the general principles of development for example whether the scale / size and nature of the development would be acceptable. Fewer details are provided in outline applications, but as a minimum the application should include information on the proposed use(s); amount of development; indicative layout and access; and the upper and lower scale parameters (height, width and length) of any building. The Council can ask for more details to be submitted if they feel that it is necessary to enable a proper assessment of the application. Examples where this may be the case include where the proposed development is in a Conservation Area. After an Outline Application is granted permission, one or more Reserved Matters Applications must be approved, before development can commence.

- **Reserved Matters Applications** - After an Outline Application has been submitted Reserved Matters applications are required to address any outstanding planning issues. These applications can be for all or part of the site.

- **Full Applications** -These applications seek to gain permission for all of the details of a development.

- **Householder consent** - This can be used to seek permission for projects that alter or enlarge a house, including works within the boundary of a house. It can be used for projects such as: extensions, loft conversions, dormer windows, garages and outbuildings.

- **Listed Building consent** - This will be required to seek approval of the demolition of a listed building or for works to alter or extend listed buildings.

- **Advertisement consent** - These applications seek to gain approval to display an advertisement or sign which requires consent from the Local Planning Authority. This could include traffic signs, posters and notices, facia and projecting signs, town and village name signs.

- **Notifications (including certain tree works)** - In conservation areas, trees that have a trunk diameter of more than 7.5cm at a height of 1.5m from the ground must submit a notice to the Council identifying any work to be undertaken on them. If the work is to reduce the number of trees to assist the growth of other trees the diameter can be increased to 10cm before a notification is required. If you want to carry out work to protected trees within a conservation area you must give the Council at least six weeks' written notice of the work you propose to do using a Tree Works Application.

- **Permitted Development and Prior Approval** - In some cases development does not require planning permission or consent from the Council. Instead, permission is technically granted through national legislation[14], this is called Permitted Development. It should be noted however, that permitted development may still need to adhere to certain standards and conditions. It is important to check these requirements before work is carried out. In some cases, even though development is 'permitted' you may need to submit a Prior Approval application to the Council so that it can be determined if certain conditions set out in the permitted development requirements can be addresses e.g. flooding and transport impact, contamination issues or the impacts of noise from existing commercial premises on residents. Prior Approval may be required if the development is situated in certain areas such as conservation areas or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

- **Permission in Principle** - This is an alternative way of getting planning permission for development which mostly includes housing. It has two stages: Permission in Principle which if approved

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13   This is a summary of some types of planning consent required before work or development is to take place, this is not an extensive description or list

14   The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

Involving the Community in the Planning Application Process | 5

confirms the suitability of the site, its location and the amount of development that is suitable on the site. Applicants / developers must then apply for a 'technical details consent', this is where the detailed development proposals are assessed. This must be approved before any development can take place.

5.3   It is important to find out whether planning permission /consent is needed before you start any development projects or work. Failure to go through the proper planning processes can result in enforcement action. In some cases not following the correct procedure can be considered a criminal offence, for example if unauthorised works are carried out on protected trees or listed buildings, which could result in imprisonment or fines.

5.4   To find out information on whether you require planning permission, the application process and what is required visit Huntingdonshire District Council's Planning Guide and the Council's Planning webpages. The Planning Portal also provides information on whether planning permission is required, including interactive guides and interactive mini guides that set out information on planning permission and permitted development for projects such as conservatories, extensions, loft conversions, outbuildings and porches, further information on common projects, and what your responsibilities are with regard to meeting the relevant planning rules and building regulations.

5.5   A flow chart for the planning application can be found on page 8 of the council's Planning Guide and further details can be also be found on the Council's Planning Process webpages. The following text sets out the consultation and engagement processes that the Council will undertake for:

- Pre-application
- Planning Applications
- Decision Making
- Monitoring of Conditions and Section 106
- Planning Enforcement
- Planning Appeals

Pre-application

5.6   Huntingdonshire District Council believes that it is in your best interest to ask the planning department to confirm if planning permission is needed or not before work is undertaken. If permission isn't required, the Council can provide written confirmation, known as a lawful development certificate. This is your evidence that permission wasn't required in case a query is ever raised over why the development didn't have formal planning permission.

5.7   The Council provides pre-application advice. This is an opportunity for you to ask planning officers to informally assess your development proposal, whether it is considered to accord with planning policy and what information, assessments, documentation or mitigation measures may be required to make the development acceptable. This will enable a streamlined process once the application is formally submitted to the Council. No formal decision is made on your development proposal at this time. Further information and charging structures can be found on the pre-application advice webpages.

5.8   The Council can also identify what community engagement may be, or is required as part of the planning process and how this can be effective in producing positive outcomes for the community. Applicants are encouraged to consult with neighbours and the local town or parish council as early as possible. For major large scale development pre-application consultation is required under the Localism Act 2011.

The Planning Application Process

5.9   Applications for planning permission can be made online through the national Planning Portal. Once a planning application has been received it will be checked in line with legislation and the councils local list. If it is considered to be acceptable, with the correct documents, plans and fee, the application will be validated and entered into the public register of planning applications. Applications can then be

5 | Involving the Community in the Planning Application Process

viewed publicly on the Council's Public Access system. On the Public Access System you can view weekly or monthly lists of planning applications based on the date they were validated or decided. It is also possible to sign up for planning application email alerts to be notified of all applications in a given parish or ward; you must be logged in to do so.

5.10   Planning legislation requires that at any time before a decision is made on a planning application, stakeholders and the local community should have the opportunity to comment on any aspect of the proposal. The level and extent of consultation will vary depending on the size, scale, location and nature of the proposed development.

5.11   Consultation on planning applications will take place with both statutory and non-statutory consultees. Who is consulted on each individual application will depend on the nature of the proposal and its location. All consultees have 21 days from the issue of the consultation notice to make comments on the application (extended as appropriate where the period extends over public or bank holidays). However, some bodies such as Natural England will be allowed a longer period of time to comment where this is prescribed by legislation. The minimum statutory requirements are set out in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

5.12   How the council consults on planning applications is set out below:

Table 3 How the council consults on planning applications

Development Type/Size	Huntingdonshire District Council Consultation Commitment
• Major developments (residential sites of either 10 dwellings or more, or 0.5 hectares or more, or commercial developments of 1000 sq. metres or more in floor space or one hectare or more) • Applications subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); • Work affecting listed buildings or conservation areas; • Applications affecting public rights of way, bridleways or byways.	Press Notice Site Notice Neighbour Letters
• All other developments	Neighbour Letters Site Notices in some cases

Consultation

5.13   Documents can be viewed on the Council's Public Access system, or in person at the Council's Offices. If you wish to view documents in person, you are encouraged to contact the Customer Service Centre in advance to make arrangements.

5.14   Once a valid application has been received, we aim to provide a decision within 13 weeks if it is a major planning application or within eight weeks if it is an application for minor or other development. Applications for development subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment have a longer time within which we aim to provide a decision at 16 weeks. We will determine planning applications as soon as is possible after the 21 day consultation period has ended.

5.15   Comments pursuant to planning applications must be submitted in writing via the Public Access system or by email (development.control@huntingdonshire.gov.uk). Comments will be rejected where they offend equalities legislation, are discriminatory, offensive, racist or threatening in their language. Comments and

consultation responses will be held on the application's file and made publicly available to view via the website. The Council will not publish sensitive information (such as personal telephone numbers, email addresses or signatures). If the Council receives a petition in relation to a planning application, the signatures will be redacted and the petition made available on Public Access.

Amendments

5.16 In order to ensure timely decision-making for all our applicants, the planning department (Development Services) will not accept amendments to planning applications, with the exception of large-scale major or strategic applications.

5.17 Once a planning application is made valid it will be publicly available on our Public Access webpages with full details of expected timescales for determination, within statutory timescales.

Decision Making

5.18 The council receives approximately 3,500 planning and related applications a year. The decision on the majority of these applications is delegated to Officers in accordance with the details set out in the council's Scheme of Delegation and its Standing Orders within the Constitution. Generally speaking, the more minor a proposal, the more likely it is delegated to Officers to approve or refuse the application. The Development Management Committee is, at the time of adopting this SCI, made up of 16 councillors. The councillors have the task of deciding planning applications in accordance with planning policy unless material considerations dictate otherwise. Generally speaking, the Committee considers only the larger applications, those that are contrary to policy or subject to significant local interest. In addition, the Committee will also consider smaller applications if requested by a parish council or ward councillor.

5.19 If your planning application goes to Committee the council will notify you or your planning agent to let you know the date and time of the meeting.

5.20 There are opportunities for objectors, applicants and others to speak at the committee meeting before a decision is made. The planning officer's report, setting out all the planning issues and representations made, is made available five days before the committee meeting and will make a recommendation to the Development Management Committee stating whether or not an application should be approved, having been considered against the Local Plan and any material considerations.

5.21 Councillors are able to act as representatives for their local community that they serve, you can ask your local councillor for advice and discuss local planning matters by contacting them directly. Your local Councillor and their contact details can be found on the council's webpages.

5.22 To speak at committee you must contact Planning Services on 01480 388418 before 4:30pm on the Friday before the Monday meeting. The dates of the Development Management Committee, agendas and reports along with the minutes of previous meetings can be found on the Council's website. Further information on your right to speak at Development Management Committee can be found on the Council's Planning Process webpage.

5.23 After a decision has been made on your planning application - either under delegated powers or at committee a 'decision notice' will be provided to the applicant or their agent and published on the Council's Public Access system. You can sign up for planning application email alerts to be notified of all decisions in a given parish or ward. The decision notice will identify the location and development proposal, including any relevant plans which form part of the application and any conditions that have been applied to make an otherwise unacceptable development acceptable and to enhance the quality of development.

Reporting on Decisions

5.24 The results of consultation on planning applications will be taken into account during the decision making process. Progress of planning applications, and the decisions made, can be tracked on the Council's Public Access system.

5 | Involving the Community in the Planning Application Process

Developer Contributions and Monitoring

5.25   As part of your planning application you may be required to provide what is termed 'developer contributions'. Developer contributions contribute towards site related and broad infrastructure and can include, but is not limited to, on site provision of, or financial contributions towards:

- Affordable housing
- Green Space and outdoor sports facilities
- Footpaths a
- Health, library and community facilities
- Schools
- Residential wheeled bins

5.26   The Council ensures that the developer contributions process is managed in a transparent and accountable way and that the correct procedures are followed. The Council's Implementation Team will where required liaise between the various District Council service areas, partner Authorities and other delivery agencies which are responsible for ensuring particular projects are completed satisfactorily. If the developer contributions are not provided or the requirements are not met, enforcement action may be taken. More information on developer contributions can be found on the Council's Developer Contributions webpages.

5.27   Information for specific developer contributions can be found by searching the Council's Public Access system. If the information is not available there, information can be purchased from the Council's Land Charges Team who can also provide further information such as whether planning obligations have been discharged.

5.28   In addition, the Council produces an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement . The statement includes details of how much money has been raised through developer contributions (Section 106 planning obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy payments) and how it has been spent in accordance with The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). Developer contribution money received and spent by Town and Parish Councils can also be found in the Infrastructure Funding Statement.

5.29   Further information on Developer contributions, your responsibilities, the Council's role in the process, developer contribution negotiations and how and when you may request to amend, renegotiate or appeal developer contributions can be found in the Council's Developer Contributions SPD and webpages.

Planning Appeals

5.30   If you are unhappy with the decision made on your planning application or enforcement decision you have the right to appeal that decision. Only the person who made the planning application or received the enforcement decision can appeal the decision[15]. Planning appeals are dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate . You can lodge an appeal if[16]:

- you think the wrong decision has been made on your application;
- your application has not been decided by the target deadline set out in legislation. This is usually 8 weeks (or 13 to 16 weeks for larger schemes);
- you think that any of the conditions required as part of the planning applications are unreasonable;
- the Council has refused to approve details of a scheme that already has outline planning permission;
- the Council has refused your proposal to meet a condition;
- the Council has refused your application for the felling of, or works to, a protected tree.

5.31   In the first instance and where the refusal is not an 'in principle' objection it is recommended applicants explore pre-application discussions with officers with a view to submitting a revised application.

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15   One way for third parties to contest a planning application is to apply for judicial review of the decision. It is advised that you speak to your planning agent for further information.

16   The Planning Portal provides further details on the types of appeals that can be lodged

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5.32   You can submit your appeal online via the Appeals Casework Portal or you can call their helpline on 0303 4445000 and they will send you the relevant forms. Full details of deadlines and the appeals process can be found at the Planning Inspectorate and The Planning Appeals page or by visiting the Planning Portal. Deadlines for submitting your appeal or making comments are strict so it is advised that you investigate your options as soon as possible.

5.33   Once an appeal has been lodged Huntingdonshire District Council will notify everyone who commented on the original application and any relevant interested parties/organisations so they can submit further comments in relation to the appeal if necessary. The information provided will include where comments should be sent to, the deadline for comments and how the appeal will be dealt with e.g. by assessing the original information provided as part of the planning application, via written representations, in a public setting as part of an informal hearing (more of an open discussion lead by the Planning Inspector) or a public inquiry (a more formal procedure) etc. In the case of informal hearings or public inquiries the Planning Inspector may ask you to attend to voice your concerns.

5.34   The Council will also forward all copies of letters and comments received during the original application stage to the Planning Inspectorate. You can view guidance, current planning appeals and comment on appeals by visiting the Appeals Casework Portal.

Planning Enforcement

5.35   Planning enforcement is the term used to describe the process of dealing with breaches in planning, for example if someone has not met the requirements (conditions) of their planning permission or carried out a development without applying for planning permission / consent. Due to the sensitivity of planning enforcement and the confidentially required during the investigation of a potential breach, public consultation is not usually undertaken.

5.36   There are a number of situations which may require investigation from the Planning Enforcement Team, examples include:

- development that has not obtained the necessary planning permission;

- failure to comply with any condition on a planning permission or other consent;

- not correctly complying with permitted development rights by going over and above what is allowed or not complying with the conditions.

- carrying out unauthorised works to:

  - listed buildings;
  - trees with a Tree Preservation Order;
  - trees in a conservation area.

- unauthorised demolition of buildings or structures in a conservation area; or

- displaying an unauthorised advertisement.

5.37   The Planning Enforcement Team also deal with complaints about untidy land and buildings.

5.38   Anyone can make a complaint or notify the planning enforcement team about a 'planning breach'. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted however all complaints will be treated as confidential. In the first instance if you are concerned about a development, you can check our Public Access system to see if permission has been granted and if there are any conditions attached to it. If you are still concerned, you can contact the Planning Enforcement Team via the following methods:

- **Online** via the Planning Enforcement Complaint Form. This is the Council's preferred method.

5	**Involving the Community in the Planning Application Process**

- **Email:** planning.enforcement@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
- **Telephone**: 01480 388369. This is the most appropriate method if you think that an investigation is urgently needed to prevent an offence being committed, or to gather evidence.
- **Post or in Person:** Planning Enforcement, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN.

5.39   If you have made a complaint the Planning Enforcement Team will:

- send an acknowledgement to you within three working days of receiving the complaint, with contact details of the officer who will be dealing with the case;

- carry out a site visit as soon as possible;

- provide you with a response as soon as possible.

5.40   If someone makes a complaint about your property, you may be contacted by a member of our Planning Enforcement Team. The case officer will carry identification when visiting your property. You should provide as much information as possible to enable the case officer to decide whether or not there is a breach of planning control. Quick responses to correspondence will help to speed up the process.

5.41   More information on Huntingdonshire District Council's approach to planning enforcement can be found by visiting the Breaches of Planning Control and Enforcement webpages.

6 Brownfield Land Registers

6.1   A Brownfield Land Register is a register of land that the Council considers is appropriate for residential development. It was introduced by Government in April 2017 through The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017. Brownfield land (also known as Previously Developed Land) is "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."[17] Certain types of land are not considered brownfield land such as, land occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings and residential gardens in built-up areas.

6.2   Councils must prepare the Brownfield Land Register and update it at least once a year. The register must include specific information that is required through regulation such as the site name and address, coordinates, land area of the site in hectares and the minimum and maximum number of dwellings that could be accommodated on the site. The register must also be published in a specific format to meet the Government's 'open data' requirements meaning that anyone can use and republish the information provided without being subject to barriers such as copyright restrictions. The Council's Brownfield Land Register can be found on the Brownfield Land Register Planning webpages. Brownfield Land Registers can also be found in one place at data.gov.uk.

6.3   The Brownfield Land Register may be made up of two parts:

- Part 1 - This includes all sites which fit the criteria identified in The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017. Sites must be 'suitable', 'available' and 'achievable' for residential development which could be delivered within 15 years.
- Part 2 - Are those sites in Part 1 of the Register that the Local Planning Authority decide would be suitable for a grant of Permission in Principle for residential development.

6.4   If the Council wants to put a site on Part 2 of the Brownfield Land Register it must apply for Permission in Principle and this must be granted before the site is added to the register. This is to ensure transparency and accountability and to make sure that the Council meets the requirements set out in regulations 6 to 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017. In summary, the Council will undertake the following consultation and engagement as a minimum:

Publicity

- A site notice will be put up on or near the land for at least 21 days saying that the Council wishes to register the land on Part 2 of the Brownfield Register.
- Information will be published on the Council's Brownfield Land Register webpage including:

  - a statement outlining that if the land is entered in Part 2 of the Brownfield Land Register it must be granted Permission in Principle, which establishes the suitability, in principle, of land for housing-led development.
  - Details of the site including:

    - a reference number for the land;
    - the name and address of the land including a plan (map identifying the land);
    - the area of the land in hectares;
    - the planning status of the land e.g. does it have permission, what type and when it was granted, is a decision pending on whether permission may or may not be granted, does it have no planning permission etc.

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17   NPPF Glossary Definition

- the minimum and maximum (net) number of dwellings (homes) that the Council thinks can be built on the land;
- any other non-housing development that is proposed on the land, what type of development and the scale of the development e.g. the area in square meters and potential heights etc.

  - any information required under regulation 26 of the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 2015 if the planning application is related to hazardous substances

- the deadline for making comments on the proposal to add the land onto Part 2 of the Brownfield Land Register. The consultation period will last for a minimum of 21 days.
- how comments can be made and where the details of the site (outlined above) can be viewed.
- the webpage will be updated with any progress made on the site.

- the application for Permission in Principle will also be published on the Council's Public Access System

Consultation

6.5   The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 requires the Council to consult:

- any infrastructure manager of relevant railway land if the land is located within 10 metres of relevant railway land;
- any Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum that have asked to be informed about the Council's intention to put a site on Part 2 of the Brownfield register.
- if the land is located in the area of a particular parish council or neighbourhood forum, they must be specifically notified;

6.6   Cambridgeshire County Council, unless the County Council tells the Council they do not wish to be notified.

6.7   The Council will also consult organisations as required by the appropriate legislation for example in schedule 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The organisations that the Council must consult vary depending on the location of the development and the type of development proposed. Examples of some organisations that the Council may have to consult are [18]:

- Historic England,
- Natural England,
- Environment Agency,
- Lead Local Flood Authority (Cambridgeshire County Council),
- Utilities Companies,
- Parish Councils,
- Health and Safety Executive,
- Highways Authority,
- Canal and River Trust,
- any person, body or authority with that is required as part of applying for planning permission for residential development of the land.

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18   This is not an extensive list, please refer to The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 for further information

6.8   The Council will also inform various statutory and non-statutory consultees, such as District Councillors, the relevant Parish/Town Council, the Highway Authority, the Environment Agency and drainage companies where required. Various interest/community groups and other council departments may also be notified. Where applications are near to parish boundaries or the proposals may have impacts on surrounding parish areas, the Council will consider whether it is necessary to also consult nearby Parishes, District Councillors or Local Authorities. The Council will also notify occupiers of neighbouring properties based on an assessment of who may be affected by the development, notification will be in writing.

Notification

6.9   The Council will notify anyone who provided comments of the results of the consultation, whether the land was entered onto Part 2 of the Brownfield Register and where this can be viewed.

Monitoring and Review

7 Monitoring and Review

7.1   Under [regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)](#) local planning authorities must review Local Plans, and Statements of Community Involvement at least once every 5 years from their adoption date to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community.

7.2   The methods of consultation and engagement and the process for update and review of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and the Local Development Scheme is set out in section 3 'Involving the Community in the Production of Planning Documents'. The LDS is kept under review and updates to progress on any documents mentioned in it will be reported annually through the Council's [Annual Monitoring Report](#). Any review or monitoring of DPDs or SPDs will also be published in the Council's [Annual Monitoring Report](#) as will details on how many homes or businesses have been built or have been approved for development.

7.3   The Council may also periodically monitor the success of the various consultation and engagement methods used. This could be through feedback from members of the public and the number of people / businesses responding to consultation and engagement events. This will ensure that the most effective consultation and engagement methods are employed to encourage community involvement in the production of planning documents and decisions. The Statement of Consultation will be updated to reflect any improvements required to enhance consultation and engagement with the community, or as a result to changes in legislation/ regulations.

8 General Complaints Procedure

8.1   The public has a number of opportunities to appeal or contest planning applications or planning policy documents which have been addressed in the sections 3 'Involving the Community in the Production of Planning Documents' and 5 'Involving the Community in the Planning Application Process'. However, if your complaint cannot be addressed through these processes, please visit the Council's Complaints and Feedback webpages.

30   Glossary

9 Glossary

Annual Monitoring Report - The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) reports on the progress made in the preparation of Development Plan Documents identified in the Council's Local Development Scheme and monitors how these documents are performing, meeting their objectives and how well the policies within them are being achieved and implemented including policies which are not being implemented. The Council must publish this information at least annually and also report on activity relating to the Duty to Cooperate. The report can also include other information such as up to date information on Neighbourhood Plans and Community Infrastructure Levy payments, but these can also be published separately if the Council wishes to do so.

Brownfield Land - Brownfield land (also known as Previously Developed Land) is "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."(NPPF Glossary Definition) Certain types of land are not considered brownfield land such as, land occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings and residential gardens in built-up areas.

Brownfield Land Register - A Brownfield Land Register is a register of brownfield land that the Council considers is appropriate for residential development. It was introduced by Government in April 2017 through The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017.

Departure from the Local Plan - A planning application that does not meet the requirements or criteria set out in a local plan

Development Plan Document (DPD) - Planning documents that help guide development in a specific area. The documents can set out planning policies and sites for development. This helps planning officers assess planning applications and identifies to planning applicants what types of development may be considered appropriate and what will be required from that development. Development Plan Documents can include:

- Local Plans which look at the whole of the district;
- Area Action Plans that look at a specific area within a district; and
- Neighbourhood Plans that are produced at a local community level. Neighbourhood Plans are covered separately in the section 4 'Neighbourhood Planning'

Local Development Scheme (LDS) - The Local Development Scheme, or LDS, sets out the timetable for the production of any Development Plan Documents that will be produced by the Council such as the Local Plan. The LDS provides details of the key stages of document production and consultation and estimated dates of when these stages take may take place.

Local Planning Authority - The public body/ organisation who has the responsibility of carrying out functions relating to town planning for a particular area. Such public bodies include organisations such as city councils, district councils and county councils.

Material Consideration - Material Considerations are matters that are material to the planning process and should be considered when deciding planning applications, they should relate to the proposed development under consideration. Material considerations can include matters such as, loss of light or overshadowing, parking, noise impact from the proposed development, the design and appearance of the development. However, issues such as loss of view, or the negative effect that a development may have on the value of nearby properties are not material planning considerations.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - Sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied; and

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) - Adds extra detail to national policy requirements.

Neighbourhood Plan - A development plan document produced by the local community for a specific local area.

Permitted Development - In some cases development does not require planning permission or consent from the Council. Instead, permission is technically granted through national legislation[19], this is called Permitted Development. It should be noted however, that permitted development may still need to adhere to certain standards and conditions.

Planning Appeal - A process for contesting a planning decision if you are unhappy with the decision made on your planning application or enforcement decision. Only the person who made the planning application or received the enforcement decision can appeal the decision

Planning Conditions - Planning conditions to make an otherwise unacceptable development, they can include requirements such as specific standards such as water efficiency and accessible housing standards; details of further matters (reserved matters) that need to be approved before any development may begin such as appearance, landscaping, scale and parking; restricting the hours that vehicles can operate within the site or what needs to be done before the permission can be implemented like flood risk assessments.

Planning Enforcement - The term used to describe the process of dealing with breaches in planning, for example if someone has not met the requirements (conditions) of their planning permission or carried out a development without applying for planning permission / consent.

Planning Inspector / Planning Inspectorate - Planning Inspectors works for the Secretary of State as part of an organisation called the Planning Inspectorate. Amongst other tasks they acrry out independent examinations of planning documents and oversee and make judgements on planning appeals

Policies Map - A map that is produced alongside a development plan document that shows where planning policies and site allocations (areas identified for development) are located within the district. The map can be updated periodically to include the latest information, for example to identify new Neighbourhood Plan areas.

Prior Approval - In some cases, even though development is 'permitted' (through permitted development) you may need to submit a Prior Approval application to the Council so that it can be determined if certain conditions set out in the permitted development requirements can be addresses e.g. flooding and transport impact, contamination issues or the impacts of noise from existing commercial premises on residents. Prior Approval may be required if the development is situated in certain areas such as conservation areas or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Proposed Submission - The version of a development plan document that the Council considers should be used to assess and make decisions on planning applications. It is the version of the document that is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination.

Site Allocation - Areas identified for development in a development plan document.

Statement of Community Involvement - Sets out how Local Planning Authorities such as Huntingdonshire District Council will engage with the community on planning matters.

Statement of Consultation - A document which sets out what consultation processes have been carried out on development plan documents and supplementary planning documents; and how the documents have evolved as a result of the consultation and engagement and the responses received.

Statutory Consultees - People or organisations that Local Planning Authorities are required to consult by law.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are documents that provide extra information relating to policies in Development Plan Documents. SPDs can provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues such as design or developer contributions. A planning officer will take into account the information in an SPD when assessing and making decisions on planning applications.

The Council - Huntingdonshire District Council

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19   The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

32   Useful Links

10 Useful Links

- **Appeals Casework Portal -** Where you can view and submit planning appeals.
- **Find your Local Councillor**
- Huntingdonshire District Council's **Annual Monitoring Report**
- **Huntingdonshire District Council's Brownfield Land Register -** A Brownfield Land Register is a register of brownfield land that the Council considers is appropriate for residential development.
- Huntingdonshire District Council's **Calendar of Meetings.**
- Huntingdonshire District Council's planning **consultation database**
- **Huntingdonshire's District Council's Development Plan** - Webpages showing the Council's current development plan documents.
- Huntingdonshire District Council's **facebook** and **twitter** accounts.
- **Huntingdonshire District Council's Neighbourhood Planning webpages**
- **Huntingdonshire District Council's Planning Webpages**
- **Legislation.gov.uk** - website where you can search for and find out about all legislation for the UK. Includes helpful guides on Understanding Legislation.
- **National Infrastructure Planning webpages** - To find information on national infrastructure projects such as national transport and energy networks. National Policy Statements to guide national infrastructure projects can also be found here. These statements set out the Government's objectives for the development of nationally significant infrastructure in a particular sector. You can also find out more about any proposed national infrastructure projects, how they are assessed and how the public can get involved in consultations.
- **National Planning Policy Framework** - Sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- **National Planning Practice Guidance** - Adds extra detail to national planning policy requirements.
- **Parish Council's in Huntingdonshire**
- **Planning Aid** – A charity set up by planners to offer free and unbiased advice.
- **Planning Inspectorate** - The Planning Inspectorate deals with planning appeals, national infrastructure planning applications, examinations of local plans and other planning-related and specialist casework in England and Wales.
- **Planning Portal** - Provides advice and guidance on planning including, interactive planning guides, legislative process, building control. Planning applications can also be viewed or submitted here.
- **Public Access** - Huntingdonshire District Council's online planning service. Applications can be viewed publicly, here you can view weekly or monthly lists of planning applications based on the date they were validated or decided. It is also possible to sign up for planning application email alerts to be notified of all applications in a given parish.
- **The Local Government Ombudsman** – if you feel that your LPA has made a mistake in its decision-making process.

Public (Part2)
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) – 4 January 2023

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Planning

Report by: Chief Planning Officer

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

RECOMMENDATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on the recommendations for the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report from the Cabinet report attached.

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Public (Part2)
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
Meeting/Date:	Overview & Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) – 4th January 2023 Cabinet – 24th January 2023
Executive Portfolio:	Executive Councillor for Planning
Report by:	Chief Planning Officer
Ward(s) affected:	All Wards

Executive Summary:

The preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and take into account relevant market signals.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 states that Local Plans and spatial development strategies should be informed throughout their preparation by a Sustainability Appraisal that meets the relevant legal requirements. This should demonstrate how the plan has addressed relevant economic, social and environmental objectives (including opportunities for net gains) and the effects they will have on the environment and people's quality of life. Significant adverse impacts on these objectives should be avoided and, wherever possible, alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued. Where significant adverse impacts are unavoidable, suitable mitigation measures should be proposed (or, where this is not possible, compensatory measures should be considered).

To be sure that a plan does not cause economic, environmental or social problems, at the heart of the plan production process there is a system of assessment known as Sustainability Appraisal (SA). As part of the preparation of an updated Huntingdonshire Local Plan, a draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report is required. The scoping report is the first stage in plan production.

SA is a systematic process for assessing the extent to which an emerging plan will help to achieve sustainable development. It is an opportunity to consider ways by which the replacement Local Plan can contribute to improvements in economic, environmental and social conditions, as well a means of identifying and mitigating any potential adverse effects that the Local Plan might otherwise have.

A thorough understanding of the context of existing plans and policies and of the current baseline situation is needed in order to be able to predict the effects the plan may have, and to identify key issues that will need to be addressed. These inform a framework with a series of SA objectives. This framework provides a means by which the performance of the plan and alternatives can be assessed against environmental, economic and social factors.

In accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, the draft scoping report was shared with the statutory bodies of the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England on 20th October 2022 with responses received by 30th November 2022. Amendments made in in response to these are being integrated into the Scoping Report and will be summarised in an appendix as required.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet/Committee is

RECOMMENDED
- To approve the contents of the draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
- To agree that the draft Scoping Report can be published for public consultation n commencing in February 2023 and running for six weeks

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report sets out the purpose, legal context and content of the draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and asks that Cabinet approve its contents and agree that it be published for public consultation commencing in February 2023 and running for six weeks.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY?

2.1 There are legal requirements for new planning documents which require an assessment of the plan's impact on the environment to be undertaken. This process is known as Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and is required under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

2.2 Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) also requires a local planning authority to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of each of the proposals in a Local Plan during its preparation. In addition to environmental aspects this requires consideration of the social and economic aspects of sustainability. More generally, section 39 of the Act requires that the authority preparing a Local Plan must do so 'with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development'. To avoid duplication, it is customary for the SEA and SA to be combined into a single document.

2.3 Also, paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that 'the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.' SA is a means by which to assess the emerging plan's sustainability against alternatives.

3. SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (SA) SCOPING PROCESS

3.1 SA is a systematic process for assessing the extent to which an emerging plan such as a Local Plan will help to achieve sustainable development. It is an opportunity to consider ways by which the plan can contribute to improvements in economic, environmental and social conditions, as well as a means of identifying and mitigating any potential adverse effects that the plan might otherwise have.

3.2 Each stage of preparation of the Sustainability Appraisal, including the Scoping Report presented here, is required to include a non-technical summary of the information within the main report to provide a clear, accessible overview of the process and findings. This can be found immediately following the contents page.

3.3 The SA process comprises five stages (A-E), each of which stages are undertaken in tandem with the development of a local plan:

Stage	Description
A Setting the context and objectives,	Known as the 'Scoping stage' the purpose of this stage is to establish the context for sustainability appraisal by assembling the evidence needed to

Stage	Description
establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope	inform the appraisal and to establish the framework, by setting up sustainability objectives and decision aiding questions, for undertaking the appraisal (Stage B).
B Develop options and appraise effects	The purpose of this stage is to appraise the plan objectives, options and preferred options/policies, to propose measures for alleviating adverse effects and maximising benefits and to propose indicators for monitoring the plan's sustainability.
C Prepare the SA Report	The purpose of this stage is to present the findings from Stage B in a form suitable for public consultation and use by decision makers.
D Consultation and developing the plan	The purpose of this stage is to consult on the report, to appraise significant changes to the plan objectives, options and preferred options/policies appraised in Stage B and to explain how the SA process has shaped the plan.
E Monitoring and implementation of the plan	The purpose of this stage is to establish ways of considering whether or not to review the plan and to enable sustainability appraisal processes for future plans.

3.4   The National Planning Practice Guidance provides further detail on the SA process and a flowchart of how the SA and local plan production stages interrelate. This is presented below.

Sustainability appraisal process / Local Plan preparation

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope
1. Identify other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives
2. Collect baseline information
3. Identify sustainability issues and problems
4. Develop the sustainability appraisal framework
5. Consult the consultation bodies on the scope of the sustainability appraisal report

Evidence gathering and engagement

Stage B: Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects
1. Test the Local Plan objectives against the sustainability appraisal framework
2. Develop the Local Plan options including reasonable alternatives
3. Evaluate the likely effects of the Local Plan and alternatives
4. Consider ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects
5. Propose measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan

Consult on Local Plan in preparation (regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012). Consultation may be undertaken more than once if the Local Planning Authority considers necessary.

Stage C: Prepare the sustainability appraisal report

Stage C: Prepare the publication version of the Local Plan

Stage D: Seek representations on the sustainability appraisal report from consultation bodies and the public

Seek representations on the publication Local Plan (regulation 19) from consultation bodies and the public

Submit draft Local Plan and supporting documents for independent examination

Outcome of examination Consider implications for SA/SEA compliance

Local Plan Adopted

Stage E: Post adoption reporting and monitoring
1. Prepare and publish post-adoption statement
2. Monitor significant effects of implementing the Local Plan
3. Respond to adverse effects

Monitoring Monitor and report on the implementation of the Local Plan

3.5 The first stage of producing the local plan is the scoping stage. It consists of the following tasks:

- A1: Identify relevant plans and programmes
- A2: Collect baseline information
- A3: Identify sustainability issues and problems
- A4: Develop the sustainability framework
- A5: Consult on the scope of the sustainability appraisal

3.6 This stage is necessary to propose and agree the way that the plan is to be drawn up including the methodology for the SA process and to collect together information to help shape the next Huntingdonshire Local Plan. A thorough understanding of the context of existing plans and policies and of the current baseline situation is needed in order to be able to predict the

effects the plan may have, and to identify key issues that will need to be addressed.

3.7 Within the attached draft Scoping Report chapter 3 and appendix 1 set out the findings of task A1. Chapter 4 explores the current baseline for Huntingdonshire (task A2) focusing on topics grouped into the climate emergency, environmental characteristics and socio-economic characteristics as well as identifying what may happen to the current baseline if there was no new Local Plan. Then chapter 5 summarises the sustainability issues and problems that have been identified for each topic (task A3) and how these may be reflected in the SA framework.

3.8 Using the findings of tasks A1, A2 and A3, a proposed sustainability framework was devised (task A4) set out in Table 20 of the draft Scoping Report. The proposed SA framework comprises of 16 SA objectives relating to the climate emergency, environment and socio-economic factors. Each objective is supported by decision aiding questions which will be used to appraise options for the strategy and its alternatives, site allocations and development management policies of the next Local Plan. Alongside the framework, a scoring system/matrix set out on pages 125 to 130 of the draft SA Scoping Report has been devised to assess how each option performs against the appropriate decision aiding questions.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

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

5. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 It is proposed that public consultation on the draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report will commence in February 2023 and run for 6 weeks. The Scoping Report will then be amended where necessary following the consultation and finalised and published on the Council's website.

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

6.1 The production of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report 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 draft Scoping Report 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.　CONSULTATION

7.1　In accordance with the Regulation 12 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, the Council is required to consult on the scope of the SA with the three statutory bodies of the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England for a period of 5 weeks.

7.2　A draft of the Scoping Report was shared with these bodies on 20th October 2022 with responses requested by 30th November 2022. Comments received have been used to amend the draft Scoping Report and summarised in an appendix.

7.3　Subject to agreement from Cabinet, the Scoping Report will be published for public engagement. 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 from its earliest stage. Any comments received from the wider public engagement period will be used to amend the Scoping Report feeding back into tasks A1 to A4. It is anticipated that consultation on the draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report will commence in February 2023. The Scoping Report will then be amended where necessary, finalised and published on the Council's website.

8.　LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1　The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 requires that new planning documents are assessed for their impact on the environment. The Council is also required under section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) to carry out an SA of each of the proposals in a Local Plan during its preparation. The Scoping Report is a key stage within this process.

9.　ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1　At the heart of the plan production is the Sustainability Appraisal process. Its role is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives.

9.2   The draft Scoping Report has been structured around the categories of the climate emergency, the environment and socio-economic characteristics to assess plans/programmes, collect baseline information, identify issues and group objectives. The climate emergency has been made into its own category to reflect the increasing focus and importance of climate change issues in plan making ensuring climate objectives are embedded into plan production alongside objectives for the environment, the economy and social benefits.

9.3   HDC's emerging Climate Strategy has been identified within the A1 stage of the scoping process when reviewing relevant plans and programmes. It is however recognised that this strategy only focuses on the Council's own climate impact.

10.   REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

10.1   The scoping stage is the first stage in local plan production. It identifies the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the Sustainability Appraisal report which must be produced alongside the local plan. It sets out the context, objectives and approach of the assessment; and identifies relevant environmental, economic and social issues and objectives.

10.2   It is recommended that Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet approve the contents of the draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and agree that it be published for public consultation commencing in February 2023 and running for six weeks.

11.   LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

12.   BACKGROUND PAPERS

Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG): Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG): Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal – sustainability appraisal process flowchart

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Contents

Non-technical Summary

This is the non-technical summary for the draft sustainability scoping report for the next Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

An explanation of some of the terms used in the document can be found in the 'Glossary'.

Why do we do sustainability appraisal?

When drawing up new planning documents the effects they will have on the environment and people's quality of life, both now and in the future are some of the most important things to consider. To be sure that the plan does not cause economic, environmental and social problems, at the heart of the plan production process there is a system of assessment known as Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

SA is a systematic process for assessing the extent to which the emerging plan will help to achieve sustainable development. It is an opportunity to consider ways by which the plan can contribute to improvements in economic, environmental and social conditions, as well as a means of identifying and mitigating any potential adverse effects that the plan might otherwise have.

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Government's view of what constitutes sustainable development is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF uses the United Nations definition of sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

How will the appraisal be done?

The first stage of producing the new Local Plan is a scoping stage, which this report relates to. This is necessary to propose and agree the way that the plan is to be drawn up including the methodology for the SA process and to collect together the necessary information to produce the plan. The scoping stage covers:

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope
A1: Identifying relevant plans and programmes • The purpose of this task is to establish how the plan is affected by outside factors, to suggest ideas for how any constraints can be addressed, and to help identify environmental protection objectives.
A2: Collecting baseline information • The purpose of this task is to provide an evidence base for environmental impacts, prediction of what will happen without the plan as well as what effects it could have, monitoring and to help in the development of SA objectives.
A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems • The purpose of this task is to help focus the SA and streamline the subsequent stages, including baseline information analysis, setting the SA objectives, prediction of effects and monitoring
A4: Developing the SA framework • The purpose of this task is to provide a means by which the environmental performance of the plan or programme and alternatives can be assessed.
A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA • The purpose of this task is to ensure that the SA covers the likely significant environmental effects of the plan and to ensure that the SA process is and will be robust and suitably comprehensive in order to support production of the plan.

Non-technical Summary

Following the scoping stage are stages B to E set out below:

Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects
B1: Testing the plan objectives against the SA framework
B2: Developing plan options
B3: Predicting the effects of the plan and alternatives
B4: Evaluating the effects of the plan and alternatives
B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects
B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the plan
Stage C: Preparing the SA Report
C1: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report
Stage D: Consulting on the draft plan and the SA Report
D1: Public participation on the draft plan and the Sustainability Appraisal report
D2: Appraising significant changes
D3: Making decisions and providing information
Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the plan on the environment
E1: Developing aims and methods for monitoring
E2: Responding to adverse effects

Stages B to E will be carried out as part of drawing up and finalising the new Local Plan. More information on stages B to E can be found in '2 'Sustainability Appraisal Methodology'. More information on when stages B to E will be carried out can be found in '8 'Next Steps'.

A1 - Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies

Plans, programmes and strategies that were considered to be relevant were reviewed. A full list of these is provided in Appendix 1: 'Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed'. The appendix splits these into international, national, regional, sub-regional, county and local level documents. The key aims, objectives, and targets/ indicators for each plan, programme and strategy are identified alongside how they will shape the Huntingdonshire Local Plan and what baseline topic they relate to.

The key aims, messages and objectives from the relevant plans, programmes and strategies are summarised below:

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives
Procedural	• The Local Plan and its proposals are required to undergo a Sustainability Appraisal (including an Environmental Impact Assessment) • The Local Plan must undergo a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) • The Local Plan and its proposals must be assessed for their impact on protected characteristics through an Equality Impact Assessment • Evidence used to shape the Local Plan must be made publicly available • Consultation will be undertaken throughout the plan making process and recorded in a Statement of Consultation document
Overarching	• The Local Plan must promote all strands of sustainable development (economic, environmental and social) in a holistic way • Sustainability is an underlying principle of the planning system • Consider the economic, environmental and social ambitions of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc (now known as the Oxford to Cambridge Pan-regional Partnership)

Non-technical Summary

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives
	• Incorporate where possible the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority's and Huntingdonshire District Council's corporate aims and objectives • Development needs to be well designed and where people want to live and work
Climate change: Carbon Emissions and Targets Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Flooding and Water Waste and Recycling	• The Local Plan must include policies on climate change • The UK Government has pledged to be carbon neutral by 2050, the District Council has set a target of reaching net zero carbon by 2040 • Plan for and respond to the impacts of climate change • Promote opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy generation including community led generation • Improve the energy performance of buildings to reduce energy consumption and reduce costs to residents • Support retrofitting of older and less energy efficient housing stock and non-residential buildings • Minimise the damage of flooding to people and property • Incorporate flood resilient and resistant design into new builds where there is a risk of flooding from any source • Ensure there is sufficient water capacity to service growth • Promote the development of water efficient homes and non-residential buildings • Integrate the 'waste hierarchy' of reduce waste and increase the amount which is re-used and recycled to meet national and local targets • Promote opportunities to create a circular economy by maximising the reuse of materials, particularly in construction • Ensure sustainable waste management practices are in place

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives
Environmental: Landscape Land, Soils and Agriculture Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment Green Infrastructure and Open Space Pollution	• Protect and enhance the various landscapes and their key characteristics • Maintain and enhance landscape and townscape character • Promote landscape protection, management and planning • Conserve and where possible enhance the best and most versatile agricultural land • Support sustainable agricultural practices • Conserve and restore peatland • Prioritise the reuse of previously developed land (brownfield land) over greenfield land • Protect and enhance biodiversity, natural habitats and wild fauna and flora, including international, national and local designated sites • Policies and proposals must seek a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain • Conserve existing tree cover and support additional tree planting • Support access to the countryside and the public rights of way network • Protect and enhance green infrastructure • Ensure that all residents have access to open and green space • Improve the quality and quantity of open spaces and accessibility to these spaces • Minimise water pollution to increase the ecology quality of rivers and groundwater • Reduce the concentration of air pollutants and keep levels of pollutants below maximum levels
Socio-economic:	• Identify land that will meet the housing needs of the district

Non-technical Summary

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives
Housing Population and Health Income and Deprivation Employment and Business Travel and Transport Digital Infrastructure and Communications Retail and Town Centres Tourism and Leisure Community Services and Facilities Education	• Provide a variety of housing types, mix and tenures across the district • Tackle affordability issues • Provide homes that meet people's needs or are capable of being adapted in the future to accommodate changing needs • Ensure the needs of Gypsy and Travellers are met • Provide care homes, accommodation and health facilities to meet the needs of the elderly or those with specific medical needs in accessible locations • Support self and custom build housing • Promote high quality design for housing products that reflect local character and are integrated into the surrounding community • Improve health and well-being • Enhance quality and quantity of indoors and outdoors sports facilities • Tackle inequalities to raise quality of life • Promote social inclusion and integration • Promote Huntingdonshire's contribution to the wider Cambridgeshire and Peterborough economy • Support existing businesses • Enhance employment opportunities for all • Support small and medium sized businesses to grow and thrive within the district • Ensure adequate public transport infrastructure to access services, facilities and employment destinations via more sustainable modes of transport

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives
Heritage	• Reduce the dependency on private car usage • Improve public transport in rural areas • Support strategic highway and transport projects • Ensure communities are digitally connected • Support digital connectivity particularly in more rural parts of the district • Support Huntingdonshire's high streets and retail centres • Support the tourism and leisure sector • Ensure there is good access to facilities such as community, sports, health and leisure facilities • Support the provision of additional community services and facilities • Ensure that everyone has access to education and training • Maintain townscape character • Protect heritage assets and the historic environment and their cultural and architectural significance • Promote the contribution the historic environment makes to the social, economic and cultural aspects of life • Recognise and protect archaeological heritage

A2 - Collecting baseline information

The baseline information has been split into three groupings: climate emergency, environmental and socio-economic. These groupings are used throughout this report. More detail on the baseline information can be found in '4 'A2: Collecting baseline information'.

The below image summarises the key baseline information found:

Non-technical Summary

District is 913 square km
9 landscape character areas
Most land is high quality agricultural land for crops

The habitat and nature restoration project:
Great Fen supporting eco tourism
Numerous waterways and marinas
3 national cycleways

River Great Ouse and River Nene
Flood risk prominent
634 water bodies

Anglian region :
2017/18 109 megalitres/day demand, in 2045 could rise to 1,240 megalitres/day

Internationally protected nature sites (Ouse Washes, Portholme & Woodwalton Fen)
26 SSSIs and 135 County Wildlife Sites

605 greenspaces totalling 1,229ha+ 87sqm greenspace/person

4 Air Quality Management Areas

70 wind turbines
12 solar farms

Be net zero by 2040
44% of carbon emissions from transport

90% of households have organic waste collection
2021/22 - 58% waste recycled/ composted

30% housing stock built 1950s/60s, 40% 1970s-90s and 19% since 2000

2020 - 10.95% households in fuel poverty

86,000 employees in 2020
7,895 enterprises (89.93% 0-9 employees)
Median weekly pay £589

4 market towns & 4 out of town retail parks

Strategic transport connections - A1, A14, A428, A141, A1123, A1096, A1198, A605
Guided busway & 2 railway stations

68.92% have indoor 4G coverage from all operators

40.8% premises have superfast broadband & 54.8% have ultrafast

86,473 dwellings in April 2022
71.3% owner occupied in 2011
12.9% of homes are social rented

Mar 2022 - £320,699 avg. house price
2021 ONS affordability ratio = 9.6

2021 census = 180,800 population
Life expectancy of those born 2001-03, females 81.5 and males 77.5 years

956 care beds
1 hospital & 21 full time GP surgeries
69th least deprived district in England

2,216 listed buildings
84 scheduled monument
61 conservation areas
5 registered parks & gardens

10 libraries and 2 mobile services
28 Assets of Community Value in Oct 2022

73 state schools
2.1% of people have no qualifications
60.7% people have NVQ1
41.5% people have NVQ4+

Non-technical Summary

A3 - Identifying sustainability issues and problems

Following the collection of baseline data, the following key sustainability issues and problems were identified, these have been set out below. Section '5 'A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems' also identifies how these issues and problems could shape the SA framework.

Sustainability issues and problems
Carbon Emissions and Targets: • Increased summer temperatures will impact on comfort and usability of existing properties • Drier summers and wetter winters will create issues for flooding, water storage and management, soil and agricultural productivity and habitat survival • CO_2 emissions are reducing across industrial, commercial, domestic and public sectors • CO_2 emissions are very high for transport, influenced by the presence of the A1, A14 and East Coast Mainline Railway coupled with the largely rural nature of the district • Per capita emissions are significantly higher than for England but typical for Cambridgeshire • Increasing the climate resilience and energy efficiency of buildings and spaces
Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency: • Renewable power generation within Huntingdonshire has shifted from a focus on wind turbines to solar farms requiring extensive areas of land but with some scope for complementary agricultural use • The age of the housing stock means that retrofitting of energy efficiency measures will be crucial in boosting the sustainability of the district's homes • Fuel poverty was already an issue for over 1 in 10 households before the April 2022 price rises; this is expected to become more intense in the short term

Sustainability issues and problems
• Access to mains gas is not universal throughout the district with some locations relying on individual oil tanks; in such circumstances alternative community heating systems may offer a more sustainable solution • The visual impact of on-shore renewable energy production needs to be balanced with the impact on local landscape and communities
Flooding and Water: • The impacts of climate change will see increases in extreme weather events, leading to increased rainfall, rainfall intensity and sea level rises all of which will increase the impact of all sources of flooding in the district. Potential to impact on existing and new developments, infrastructure and agricultural productivity, social and economic impacts across the district • Potential need to set aside land for flood mitigation measures due to increased flood risk and understand effectiveness flood management infrastructure • Increased flood risk may influence where development can be sustainably located • Ensuring that new growth does not adversely affect water resources or water resources management infrastructure and that there are sufficient measures in place to balance water supply across the district • Ensuring that homes and businesses are resilient to flooding and provide effective water management to maintain water resources for all • Ensuring new development does not adversely impact on the ecological and biological status of water bodies
Waste and Recycling: • Many tonnes of waste are sent to landfills and recycling centres • Increasing levels of recycling and re-using materials reduces how much material ends up in landfills reducing their environmental effects and supporting a circular economy • Growth places additional demand on existing waste and recycling collection services • The waste attributed to the construction of new buildings

Sustainability issues and problems

Landscape:
- Huntingdonshire's landscape and its distinctive qualities are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, insensitive new development and land management practices
- Water management is key to landscape character throughout much of the district
- The expansive, flat wetlands of the Fens are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change degrading fertile peat soils and its landscape character
- The River Great Ouse flows through or around three of Huntingdonshire's four market towns providing a high quality landscape setting to them and recreational opportunities but also an increased risk of flooding

Land, Soils and Agriculture:
- A very high proportion of the district's agricultural land is classified as best and most versatile, whilst this is beneficial for production and food security it provides challenges for focusing development onto less valuable land
- Degradation of peat and soil erosion resulting in the loss of the most fertile soils
- There are limited remaining opportunities for largescale reuse of previously developed land

Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment:
- There are several sites designated at an international and national level for their biodiversity and habitat value as well as non-designated sites identified for their local nature conservation value
- Nature conservation sites and ancient woodland are vulnerable to new developments and land management practices.
- Two thirds of SSSIs in Huntingdonshire are in a favourable state, with approximately a third of SSSIs not in a favourable condition, although these are in a recovering state
- Visitor pressures on designated and non-designated sites may harm the quality of these sites for nature conservation and vital habitats

Sustainability issues and problems

- Nature conservation sites and other natural environments are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change
- Trees are a natural carbon store, with established and mature trees taking in the most carbon

Green Infrastructure and Open Space:
- Huntingdonshire has several strategic green infrastructure areas: the Great Fen, Nene Valley, Great Ouse Valley and the West Cambridgeshire Hundreds
- Strategic green infrastructure and localised provision of open green space provide important social benefits to human health and wellbeing as well as opportunities for habitat and biodiversity conservation and enhancement
- Green infrastructure and open space must be located in accessible places
- Several public parks and gardens are managed to the Green Flag Award standard, with others aspiring to the standard

Pollution:
- The most significant air quality issues arise from traffic and congestion
- Air, noise and light pollution can have serious implications on the health and wellbeing of people and cause harm to the natural environment and disrupt the lifecycles of wildlife
- Homes, employment, schools, services and facilities should be accessible via walking, cycling and public transport
- Light and noise pollution can reduce the tranquillity of the countryside and green spaces within settlements

Population and Health:
- Ensuring the delivery of an ongoing supply of new homes in sustainable locations
- Ensuring new homes provide a mix of types, sizes and tenures aligned with the composition of the local population with an emphasis on increasing the stock of smaller properties suitable for one and two person households

Non-technical Summary

Sustainability issues and problems
- Affordability ratios of house prices to around 9 times average earnings create significant stress in the housing market and result in strong social sustainability challenges   - Proactive work through the prevention duty regarding homelessness has high effectiveness rates and reduces social sustainability challenges through the trauma otherwise experienced by those who become homeless   - Ensuring a range of accessible, adaptable and specialist new homes are available suitable to meet the changing needs of residents as the population ages overall
Housing: - The ageing and in some locations declining population may lead to challenges for the social sustainability of communities, for health and social provision and provision of appropriate housing options.   - Decreasing proportion of the population is of working age raising the proportion of dependants.   - Natural change is decreasing and may result in a negative rate of population growth unless in-migration is sufficient to counterbalance falling population numbers   - GP surgeries are concentrated in larger settlements necessitating residents of almost all villages to travel for appointments or rely on telephone or other remote forms of consultations   - Health indicators suggest that Huntingdonshire's population is typically slightly healthier than that for England on average but deaths from particulate air pollution were higher than average in 2019 although it should be noted that this was prior to the rerouting of the A14 and consequent impact on air quality management areas
Income and Deprivation: - Huntingdonshire shows great disparity across the district in terms of income and deprivation   - Median weekly pay in Huntingdonshire is in decline potentially creating a less financially stable population

Sustainability issues and problems
Employment and Businesses: - Post-pandemic recovery: addressing the decline in the number of jobs in the district   - Supporting and maintaining a stable economy: facilitating growth of key industries by providing appropriate land for development and expansion   - Supporting rural enterprises to provide sustainable job opportunities in outside the existing employment clusters   - Addressing the post-pandemic decline in the number of enterprises in the district   - Facilitating access to higher level occupations where required across the district   - Addressing the contribution that Huntingdonshire makes to Knowledge Intensive industries   - Providing complementary enterprises to support supply chains and economic growth
Travel and Transport: - Huntingdonshire is well located in terms of the strategic road network creating pressure from logistics businesses for new sites and generating high levels of road based through travel and locally generated car travel   - A variety of road and active travel infrastructure improvements are proposed which may reduce congestion, improve journey times and increase the attractiveness of active travel modes for journeys   - The district's semi-rural nature means some parts are relatively remote which increases reliance on private vehicles and engenders viability challenges for public transport; the distances involved can make walking and cycling unattractive options for many journeys
Digital Infrastructure and Communications: - Reducing inequality, economic opportunity and vital access to services via digital infrastructure   - Reducing social exclusion by providing improved access to improved online services especially in rural areas

Sustainability issues and problems
• Enabling businesses and rural businesses to thrive through improved broadband and mobile coverage • Decreasing rural isolation through improved broadband and mobile coverage
Retail and Town Centres: • Increase in retail/ town centre use vacancies in key locations that provide accessible sustainable access to leisure, services and retail, impacting on social and economic health of the district • Potential contraction of the high street and detrimental impacts on business viability • Perceived safety threats from vacant units and low activity levels potentially creating inhospitable and unsafe neighbourhoods • Ensuring high streets in the district provide easy access to leisure, services and retail
Tourism and Leisure: • The conservation of wildlife and landscapes are not harmed through tourism and leisure pursuits • Tourism and leisure play an important role in people's health and well being so needs to be accessible to all • Growth places additional demand on existing tourist attractions and leisure facilities • Local tourist attractions and leisure facilities contribute towards the local economy and supports local communities through employment, voluntary opportunities and celebrating local heritage and past times
Community Services and Facilities: • Availability of multi-use community spaces where people can gather • Sustainable access to services and facilities across the district • Retention of and long-term sustainability of community services and facilities

Sustainability issues and problems
Education: • Ensuring residents have access to a range of educational providers in sustainable locations to meet the growing population • Ensuring education levels and range of qualifications are available for all to facilitate social mobility and job prospects for residents, intern contributing to the economic growth of the district • Providing enough SEND provision as a result of new growth
Heritage: • There are many designated and non-designated structures assets, a small proportion are judged to be at risk • Heritage assets face pressures from future development that may cause harm to them and to their setting • Conservation areas may see a gradual erosion of their special features which may undermine the original reasons for designation • Significant archaeology may yet to be discovered • Climate change and flooding events pose significant risks to the historic environment

Non-technical Summary

A4 - Developing the sustainability appraisal framework

Following the review of relevant plans, programmes and strategies, the identification of baseline information and sustainability issues and problems, the following SA objectives were considered to be:

Climate emergency

- **SA1** - Contribute to achieving the district's ambition to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2040
- **SA2** - Improve adaptability to the unavoidable impacts of the climate emergency
- **SA3** - Manage Huntingdonshire's water resources in a sustainable manner and reduce the risk all potential sources of flooding to people, properties and the environment

Environmental

- **SA4** - Make efficient use of land by maximising development on previously developed land where this is not of high biodiversity value and minimising that on the best and most versatile agricultural land
- **SA5** - Improve the quantity and quality of publicly accessible natural green space and enhance the strategic green and blue infrastructure network and links to it
- **SA6** - Promote conservation, enhancement, recovery and connectivity of sites of biodiversity or geodiversity significance
- **SA7** - Conserve and enhance the special qualities and integrity of our landscape and townscape character and the local distinctiveness of settlements
- **SA8** - Contribute to the minimisation and reduction of all forms of pollution

Socio-economic

- **SA9** - All people have access to high quality affordable homes that meet their needs across their lifetime

- **SA10** - Enhance the quality, range and accessibility of social and community services and facilities to promote social inclusion particularly amongst those most at risk of experiencing discrimination, poverty and social exclusion
- **SA11**- Enhance the quality, range and accessibility of economic opportunities for all communities
- **SA12** - Reduce the need to travel by car and promote active travel and public transport infrastructure
- **SA13** - Strengthen, modernise and diversify the local economy and promote opportunities for growth of indigenous companies as well as encouraging sustainable inward investment
- **SA14** - Support the successful response of town and local retail centres to changing shopping and social trends
- **SA15** - Promote high quality design and placemaking that enables attractive, safe and resilient communities
- **SA16** - Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting(s)

A series of decision aiding questions have been drawn up for each objective. The decision aiding questions have been specifically worded so that the appraisal can be applied to the three different types of policy that will be part of the new Local Plan. This means that there is at least one decision aiding question for strategic, site specific and development management policies for each objective.

The full sustainability appraisal framework, including all the decision aiding questions, can be found in 6 'A4: Developing the SA framework'.

A5 - Consulting on the scope of the sustainability appraisal

The council is required to consult on the scope of the SA with the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England, often referred to as the SA Bodies. Consultation with environmental bodies ran between 20 October and 30 November 2022.

Comments on a draft of the scoping report were received from all three environmental bodies. Their comments have been compiled into a table alongside the Council's response to them highlighting where amendments have been made to this report. This table can be found in Appendix 2: 'Comments from Environmental Bodies'.

Following this, the scoping report will be made available for anyone to make comments. This is so that the scoping report is as robust as possible and to promote participation in production of the new Huntingdonshire Local Plan. Any comments received from the wider public consultation will be used to amend this scoping report (feeding back into tasks A1 to A4).

Stage A will be completed with the publication of this final scoping report.

More information can be found in '7 'A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA'.

Next steps

The methodology contained in this scoping report will be used to complete the sustainability appraisal process as part of the production of the new Local Plan:

- Stages 'B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects' and 'C: Preparing the sustainability appraisal report' will be produced as part of drawing up the draft Local Plan.
- Stage 'D: Consulting on the draft plan and the Sustainability Appraisal Report' will be started with consultation on the draft Local Plan and will continue through the publication of the Proposed Submission Local Plan and through the examination process.
- Stage 'E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the plan on the environment' will start with preparation of the Proposed Submission Local

Plan and continue through the examination process and will then continue after the adoption of the Local Plan with the Annual Monitoring Report.

More information can be found in '8 'Next Steps'.

1   Introduction

1 Introduction

1.1   When drawing up new planning documents the effects they will have on the environment and people's quality of life, both now and in the future are some of the most important things to consider. To be sure that the plan does not cause economic, environmental and social problems, at the heart of the plan production process there is a system of assessment known as Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

1.2   SA is a systematic process for assessing the extent to which the emerging plan will help to achieve sustainable development. It is an opportunity to consider ways by which the plan can contribute to improvements in economic, environmental and social conditions, as well as a means of identifying and mitigating any potential adverse effects that the plan might otherwise have.

1.3   The commitment to the achievement of sustainable development is set out at an international and national level.

1.4   The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Government's view of what constitutes sustainable development is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF uses the United Nations definition of sustainable development as *'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'*. The NPPF also refers to the United Nation's 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development which address social progress, economic well-being and environmental protection by 2030. Members of the United Nations (including the United Kingdom) have agreed to pursue these goals. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

1.5   For plan-making this means that:

a.   all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;

b.   strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:

  i.   the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or

  ii.   any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

1.6   Legal requirements for new planning documents require an assessment of the plan's impact on the environment to be undertaken. This process is known as Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and is required under the SEA Directive. In 2004, the European SEA Directive was transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, (commonly referred to as the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations).

1.7   Furthermore, section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires a local planning authority to carry out an SA of each of the proposals in a Local Plan during its preparation. More generally, section 39 of the Act requires that the authority preparing a Local Plan must do so '*with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development*'. Sustainability appraisals incorporate the requirements of the 2004 Environmental Assessment Regulations, meaning the SA and SEA are carried out together as part of the preparation of planning documents and are collectively known as the SA process.

1.8   The methodology for the SA process takes into account the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) on Plan Making and Sustainability Appraisals and incorporates requirements set out in the 2005 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive'. The SA process consists of five stages (A-E), each of the stages are undertaken in tandem with the development of a local plan, as illustrated in Figure 1.1.

1.9   The first stage of producing the plan is a scoping stage, which this report relates to. This is necessary to propose and agree the way that the plan is to be drawn up including the methodology for the SA process and to collect together the necessary information to produce the plan. A thorough understanding of the context of existing plans and policies and of the current baseline situation is needed in order to be able to predict the effects the plan may have, and to identify key issues that will need to be addressed.

1.10   This draft scoping report for the updated Huntingdonshire Local Plan sets out how we intend to draw up the plan, focusing on the SA appraisal stages involved as well as the baseline information and plan context. This scoping report incorporates both the requirements of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Therefore, where reference is made to "SA process" within this document it refers to the combined process of SA and SEA.

Figure 1.1 Flowchart of the SA process alongside Local Plan production
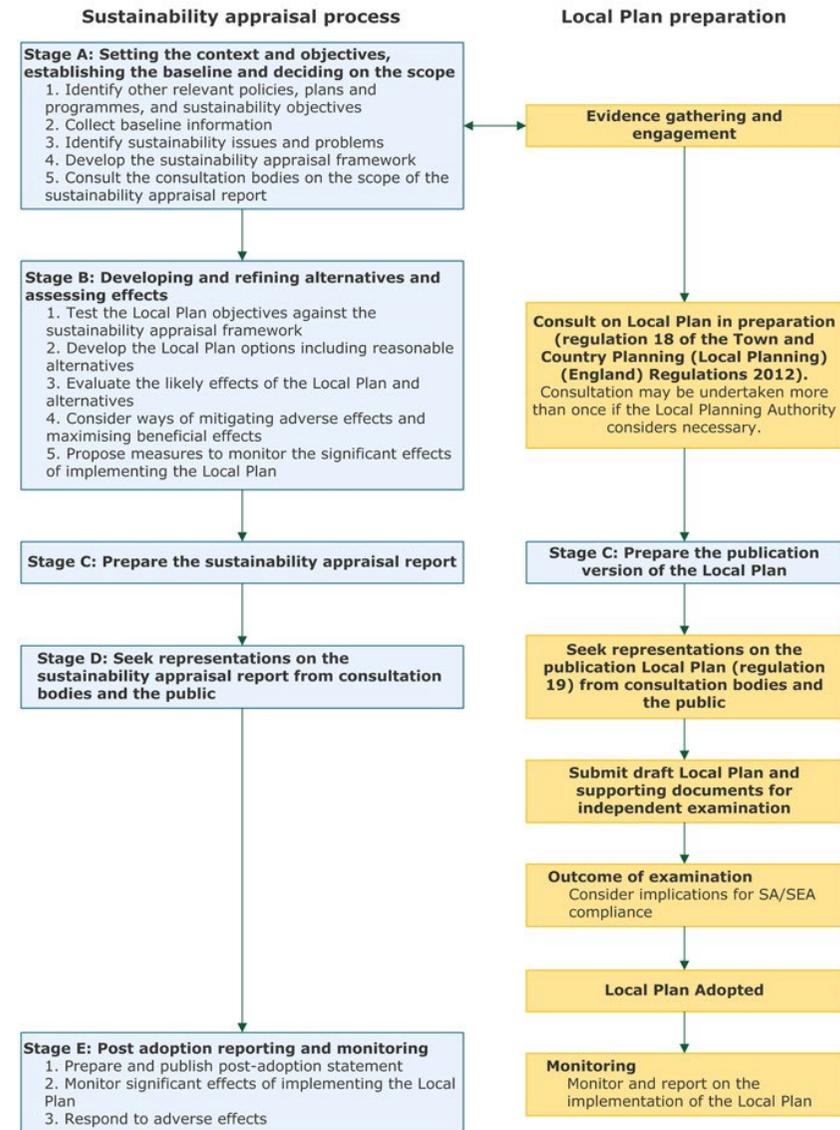
1   Introduction

The new Local Plan

1.11   The Local Plan will set out the planning policy for Huntingdonshire. It will include the strategy for spatial development of Huntingdonshire, the Council's policies for managing development in the district, and sites for achieving the development requirements. Initial engagement will focus on issues facing the district and identifying potential development sites. These will be refined through a series of options exploring the sustainability of potential policies and packages of development sites. Each phase of engagement will be accompanied by appropriate SA materials to explore the sustainability of the options being considered and a draft final SA will support the pre-submission version of the updated Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

1.12   The updated Huntingdonshire Local Plan and hence updated SA is necessary due to many changes to the context in which the Local Plan sits. These are explained in greater detail in section 3 'A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies' but are summarised here:

- UK's formal withdrawal from the European Union
- Planning and Leveling Up White Papers and Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill
- Increasing emphasis on the impacts of climate change and reducing carbon emissions
- Revised NPPF (and proposed further revisions to come) and new National Model Design Guide and Design Code
- New use classes
- Oxford-Cambridge Arc
- National and sub-regional transport infrastructure projects
- Updates and reviews to neighbouring local authorities' local plans
- Coronavirus pandemic

How the SA will influence the Local Plan

1.13   The Council' considers that SA is an integral part of the plan production process and is a core element of good planning. It is necessary to ensure that development occurring within the district takes the most sustainable form possible in economic, environmental and social terms. The Council has approached the SA in accordance with national guidance and undertaken the process in-house as part of the production of the Local Plan so that the SA and plan production are fully integrated.

Other appraisals and assessments

1.14   There are a range of appraisals and assessments associated with the production of the Local Plan. Where it is considered appropriate these other appraisals and assessments will be combined with the sustainability appraisal or completed at the same time.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

1.15   Probably the most important other assessment will be the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), sometimes known as Appropriate Assessment. The HRA looks at the impact that the Local Plan is likely to have on European Sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites). HRA is a two stage process that starts with a screening stage. If significant impacts on European sites cannot be ruled out by the screening stage a more detailed Appropriate Assessment will be required. The Appropriate Assessment will look at ways that significant effects can be avoided or mitigated against. HRA is required to be a separate process to sustainability appraisal.

Equality Impact Assessment

1.16   The Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. The Council also needs to demonstrate its compliance with the Equality Duty. The Council therefore needs to understand how its decisions and activities impact on different people and how they are affected by policies and practices. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is the method by which the Council can assess the impact of a new strategy, policy or decision.

1.17 The assessment focuses primarily on identifying circumstances where an adverse impact may occur; an adverse impact is is defined as occurring when a strategy, policy or decision has a disproportionately negative effect on a protected group or groups. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion and belief
- Race
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Health Impact Assessment

1.18 HIA is a process used to evaluate the significance of the potential health effects of a proposed plan. It helps to inform choices about actions to prevent ill-health, promote good health and reduce health inequalities. When applied in the planning system, an HIA puts people at the heart of the process and seeks to address the barriers and opportunities for creating healthy places. The HIA can help identify a set of evidence-based practical recommendations to promote and protect the health of local communities. Guidance from Public Health England indicates that a health impact assessment may be combined with an SA or completed as a standalone document.

2 | Sustainability Appraisal Methodology

2 Sustainability Appraisal Methodology

2.1   The purpose of this chapter is to formulate a methodology for the SA and to complete the necessary steps to enable the Council to draw up the Local Plan and undertake the SA. The Council proposes a methodology for the SA process that is based on the tasks and stages set out in the government's 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.

2.2   Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations sets out the information that must be provided within the SA:

1.   an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;
2.   the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;
3.   the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;
4.   any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;
5.   the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;
6.   the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as:

   a.   biodiversity,
   b.   population,
   c.   human health,
   d.   fauna,
   e.   flora,
   f.   soil,
   g.   water,
   h.   air,
   i.   climatic factors,
   j.   material assets,
   k.   cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage,
   l.   landscape, and
   m.   the interrelationship between the above factors;

7.   the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;
8.   an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;
9.   a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10;
10.   a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.

2.3   The issues (a-m) identified are reflected in the topics used throughout this scoping report. To ensure all of these issues are addressed, Table 1 shows which topic addresses each of the Schedule 2 issues. The significant effects on these need to be assessed in terms of short, medium and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects, and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects.

Table 1 Scoping report topics and the Schedule 2 issues they address

Issues listed in Schedule 2	Scoping report topic
a. biodiversity	• Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment • Green Infrastructure and Open Space
b. population	• Housing • Population and Health • Income and Deprivation • Employment and Businesses • Retail and Town Centres • Education
c. human health	• Population and Health • Income and Deprivation • Green Infrastructure and Open Space
d. fauna	• Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
e. flora	• Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
f. soil	• Land, Soils and Agriculture
g. water	• Flooding and Water
h. air	• Pollution
i. climatic factors	• Climate Emissions and Targets • Flooding and Water
j. material assets	• Housing • Travel and Transport

Issues listed in Schedule 2	Scoping report topic
	• Digital Infrastructure and Communications • Community Services and Facilities • Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency • Waste and Recycling
k. cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage	• Heritage
l. landscape	• Landscape
m. the inter-relationship between the issues referred to in (a) to (l)	• Many of these topics overlap, where they do so this has been reflected in the baseline commentary for the topic(s).

2.4   Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations sets out the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the issues referred to in Schedule 2 (a-m):

2   Sustainability Appraisal Methodology

1.   The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to

- the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,
- the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy,
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,
- environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).

2.   Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,
- the cumulative nature of the effects,
- the transboundary nature of the effects,
- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

  - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,
  - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,
  - intensive land-use,

- the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status

2.5   In Tables 2 and 3, each SA stage and its tasks are set out with the aspects that fulfil the requirements of the SEA Regulations identified in brackets after the stage or task title.

2.6   The stages and tasks covered by this scoping report are set out below (Stage A) in Table 2. Tasks A1 to A4 are not intended to be completed in a purely linear process as they will inform each other. The iterative nature of the SA process is summarised in the Figure 2.1 from the government's 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.

2.7   Stages B to E in the SA/SEA process, set out below in Table 3, will be carried out as part of the plan production process. Stage E will lead to indicators that will be reported on in the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) as part of the monitoring of the effectiveness of the Local Plan. More information on when stages B to E will be carried out can be found in 'Next Steps' part of this report.

2.8   Tasks B2, B3, B4 and B5 are not intended to be completed in a purely linear process as they will inform each other. Stage E will help considerations of whether or not to review the plan and will feed into future sustainability appraisal processes for future plans. This is also reflected in Figure 2.1.
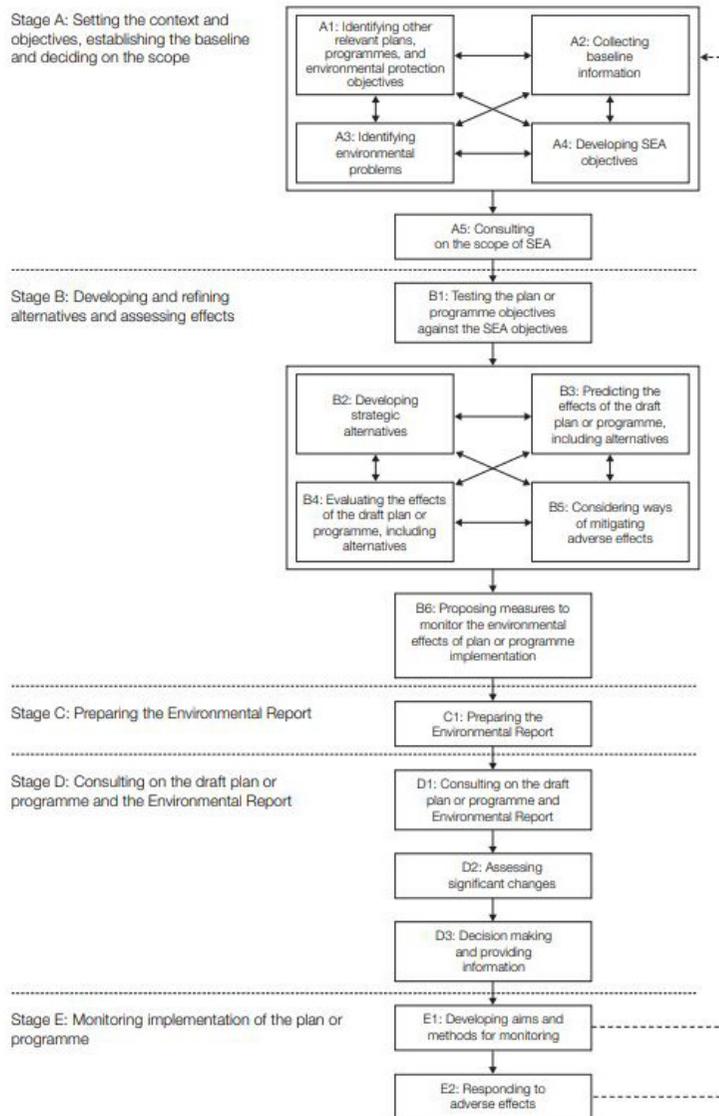
Figure 2.1 SA tasks process flow chart

Table 2 Stage A tasks in the SA/SEA process

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope
A1: Identifying relevant plans and programmes' (Schedule 2, (1) and (5)) • The purpose of this task is to establish how the plan is affected by outside factors, to suggest ideas for how any constraints can be addressed, and to help identify environmental protection objectives.
A2: Collecting baseline information' (Schedule 2, (2) and (3)) • The purpose of this task is to provide an evidence base for environmental impacts, prediction of what will happen without the plan as well as what effects it could have, monitoring and to help in the development of SA objectives.
A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems' (Schedule 2, (4) and Schedule 1, (1)) • The purpose of this task is to help focus the SA and streamline the subsequent stages, including baseline information analysis, setting the SA objectives, prediction of effects and monitoring
A4: Developing the SA framework' (Schedule 2, (6)) • The purpose of this task is to provide a means by which the environmental performance of the plan or programme and alternatives can be assessed.
A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA' (Part 3(5)) • The purpose of this task is to ensure that the SA covers the likely significant environmental effects of the plan and to ensure that the SA process is and will be robust and suitably comprehensive in order to support production of the plan.

2 | Sustainability Appraisal Methodology

Table 3 Stages B to E in the SA/ SEA process

Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects
B1: Testing the plan objectives against the SA framework (Schedule 2, (6)) • The purpose of this task is to identify potential synergies or inconsistencies between the objectives of the plan and the SA objectives.
B2: Developing plan options (Part 3(12) and Schedule 2, (8)) • The purpose of this task is to develop and refine options.
B3: Predicting the effects of the plan and alternatives (Schedule 2, (6)) • The purpose of this task is to predict the significant environmental effects of the plan and alternatives.
B4: Evaluating the effects of the plan and alternatives (Schedule 2, (6)) • The purpose of this task is to evaluate the predicted effects of the plan and alternatives in order to assist in the refinement of the plan.
B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects (Schedule 2, (7)) • The purpose of this task is to ensure that adverse effects are identified and potential mitigation measures are considered.
B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the plan (Schedule 2, (9)) • The purpose of this task is to detail the means by which the environmental performance of the plan can be assessed.
Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report
C1: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report (Part 3(12) and Schedule 2, (6) to (10))

• The purpose of this task is to present the predicted effects of the plan, including alternatives, in a form suitable for public consultation and use by decision makers.

Stage D: Consulting on the draft plan and the Sustainability Appraisal Report
D1: Public participation on the draft plan and the Sustainability Appraisal report (Part 3(13)) • The purpose of this task is to give the public and Consultation Bodies an opportunity to express their opinions on the findings of the Environmental Report and to use it as a reference point in commenting on the plan. To gather more information through the opinions and concerns of the public.
D2: Appraising significant changes (Schedule 2, (6)) • The purpose of this task is to ensure that the environmental implications of any significant changes to the draft plan are assessed and taken into account.
D3: Making decisions and providing information (Part 4(16)) • The purpose of this task is to provide information on how the Sustainability Appraisal Report and consultees' opinions were taken into account in deciding the final format of the plan to be adopted.
Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the plan on the environment
E1: Developing aims and methods for monitoring (Part 4(17)) • The purpose of this task is to track the environmental effects of the plan to show whether they are as predicted; to help identify any adverse effects.
E2: Responding to adverse effects (Part 4(17)) • The purpose of this task is to prepare for appropriate responses where adverse effects are identified.

3 A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies

STAGE A	STAGE B	STAGE C	STAGE D	STAGE E

- **A1: Identifying relevant policies, plans, programmes and objectives**
- A2: Collecting baseline information
- A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems
- A4: Developing the SA framework
- A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA

3.1 The purpose of this task is to establish how the plan is affected by outside factors, to suggest ideas for how any constraints can be addressed, and to help identify environmental protection objectives.

3.2 For the production of the Local Plan to be effective, a wide range of plans, programmes and strategies need to be taken into account. Such plans, programmes and strategies contain objectives and specific policy requirements that need to be considered. Identifying and reviewing these documents is an important element of the SA process, as it can help to shape the objectives against which emerging policies should be appraised, as well as pointing to particular issues and problems that should be tackled.

3.3 This review used the previously produced scoping report for the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 as a starting point but expanded to look at plans, programmes and strategies that could affect the new Local Plan. The assessment of relevant plans, programmes and strategies were also informed by best practice work of other local authorities and advice from council officers.

Changing contexts

3.4 Since the adoption of the Local Plan to 2036, the UK formally left the EU, however many of the European legislation and obligations had already or are now transposed into UK law.

3.5 There are significant changes happening at a national level. Firstly, in August 2020, the then Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published the Planning for the Future White Paper with proposals for long-term fundamental structural changes to England's planning system. 44,000 responses were received during the consultation on the White Paper. As of October 2022, the Government are yet to publish their response but have committed to doing so before introducing any Planning Bill to Parliament.

3.6 In February 2022, the now Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (formerly MHCLG) published the Levelling Up White Paper. It sets out 12 new missions to level up by 2030 across four broad areas: boosting productivity and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging; spreading opportunities and improving public services, especially in those areas where they are weakest; restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost; and, empowering local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill followed the White Paper in May 2022 and as of October 2022, is in the committee stages of the House of Commons.

3.7 On a global scale, climate change and its impacts are high on the agenda, as demonstrated at COP26 and the signing of new agreements for nations to cut down dramatically their carbon emissions and create a more resilient future. The Government has committed to being net zero emissions by 2050. Therefore, there is an increasing emphasis on climate change and the issues this gives rise to.

3 | A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies

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3.8   Planning and the built environment plays a significant part in contributing to a net zero carbon future as it currently accounts for around 25% of the UK's total carbon footprint [1] and as at December 2021 heating and powering homes accounts for some 40% of the UK's total energy use [2]. This has been recognised by the Committee on Climate Change which has stated that achieving the UK's net zero target will require the full decarbonisation of buildings by 2050. To assist in this goal, the Future Building Standards are expected to start from 2025 and will produce highly efficient new non-domestic buildings which use low-carbon heat and have the best fabric standards possible. By building future buildings to this standard, the Government anticipates that no further energy efficiency retrofit work will be necessary to enable these buildings to become zero-carbon as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise. In the interim, uplifts to Part L (Conservation of fuel and power) and F (Ventilation) of the Building Regulations and the introduction of Part O (Overheating) and Part S (Infrastructure for charging electric vehicles) were introduced in June 2022. These uplifts will see a 30% cut on emissions from new homes, as well as a 27% cut on new buildings including offices and shops. However, 80% of buildings by 2050 have already been built, therefore, there is still a need for retrofitting existing buildings as well as constructing buildings to higher energy efficiency standards. The resilience of development is also important to enable adaption to changing climate and extreme climatic conditions such as flooding and overheating.

3.9   A revised National Planning Policy Framework was published in July 2021. The revisions increased the focus on design quality with the language used firmer on protecting and enhancing the environment and promoting a sustainable pattern of development. Guidance on the use of Article 4 Directions has been updated to reflect changes to permitted development rights creating new homes from non-residential properties, with additional emphasis on restricting the use of Article 4 Directions to the 'smallest possible geographical area.'

3.10 There is also increased emphasis on supporting design that is locally specific. This ties in with the introduction of the Government's National Model Design Guide and Design Code. The National Model Design Code forms part of the government's planning practice guidance and expands on the ten characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide, which reflects the government's priorities and provides a common overarching framework for design to help local authorities and communities decide what good quality design looks like in their area. This is intended to drive up design quality and to contribute to the Government's ambition of planning for 'beautiful places'. There is also a growing emphasis on use of digital tools and digital forms of communicating information including interactive mapping and interactive tools to help people to more readily engage with the planning process.

3.11 Substantial amendments to the use classes came into force on 1 September 2020 under the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020. These introduced Class E which encompasses commercial, business and services. There is also a new F1 and F2 class which applies to learning and non-residential institutions and local community use respectively.

3.12 In February 2021, a Spatial Framework for the Ox Cam Arc area was published setting out the rationale and timelines to deliver the Spatial Framework. This was proposed as a long-term strategic plan to help coordinate the infrastructure, environment and new developments in the area. A consultation on creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc was launched in July 2021 alongside a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, the data used within it has been placed into an interactive map. No government response has been published as of October 2022 and there is uncertainty over the future of any government led spatial framework for the Arc due to its lack of acknowledgement in the Levelling Up White Paper and Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

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1   New report confirms that net zero is achievable for the built environment sector by 2050, but only with urgent government action - UKGBC - UK Green Building Council
2   New homes to produce nearly a third less carbon - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

3.13 At a local and sub-regional level, several neighbouring local authorities have commenced an update to their Local Plans. Under the Duty to Cooperate, Huntingdonshire are working with neighbouring authorities to understand the cross boundary effects and strategic issues and opportunities that may arise. The Council is also working with neighbouring authorities and pubic bodies including National Highways on strategic transport infrastructure projects such as the upgrading the A428 and East West Rail which are regarded as playing a significant part of the growth agenda of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

3.14 The coronavirus pandemic had significant short term impacts on the economy, people's working and travel patterns, demand levels for publicly accessible open space and social and community relationships. The long terms impacts are still uncertain and locally informed evidence will be needed to ascertain what form and scale he long term changes take in Huntingdonshire.

3.15 The policy context has therefore been comprehensively reviewed to take these changes into account, and to remove from the list those policies that are outdated or less central to the development of the new Local Plan.

3 | A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies

Relevant plans, programmes and strategies

3.16   Relevant plans, programmes and strategies were reviewed at an international, national, regional and sub-regional/county/local level. A detailed review of these documents can be found in Appendix 1: 'Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed'. The appendix is split into international, national, regional, sub-regional, county and local level tables. The key aims, objectives, and targets/ indicators for each plan, programme and strategy are identified alongside how they will shape the Huntingdonshire Local Plan and what baseline topic they relate to.

3.17   In Appendix 1 there is a list of relevant EU Directives and the UK legislation that transposes their requirements. As these EU Directives have been transposed into UK law, they have not been added to the list of plans, programmes and strategies to save duplication. Instead, the UK legislation have been included with an explanation of their key aims, objectives and targets/ indicators and implications for the Local Plan within Table 4 and Appendix 1.

3.18   A summary of the findings of the detailed review are shown in Table 4, these have been split into climate emergency, environmental and socio-economic groupings consistent with those used later in the baseline research. Table 4 also identifies the plans, programmes and strategies that are procedural (requirements that the Local Plan and its supporting evidence must do) and those that are overarching (cross over all groupings).

3.19   The plans, programmes and strategies with an asterisk (*) are documents which were produced to support the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the most recent versions of these documents at the time this scoping report was prepared.

Table 4 Key aims, messages and objectives from the review of relevant plans, programmes and strategies

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives that will shape the Huntingdonshire Local Plan	Plans, Programmes and Strategies
Procedural	• The Local Plan and its proposals are required to undergo a Sustainability Appraisal (including an Environmental Impact Assessment) • The Local Plan must undergo a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) • The Local Plan and its proposals must be assessed for their impact on protected characteristics through an Equality Impact Assessment • Evidence used to shape the Local Plan must be made publicly available • Consultation will be undertaken throughout the plan making process and recorded in a Statement of Consultation document	• Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) • Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) • Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) • Localism Act 2011 • Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended) • Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) • The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) • Human Rights Act 1998 • Equality Act 2010 • Environmental Information Regulations 2004 • Aarhus Convention 1998 • Freedom of Information Act 2000 • Community Transition Strategy 2021-2023 (2021)
Overarching	• The Local Plan must promote all strands of sustainable development (economic, environmental and social) in a holistic way • Sustainability is an underlying principle of the planning system • Consider the economic, environmental and social ambitions of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc • Incorporate where possible the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority's and Huntingdonshire District Council's corporate aims and objectives • Development needs to be well designed and where people want to live and work	• National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (NPPF) • National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) • United Nations: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) • Planning for the Future White Paper (2020) • Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill and Policy Paper (2022) • Planning for sustainable growth in the Ox-Cam Arc: spatial framework (2021) and Local Natural Capital Plan • Huntingdonshire Council Corporate Plan and monitoring reports • Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (May 2019) and Annual Monitoring Reports • Developer Contributions SPD (2011) and Updated Costs 2019/20 • Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Infrastructure Schedule (June 2017) and Infrastructure Delivery Plan - Addendum (December 2017)* • Manual for Streets (2007)

3   A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives that will shape the Huntingdonshire Local Plan	Plans, Programmes and Strategies
		• National Model Design Guide and Design Code (2021) • Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2017) & Compatibility Statement (2021) • Made Neighbourhood Plans within Huntingdonshire • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 • Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Devolution Deal (2017) • Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill (2022)
Climate change: Carbon Emissions and Targets Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Flooding and Water Waste and Recycling	• The Local Plan must include policies on climate change • The UK Government has pledged to be carbon neutral by 2050, the District Council has set a target of reaching net zero carbon by 2040 • Plan for and respond to the impacts of climate change • Promote opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy generation including community led generation • Improve the energy performance of buildings to reduce energy consumption and reduce costs to residents • Support retrofitting of older and less energy efficient housing stock and non-residential buildings • Integrate the 'waste hierarchy' of reduce waste and increase the amount which is re-used and recycled to meet national and local targets • Promote opportunities to create a circular economy by maximising the reuse of materials, particularly in construction • Ensure sustainable waste management practices are in place	• United Nations Climate Change Conference: Glasgow Climate Pact (2021) • United Nations: Paris Agreement (2015) • UKCP18 Climate Projections (2018) • Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended) • Planning and Energy Act 2008 • Planning Act 2008 (as amended) • Building Regulations 2010 (as amended) • The Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 • Future Buildings Standard - Government consultation response (2020) • British Energy Security Strategy (2022) • Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (2021) • Heat and buildings strategy (2021) • Energy white paper: Powering our net zero future (2020) • Decarbonising transport: a better, greener Britain (2021) • The Clean Growth Strategy: Leading the way to a low carbon future (2017) • Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future (2017) • Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate (2021) • Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (July 2021) • Cambridgeshire Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2020 • Cambridgeshire Renewables Infrastructure Framework – Final Report: Finance, Delivery and Engagement (2012) • Climate Change and Environment Strategy (2020-2025), Carbon Footprint for 2018/19 and our Action Plan (2020) • Huntingdonshire Environment Principles (2021) • Huntingdonshire's Environment and Climate Strategy (emerging)

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives that will shape the Huntingdonshire Local Plan	Plans, Programmes and Strategies
		• Wind Energy Development in Huntingdonshire SPD (2014) • Flood and Water Management Act 2010 • The Flood Risk Regulations 2009 • Water Act 2014 • East Inshore and East Offshore Marine Plans (2014) • Anglian River Basin District River Basin Management Plan (2015) • Anglian Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) 2020-2045 • Anglian Water's Long Term Water Recycling Plan (WRLTP) • Cambridge Water Resource Management Plan 2020-2045 • Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Action Plans • Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017) • Surface Water Planning Guidance (2021) • Draft Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for Cambridgeshire 2021-2027 (2022) • Upper Ouse and Bedford Ouse abstraction licensing strategy (2017) • Old Bedford including Middle Level abstraction licensing strategy (2017) • Future Fens Integrated Adaptation manifesto (Nov 2021) and Future Fens Flood Risk Management Baseline Report (2020) • Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and appendices A-G (2017)* • Stage 2: Detailed Water Cycle Study Update (2014)* • National Flood and Coastal Erosion Management Strategy for England (2021) • Surface Water Management Plan for Cambridgeshire (2014) • The Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection (2017) • Water resources strategy Regional action plan for the Anglian Region (2009) • Emerging Water Resources East Regional Plan (January 2022) • Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 • Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002 (as amended) • National Planning Policy for Waste (2014) • Waste Management Plan for England 2021 (2021) • Huntingdonshire's Litter Minimisation Strategy 2021-2025 and action plan (2020)
Environmental:	• Protect and enhance the various landscapes and their key characteristics	• Environment Act 2021

3 | A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives that will shape the Huntingdonshire Local Plan	Plans, Programmes and Strategies
Landscape Land, Soils and Agriculture Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment Green Infrastructure and Open Space Pollution	• Maintain and enhance landscape and townscape character • Promote landscape protection, management and planning • Conserve ad where possible enhance the best and most versatile agricultural land • Support sustainable agricultural practices • Conserve and restore peatland • Prioritise the reuse of previously developed land (brownfield land) over greenfield land • Protect and enhance biodiversity, natural habitats and wild fauna and flora, including international, national and local designated sites • Policies and proposals must seek a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain • Conserve existing tree cover and support additional tree planting • Support access to the countryside and the public rights of way network • Protect and enhance green infrastructure • Ensure that all residents have access to open and green space • Improve the quality and quantity of open spaces and accessibility to these spaces • Minimise the damage of flooding to people and property • Incorporate flood resilient and resistant design into new builds where there is a risk of flooding from any source • Ensure there is sufficient water capacity to service growth	• A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018) • Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011) • Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022) • Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines (1991) • Wind Energy Development in Huntingdonshire SPD (2014) • European Landscape Convention • Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy (2020-2030) and 10 year Action Plan • Great Fen Master Plan 2010 and Fens for the Future Strategic Plan (2012) • England Peat Action Plan (2021) • Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended) • The UK Biodiversity Action Plan and UK Biodiversity Action Plan • The Biodiversity Metric 3.0 (JP039) (2021) • Mapping natural capital and opportunities for habitat creation in Cambridgeshire (2019) • Natural Cambridgeshire's 'Doubling Nature – A Vision for the Natural Future of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in 2050' • Combined Authority Doubling Nature Investment Plan (2020) • The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 • Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2016) • Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended) • The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010 • Clean Air Strategy 2019 • Air Quality Annual Status Report for the year 2021 • Air quality plan for nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) in UK (2017) • Joint Air Quality Action Plan for the Cambridgeshire Growth Area (2009) • Nitrate Pollution Prevention (Amendment) Regulations 2016 • The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2007 • Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard (2020) • Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2016-2021 (2016)* • Nature Nearby, Accessible Greenspace Guidance (2010)

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives that will shape the Huntingdonshire Local Plan	Plans, Programmes and Strategies
	- Promote the development of water efficient homes and non-residential buildings - Minimise water pollution to increase the ecology quality of rivers and groundwater - Reduce the concentration of air pollutants and keep levels of pollutants below maximum levels	- Open Space Strategy for Huntingdonshire 2020-2030 & 10 year action plan (2020) - PHE Strategy 2020 to 2025 (2019) - Safeguarding our Soils – A Strategy for England (2009) - Sports England Strategic outcomes planning and leisure delivery guidance (2021)
Socio-economic: Housing Population and Health Income and Deprivation Employment and Business Travel and Transport Digital Infrastructure and Communications Retail and Town Centres Tourism and Leisure	- Identify land that will meet the housing needs of the district - Provide a variety of housing types, mix and tenures across the district - Tackle affordability issues - Provide homes that meet people's needs or are capable of being adapted in the future to accommodate changing needs - Ensure the needs of Gypsy and Travellers are met - Provide care homes, accommodation and health facilities to meet the needs of the elderly or those with specific medical needs in accessible locations - Support self and custom build housing - Promote high quality design for housing products that reflect local character and are integrated into the surrounding community - Improve health and well-being - Enhance quality and quantity of indoors and outdoors sports facilities - Tackle inequalities to raise quality of life - Promote social inclusion - Promote Huntingdonshire's contribution to the wider Cambridgeshire and Peterborough economy - Support existing businesses - Enhance employment opportunities for all	- Planning Act 2008 (as amended) - Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 - Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 - Housing and Planning Act 2016 - Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended) - Levelling-Up White Paper and Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill (2022) - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Housing Strategy (2018) - Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy 2020-2025 (2020) - Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk: Housing Needs of Specific Groups (2021) - Cambridgeshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and data sets - Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015) - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2024 (2020) - Children and Families Act 2014 - Childcare Act 2016 - Education Act 1996 - Education and Inspections Act 2006 - Education and Skills Act 2008 - Planning for Schools Development: Statement (2011) - Cambridgeshire's 0-19 Education Organisation Plan 2021-2022 - Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth (2021) - Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2016-2021 (2016)* - The Clean Growth Strategy: Leading the way to a low carbon future (2017) - Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future (2017) - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Independent Economic Review (2018)

3 | A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives that will shape the Huntingdonshire Local Plan	Plans, Programmes and Strategies
Community Services and Facilities Education Heritage	• Support small and medium sized businesses to grow and thrive within the district • Ensure adequate public transport infrastructure to access services, facilities and employment destinations via more sustainable modes of transport • Reduce the dependency on private car usage • Improve public transport in rural areas • Support strategic highway and transport projects • Ensure communities are digitally connected • Support digital connectivity particularly in more rural parts of the district • Support Huntingdonshire's high streets and retail centres • Support the tourism and leisure sector • Ensure there is good access to facilities such as community, sports, health and leisure facilities • Support the provision of additional community services and facilities • Ensure that everyone has access to education and training • Maintain townscape character • Protect heritage assets and the historic environment and their cultural and architectural significance • Promote the contribution the historic environment makes to the social, economic and cultural aspects of life • Recognise and protect archaeological heritage	• Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Economic Recovery Strategy (2021) • Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Industrial Strategy (2019) • Huntingdonshire's Place Strategy (emerging) • Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Strategy and Economic Growth Plan 2020-2025 • Huntingdonshire Market Town's Economic Prospectuses for Growth and emerging Masterplans for Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey • St Neots Future High Streets Fund • Huntingdonshire Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Assessment (2017)* • Employment Land Study and appendices 1-6 (2014)* • Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Digital Connectivity Strategy 2021-2025 (2021) • The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Transport Plan (2020) • Decarbonising transport: a better, greener Britain (2021) • Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy (2019) • Future of Transport: Rural Strategy – call for evidence responses (2021) • A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Road improvement scheme DCO • A47 North Tuddenham to Easton improvement scheme DCO • Strategic Transport Study Baseline Report and Development Scenario Comparative Assessment (May 2017), and Development Scenario Addendum (Dec 2017)* • Transport Strategy for Huntingdonshire and Active Travel Strategy (emerging) • Huntingdonshire Community Infrastructure Levy: Charging Schedule • Huntingdonshire Conservation Area Character Statements and Assessments and Cambridgeshire Historic Environmental Record • Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022) • European Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985) (Granada Convention) • Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) • The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended) • The Heritage Statement (2017) • Valletta Convention (European Convention on the protection of Archaeological Heritage) 1992

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

STAGE A	STAGE B	STAGE C	STAGE D	STAGE E

- A1: Identifying relevant policies, plans, programmes and objectives
- **A2: Collecting baseline information**
- A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems
- A4: Developing the SA framework
- A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA

4.1   The purpose of this task is to provide an evidence base for environmental impacts, prediction of what will happen without the plan as well as what effects it could have, monitoring and to help in the development of SA objectives.

4.2   Baseline information provides the starting point for predicting and monitoring effects of plans as well as what is likely to happen without the plan and helps to identify problems and potential solutions for dealing with them. Sufficient information about the current and likely states of the plan area is required to allow the plan's effect to be accurately predicted. Collection of baseline data also enables the identification of key sustainability issues affecting the district which are useful in developing SA objectives.

4.3   The following section sets out baseline information in topics which correspond with the SEA topics identified as set out in Table 1. These topics have been grouped into climate emergency, environmental and socio-economic characteristics.

Data Limitations

4.4   Much of the data presented is either collected by external bodies or collected in partnership between them and the District Council. Therefore the Council has limited control over the temporal and spatial scope of the data collected and whether data collection methods may change in the future. These factors may limit the ability to make reliable comparisons.

4.5   There are some gaps in the data collected as not all information is available at the local level for recent time periods. This will be added to as the plan production process and as future Annual Monitoring Reports are published. A significant new source of data that will become available is the 2021 Census. Other sources will become available during the plan production process and so in the future, it may be necessary to alter the SA framework depending on the baseline information available at the time.

Key information

4.6   A summary of the key information found during the collecting of baseline information are provided below:

4 | A2: Collecting baseline information

District is 913 square km
9 landscape character areas
Most land is high quality agricultural land for crops

The habitat and nature restoration project: Great Fen supporting eco tourism
Numerous waterways and marinas
3 national cycleways

River Great Ouse and River Nene
Flood risk prominent
634 water bodies

Anglian region :
2017/18 109 megalitres/day demand, in 2045 could rise to 1,240 megalitres/day

Internationally protected nature sites (Ouse Washes, Portholme & Woodwalton Fen)
26 SSSIs and 135 County Wildlife Sites

605 greenspaces totalling 1,229ha+
87sqm greenspace/person

4 Air Quality Management Areas

70 wind turbines
12 solar farms

Be net zero by 2040
44% of carbon emissions from transport

90% of households have organic waste collection
2021/22 - 58% waste recycled/ composted

30% housing stock built 1950s/60s, 40% 1970s-90s and 19% since 2000

2020 - 10.95% households in fuel poverty

86,000 employees in 2020
7,895 enterprises (89.93% 0-9 employees)
Median weekly pay £589

4 market towns &
4 out of town retail parks

Strategic transport connections - A1, A14, A428, A141, A1123, A1096, A1198, A605
Guided busway & 2 railway stations

68.92% have indoor 4G coverage from all operators

40.8% premises have superfast broadband & 54.8% have ultrafast

86,473 dwellings in April 2022
71.3% owner occupied in 2011
12.9% of homes are social rented

Mar 2022 - £320,699 avg. house price
2021 ONS affordability ratio = 9.6

2021 census = 180,800 population
Life expectancy of those born 2001-03, females 81.5 and males 77.5 years

956 care beds
1 hospital & 21 full time GP surgeries
69th least deprived district in England

2,216 listed buildings
84 scheduled monument
61 conservation areas
5 registered parks & gardens

10 libraries and 2 mobile services
28 Assets of Community Value in Oct 2022

73 state schools
2.1% of people have no qualifications
60.7% people have NVQ1
41.5% people have NVQ4+

Climate Emergency

Carbon Emissions and Targets

4.7   Greenhouse gas emissions are the largest single driver of climate change. The European Commission states that carbon dioxide (CO_2) produced by human activities is the largest contributor to global warming. By 2020, its concentration in the atmosphere had risen to 48% above its pre-industrial level before 1750. Other greenhouse gases are emitted by human activity in smaller quantities. Methane is a more powerful greenhouse gas than CO_2 but has a shorter atmospheric lifetime. Nitrous oxide, like CO_2, is a long-lived greenhouse gas that accumulates in the atmosphere over decades to centuries. The main anthropogenic causes for increases in emissions are burning coal, gas and oil, deforestation, increasing livestock farming, increased use of nitrogen based fertilisers and emissions of flurinated gases. Natural causes, such as changes in solar radiation or volcanic activity are estimated to have contributed less than plus or minus 0.1°C to total warming between 1890 and 2010.

4.8   2011-2020 was the warmest decade recorded, with global average temperature reaching 1.1°C above pre-industrial levels in 2019. Anthropogenic global warming is presently increasing at a rate of 0.2°C per decade. The primary aim of the Paris Agreement on climate change is to keep the increase in the global temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. An increase of 2°C compared to the temperature in pre-industrial times is associated with serious negative impacts to the natural environment and human health and wellbeing, including a much higher risk that dangerous and possibly catastrophic changes in the global environment will occur.

4.9   Strong and sustained reductions in emissions of CO_2 and other greenhouse gases would limit climate change. Some benefits such as improved air quality would be seen in the short term, however, the IPCC Working Group I report, Climate Change 2021: the Physical Science Basis notes that it would take 20-30 years to see global temperatures stabilise. The report finds that unless there are immediate, rapid and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, limiting warming to close to 1.5°C or even 2°C will be beyond reach, making the targets of the Paris Agreement unachievable.

4.10   In December 2021, Huntingdonshire District Council adopted the aspiration of a net carbon zero Huntingdonshire by 2040, complemented by a series of environmental principles based on those agreed by authorities across the OxCam Arc. Our environmental principles are:

- to target net-zero carbon at a district level by 2040
- to protect, enhance and restore existing nature areas (green spaces) and create new ones (where it is viable to do so)
- to pursue the ambitions of 'A Green Future: Our 25-year Plan to Improve the Environment' and that new development should be designed with a view to minimising and mitigating the effects of climate change
- to ensure existing and new communities see real benefits in their well-being from living in Huntingdonshire
- to use natural resources wisely.

4.11   The Meteorological Office has prepared climate projections and visualisations based on 12km square grids across the UK, searchable by postcode. A postcode was selected to represent the central point of Huntingdonshire (see Table 5). The data is published in collaboration with the BBC and can be found at Climate projections and visualisations by postcode. This projects changes in temperatures and rainfall by summer and winter dependent on global warming being restrained to an increase of 2°C or being 4°C.

4 | A2: Collecting baseline information

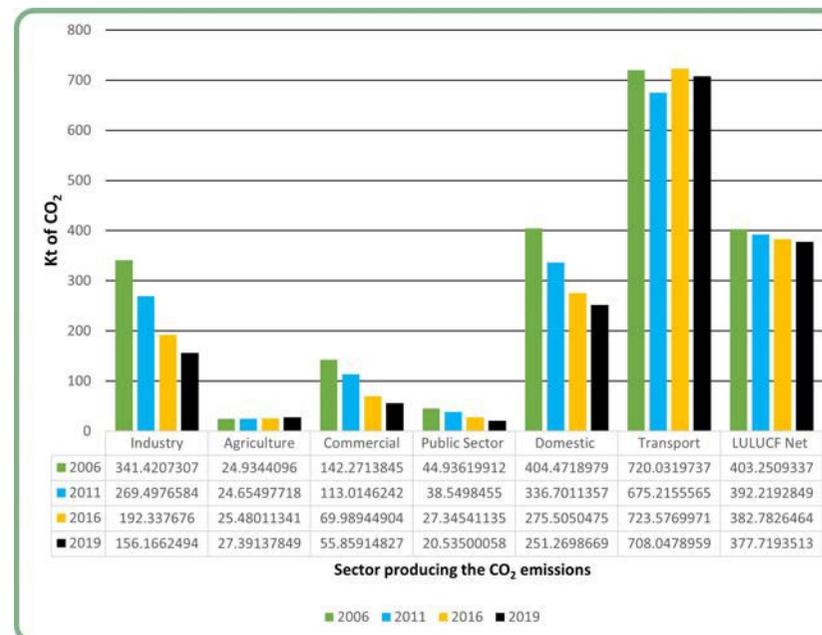**Table 5 Predicted impacts of climate change in Huntingdonshire**

Area of change	Season	Current (1991-2019)	2°C global warming	4°C global warming
Hottest day	Summer	37.2°C	38.9°C	43°C
	Winter	18.5°C	19°C	20.2°C
Days reaching above 25°C per month	Summer	5	10	19
Rainy days	Summer	8	8	8
	Winter	9	9	9
Wettest day	Summer	61 mm of rain	56 mm of rain	60 mm of rain
	Winter	28 mm of rain	38 mm of rain	40 mm of rain

4.12   The Met Office climate projections for the UK indicate significant temperature rises in the decades ahead for both winter and summer, with the greatest increases in the already warmer southern parts of the UK. Extreme weather could become more frequent and intense. Although the number of rainy days is predicted to remain the same the amount of rainfall on the wettest winter days may increase by 41% if global warming reaches 4°C.

4.13   The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) annual statistics on territorial carbon dioxide emissions by local authority show CO_2 emissions annually since 2005 by sector although the figures exclude aviation, shipping and military transport for which there is no obvious basis for allocation to local areas. The UK total CO_2 emissions hav declined from 537,128 Kt in 2005 to 344,511 Kt in 2019, a fall of nearly

a third. Transport makes up the single largest generator of this at 36% of all UK CO_2 emissions in 2019. Huntingdonshire's share of these emissions has declined from 2,100 Kt in 2005 to 1,597 Kt in 2019. Transport comprises a particularly high proportion of the district's CO_2 emissions at 44% of the 2019 total reflecting the presence of the A1, A14 and East Coast mainline railways running through the district. Figure 4.1 below shows the levels and changing patterns of CO_2 emissions at selected years between 2005 and 2019 [3]. BEIS also publish data reflecting emissions which are within the scope of influence of local authorities which excludes very large industrial sites, railways, motorways and land use. When these figures are considered, the emissions from transport in 2019 fell from 708 Kt to 544 Kt reflecting the high volume of long distance road and rail transport which traverses Huntingdonshire.

Figure 4.1 Carbon dioxide emissions by category

	Industry	Agriculture	Commercial	Public Sector	Domestic	Transport	LULUCF Net
2006	341.4207307	24.9344096	142.2713845	44.93619912	404.4718979	720.0319737	403.2509337
2011	269.4976584	24.65497718	113.0146242	38.5498455	336.7011357	675.2155565	392.2192849
2016	192.337676	25.48011341	69.98944904	27.34541135	275.5050475	723.5769971	382.7826464
2019	156.1662494	27.39137849	55.85914827	20.53500058	251.2698669	708.0478959	377.7193513

Sector producing the CO_2 emissions

■ 2006 ■ 2011 ■ 2016 ■ 2019

---

3   LULUCF stands for land use, land use change and forestry and is measured as net emissions as some elements of this sector absorb more CO_2 than they emit.

4.14 Figure 4.2 below shows the per capita CO_2 emissions in 2019 for each local authority within Cambridgeshire and for England as a whole to set Huntingdonshire's levels into perspective. This contains both the total territorial emissions data and that for emissions which are within the scope of the local authority. It shows the significant differences that arise from removing transport and land use, land use change and forestry. When all emissions are taken into account Huntingdonshire's outputs per capita are slightly below the average for Cambridgeshire, however they are some 80% higher than the per capita average for England. When only emissions which fall within the scope of local authorities are taken into account the picture is significantly different. Huntingdonshire's emissions are reduced to 64% of the former figure and East Cambridgeshire and Fenland similarly see significant decreases. Comparing to the average per capita for England also changes with Huntingdonshire sitting some 40% above the average, in part reflecting its semi-rural nature.

Figure 4.2 Comparative per capita carbon dioxide emissions, 2019

	Huntingdonshire	Cambridge	East Cambs	Fenland	South Cambs	Cambridgeshire	England
All emissions	9	3.9	14.9	14.2	7.6	9.3	4.9
Emissions within LA scope	5.8	3.8	5.8	5.4	6.3	5.5	4.1
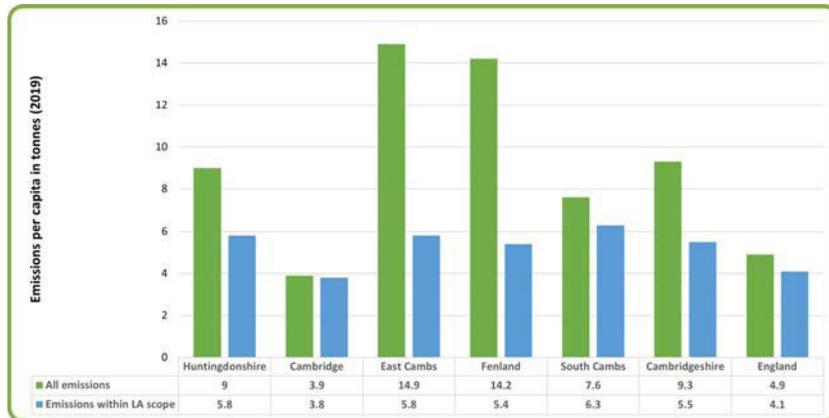
4.15 The Climate Change Commission's report 'Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget' (2020) stated in their key recommendations that:

'More than half of the emissions cuts needed rely on people and businesses taking up low-carbon solutions – decisions that are made at a local and individual level. Many of these decisions depend on having supporting infrastructure and systems in place. Local authorities have powers or influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas.'

4.16 Key elements which can be influenced at the local authority level include: using planning powers to shape future buildings and local transport infrastructure, enforcement of building regulations to ensure policies setting out more ambitious targets are delivered in new buildings when built, managing risks such as flooding, and protecting the natural environment, wildlife and heritage.

4.17 The Tyndall Centre of the University of Manchester has prepared reports setting climate commitments for all local authorities in England which quantify the implications of the United Nations Paris Agreement for each authority's area. The report for Huntingdonshire was prepared in October 2021. It presents climate change targets for the district derived from commitments enshrined in the Paris Agreement setting out the district's contribution to achieving national targets based on translating the global temperature target of 'well below 2°C' and pursuing 1.5°C as a preferable maximum increase over pre-industrial global temperatures. The Tyndall Report gives the following key recommendations for Huntingdonshire:

1. To stay within a maximum cumulative carbon dioxide emissions budget of 7.6 million tonnes (Mt CO_2) for the period of 2020 to 2100. At 2017 CO_2 emission levels, Huntingdonshire would use this entire budget within 6 years from 2020.
2. To initiate an immediate programme of CO_2 mitigation to deliver cuts in emissions averaging a minimum of -14.1% per year to deliver a Paris aligned carbon budget. These annual reductions in emissions require national and local action, and could be part of a wider collaboration with other local authorities.
3. To reach zero or near zero carbon no later than 2040. This provides an indicative CO_2 reduction pathway that stays within the recommended maximum carbon budget of 7.6 Mt CO_2. At 2040 just 5% of the budget remains.

4 | A2: Collecting baseline information

4.18 The carbon budgets set out in the report apply only to CO_2 emissions from the energy system. The report notes that although all greenhouse gas emissions such as methane affect the rate of climate change long term warming is mainly driven by CO_2 emissions; this approach ensures consistency with the global carbon budgets in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Special Report on 1.5°C. Figure 4.3 below sets out the carbon budget ascribed to Huntingdonshire by the Tyndall Centre with data including 2018 and 2019 in addition to the budget set out in 1 above giving a total of 10.2 Mt CO_2 This shows the maximum cumulative CO_2 amount consistent with the district's fair contribution to the Paris Agreement and meeting the budget must not rely on carbon offsets.

Figure 4.3 Recommended Carbon Budget 2018 to 2100

Mt CO2	2018-2022	2023-2027	2028-2032	2033-2037	2038-2042	2043-2047	2048-2100
	5.3	2.6	1.2	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.1
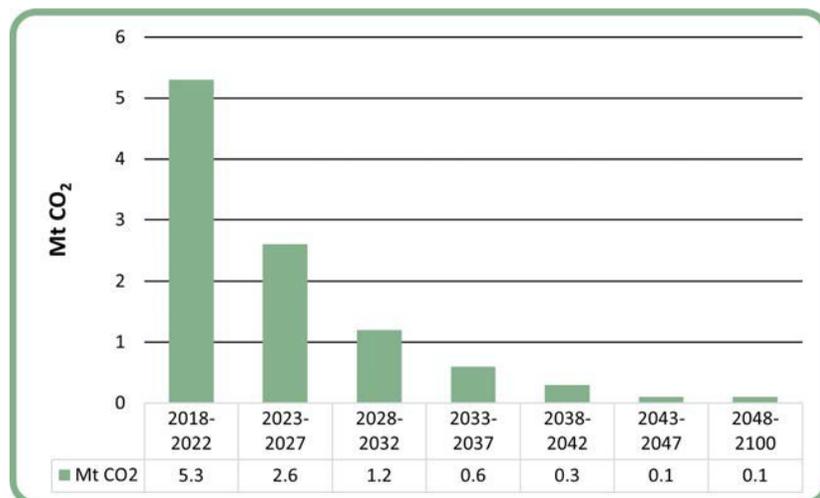
Key sustainability issues and problems

- Increased summer temperatures will impact on comfort and usability of existing properties
- Drier summers and wetter winters will create issues for flooding, water storage and management, soil and agricultural productivity and habitat survival
- CO_2 emissions are reducing across industrial, commercial, domestic and public sectors
- CO_2 emissions are very high for transport, influenced by the presence of the A1, A14 and East Coast Mainline Railway coupled with the largely rural nature of the district
- Per capita emissions are significantly higher than for England but typical for Cambridgeshire
- Increasing the climate resilience and energy efficiency of buildings and spaces

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Emission levels are likely to continue to fall due to enhanced national policy and technological improvements but the Local Plan offers opportunities to accelerate reductions locally
- New or renovated buildings may be less resilient to the impacts of climate change

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

4.19   In order to reach global climate and sustainable energy goals a dramatic acceleration is needed in the transition to clean, sustainable energy. Data from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy for 2020 details electricity consumption levels for Huntingdonshire of 324.3 GWh for all domestic use and 486.6 GWH for non-domestic use. Equivalent BEIS data for gas consumption in 2020 details gas consumption levels at 877.5 GWh for all domestic use and 235.1 GWh for non-domestic use.

4.20   Renewable energy generation within Huntingdonshire is provided through wind power, photovoltaic panels (solar power) and a small amount of biomass power generation. Figure 4.4 below shows the proportion of each power source installed from 2011/12 to 2020/21. This illustrates the shift from installation of wind turbines in the early part of the decade to the dominance of photovoltaic panels as the main source of renewable energy generation within the district. The capacity figures of installations show the high discrepancy between renewable capacity and current levels of energy demand.

Figure 4.4 New renewable energy installations by type 2011 to 2021

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Photovoltaic	3.5404	1.7006	36.9464	9.8447	47.3616	0.4164	5.5503	0.6560	0.0000	52.5666
Biomass	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.3900	0.4490	0.0000	0.1640	0.0000	0.0000	1.3150
Wind	0.0731	1.4195	24.0325	16.5110	0.8000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

■ Wind ■ Biomass ■ Photovoltaic
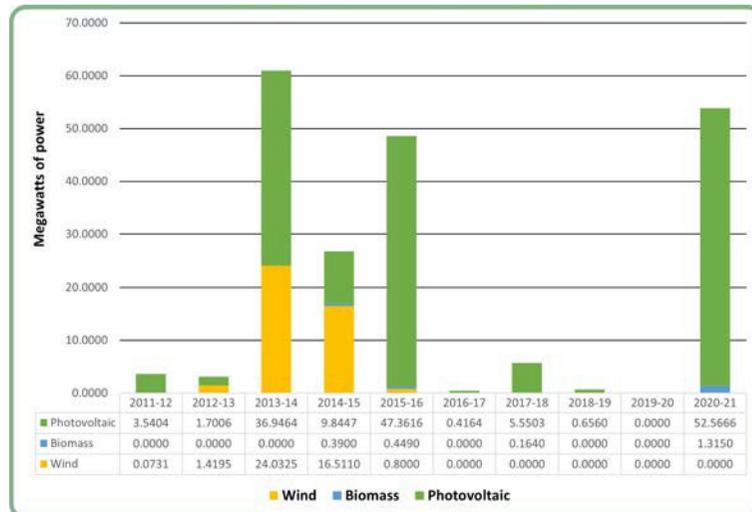
4.21   Since 2011/12 to March 2021 photovoltaic panels requiring planning permission or prior notification have been installed that are capable of generating 146.3 MW of power. The largest solar farm in the district as at March 2022 is situated at Little Staughton Airfield/ Top Farm covering 149 ha and capable of generating 40 MW of power. Two solar farms at Abbotsley and Abbots Ripton are each capable of generating 25 MW of power. Nine smaller solar farms can collectively generate 53 MW of power one of which was granted permission in December 2021 for an extension to provide an additional 20 MW of power. The remaining 52 schemes installed in this time requiring planning permission or prior notification are all small scale installations, many on the roofs of existing buildings, and collectively providing just over 3 MW of power.

Solar panels near Grafham Water

4.22   Map 4.1 shows the distribution of wind turbines throughout Huntingdonshire including the height to the blade tip. Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 has prevented further erection of wind turbines within the area of the Great Fen and its visual and landscape setting to protect this valuable nature conservation site. Guidance has been provided locally since 2006 on landscape sensitivity when planning wind turbine proposals and for the consideration of the cumulative impact of schemes.

4   A2: Collecting baseline information

Map 4.1 Wind Turbine Locations

Wind Turbines by Height
- ○ 15m - 29m
- ○ 30m - 59m
- ● 60m - 99m
- ● 100m - 129m
- ● 130m - 150m

Landscape Character Areas
- Central Claylands
- Central Claylands sub area of Extensive Woodland
- Fen Margin
- Grafham Water
- Great Ouse Valley
- Nene Valley
- Northern Wolds
- South East Claylands
- Southern Wolds
- The Fens

Great Fen Landscape & Visual Setting
- Great Fen Landscape & Visual Setting
- Great Fen Project Area
- District Boundary

0   4.5   9   13.5   18 Kilometers

© Huntingdonshire District Council 2022

4.23   Biomass is a very limited source of renewable power within Huntingdonshire. Only 11 schemes have been granted planning permission from 2011/12 to 2021/22 collectively capable of providing around 4 MW of power. Biomass power installations have primarily been at educational, agricultural and industrial sites.

4.24   Improving energy efficiency is also important both in reducing the climate impacts of fossil fuel based power and heating systems and in reducing fuel poverty. The Local Plan will have a key role to play in promoting energy efficiency standards within new buildings. However, the construction age and energy performance of the current housing stock presents the greater challenge in effective retrofitting to bring these homes closer to net zero standards. Figure 4.5 below shows the percentages of Huntingdonshire's housing stock built across different time periods, followed by Figure 4.6 which shows the ratings of EPCs issued for homes in Huntingdonshire from 2011 to 2021.

4.25   Prior to the 1930s most properties were of solid wall construction; this represents around 12% of the district's housing stock including a substantial number of listed heritage properties which present particular challenges in retrofitting. Uninsulated cavity walls were introduced in the 1930s; and the building boom of the 1950s and 1960s predominantly constructed properties with cavity walls and saw the introduction of around 50mm of roof insulation as standard towards the end of the period. Around 30% of Huntingdonshire's homes were built in this period. Standards improved gradually through the remainder of the century with deeper loft insulation and double glazed windows common by the 1990s. This building phase represents nearly 40% of homes in the district. Many residents have already undertaken some upgrades to properties with double glazing and roof insulation improvements being common. However, substantial additional measures will be required to bring older homes as close as possible to net zero carbon standards. Homes built since 2000 typically included insulation in the cavity walls, double glazed windows, and deeper roof insulation.; however this accounts for only 19% of the district's homes and the vast majority will still need some level of retrofitting of energy efficiency measures to reach net zero carbon standards.

Figure 4.5 Age Distribution of Huntingdonshire's Housing Stock

4.26   Energy efficiency of new buildings is fundamentally shaped by Building Control Regulations which changed on 15 June 2022 as part of the governments' efforts towards the transition to net zero. CO_2 emissions from new build homes must be around 30% lower than the previous standards and emissions from other new buildings, including offices and shops which must be reduced by 27%. These are expected to be an interim measure to be followed in 2025 by introduction of the Future Homes and Buildings Standard which is intended to ensure that any new homes built after 2025 will not require further energy efficiency retrofit work to become zero-carbon as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise.

4.27   Since 2008 homes have required an Energy Performance Certificate when they are built or marketed for sale or rental, although listed buildings are exempt from the requirement. Each property is given a rating from 'A' which is the most energy efficient to 'G' which is the least energy efficient. Within these categories are more refined scores from 1-100 points based on the government's standard assessment procedure (SAP). A certificate

4 | A2: Collecting baseline information

is valid for 10 years. DLUHC provide quarterly monitoring for all EPC certificates issued on homes; it should be noted that there may be some double counting of properties over the years if replacement certificates are issued. The EPC certificates issues across Huntingdonshire between 2011 and June 2022 are shown in Figure 4.6. Energy efficiency ratings typically vary by age of property too. The average for a home in England built before 1900 is 54, for a mid-20th century property it is 63 and for one built from 2012 onwards it is 83 which gives a 'B' EPC rating. A sample of new homes being built in Huntingdonshire in 2021/22 shows that EPC ratings of 'A' and 'B' are being achieved.

Figure 4.6 EPC for Huntingdonshire 2011 to June 2022

Figure 4.7 Types of central heating across Huntingdonshire (ONS 2011 Census)

	Electric (inc. storage heaters)	Gas	Oil	Other	Solid fuel (e.g. wood, coal)	Two or more types	None
Huntingdonshire	7.3%	77.0%	8.5%	0.8%	0.6%	3.9%	1.9%
Cambridgeshire	8.5%	72.5%	11.5%	0.9%	0.7%	4.0%	4.0%
England	8.3%	78.8%	3.8%	1.6%	0.7%	4.1%	2.7%

Type of central heating
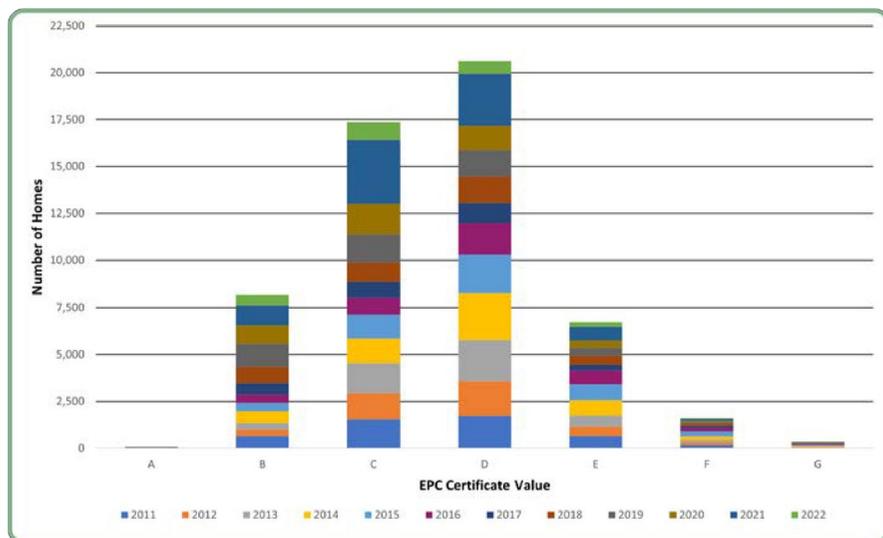
4.28 Energy efficiency is linked to fuel poverty which is both a social and climate related issue. Figure 4.7 below shows central heating by power source as recorded in the 2011 Census and reflects the dominance of gas powered central heating in Huntingdonshire along with the majority of England. Oil heating still has a significant role to play in heating homes in Huntingdonshire though at 8.5% and is particularly common in more remote locations which are not served by the mains gas grid.

4.29 Fuel poverty is an issue for communities across Huntingdonshire for a variety of reasons. Significant parts of the district, particularly in the more sparsely populated western and northern areas do not have access to mains gas supplies so households tend to be dependent on oil fired boilers or electric heating systems. Although prices vary significantly oil boilers are typically around 30% more expensive to run than mains gas ones. Households are considered to be in fuel poverty if their dwellings equates to an energy efficiency rating of band D to G and a disposable income after housing costs and energy needs of less than 60% below the national median.

4.30 BEIS publish fuel poverty data annually at lower super output area level giving a very detailed picture of where communities are facing fuel poverty. The 2020 dataset is the most recent available and shows that within Huntingdonshire fuel poverty affect 10.95% of households overall. With the increase in fuel prices during 2022 and uncertainty over future prices and supply, it is anticipated that a greater proportion of households will

now be in fuel poverty or will be in the future. The 2020 data shows that the lowest levels of fuel poverty at 4.2% of households is experienced in parts of Stukeley Meadows in Huntingdon and north of St Ives and along the B1040; both of these areas comprise late 20th century homes with a high proportion of larger detached properties that have access to the mains gas grid. The mid-range of fuel poverty at between 11 and 14% is experienced in a diverse range of locations including Sawtry and the Giddings, Southoe, central Yaxley, Great Staughton, the Mallard Lane area of St Neots and Ramsey St Mary's. These areas typically contain a much wider range of house types including older properties and between 45 to 65% of homes tend to be off the gas grid. The highest levels of fuel poverty in Huntingdonshire at 21 and 22% are experienced in the Thongsley and Norfolk Road/ Nene Road areas of the Oxmoor estate in Huntingdon which have high concentrations of households living in relative poverty overall and out in rural parts of the district around Great Raveley and Woodwalton where mains gas grid access is typically less than half of all households and the age and nature of the housing stock is very varied.

Key sustainability issues and problems

- Renewable power generation within Huntingdonshire has shifted from a focus on wind turbines to solar farms requiring extensive areas of land but with some scope for complementary agricultural use
- The age of the housing stock means that retrofitting of energy efficiency measures will be crucial in boosting the sustainability of the district's homes
- Fuel poverty was already an issue for over 1 in 10 households before the April 2022 price rises; this is expected to become more intense in the short term
- Access to mains gas is not universal throughout the district with some locations relying on individual oil tanks; in such circumstances alternative community heating systems may offer a more sustainable solution
- The visual impact of on-shore renewable energy production needs to be balanced with the impact on local landscape and communities

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Lack of local criteria establishing where and in what circumstances renewable energy infrastructure installations may be acceptable
- Reliance upon national standards for energy efficiency of building construction
- Lack of support for community heating schemes

4 | A2: Collecting baseline information

Flooding and Water

4.31 Huntingdonshire has a number of water courses within its administrative area including the Rivers Great Ouse and Nene. In addition, there are several brooks and other water courses as well as numerous lakes, many made from old gravel workings and the Grafham Water reservoir. Some areas of Huntingdonshire located in the Fens area are below sea level. Flood zones within and around Huntingdonshire are shown in Map 4.2.

4.32 The district sits within the administrative area for Water Resources East, the Anglian River Basin district and the Anglian Water and part of Cambridge Water catchment areas. The district is located in the driest region in the country, most of the East of England receives less than 700mm of rain a year in comparison to the wettest regions in the country - the Lake District and the Scottish Mountains which receive 3000mm and 4000mm respectively. However, there is a much more even distribution of rainfall throughout the year than in other regions, in the winter (December to February) the region averages 30 days of rainfall whilst the summer (June to August) sees an average of 25 days[4].

4.33 Historically, the district has experienced a number of surface water / drainage related flood events; causes range from insufficient storm and combined drainage capacity to poor surface water management[5]. The majority of fluvial flood events are associated with the River Great Ouse and its tributaries, whilst in Ramsey fluvial flood risk results from High Lode which flows northwards through the town. This is reflected in flood risk mapping which sets out flood risk from rivers and seas. Tidal flood risk can cause a potential risk within the district, although the tidal limit of the River Great Ouse is at Brownshill, just upstream of Earith, the river as far upstream as St Ives can still be affected by the tide (Future Fens Flood Risk Management Baseline Report 2020).

4.34 The impacts of climate change will see increases in extreme weather events, leading to increased rainfall, rainfall intensity and sea level rises all of which will increase the impact of all sources of flooding in the district. The three months from October to December 2020 saw increased rainfall across the East equivalent to 154% of the Longtime Average Rainfall (LTA) for the region. The most significant river levels were recorded on the River Great Ouse, the Tove, Kym, Alconbury Brook and Bury Brook and the region saw the most significant flood event of such a scale since 1998. Across the whole of 2020 rainfall across the region was 115% of the LTA [6]

4.35 Water supply and management in Huntingdonshire is undertaken by Anglian Water (a water and sewerage undertaker,) and by Cambridge Water (a water undertaker). Water supply in the Anglian Water region comes from surface water supplies such as rivers and reservoirs or ground water sources such as wells, boreholes and springs. The majority of Huntingdonshire sits within the Ruthamford South Water Resource Zone (WRZ) which covers an area of 1,419km^2. Water resources are in general supplied "from surface water [82%], with a direct abstraction on the River Great Ouse going to Grafham Water reservoir. There is also a small groundwater contribution [18%] from the abstraction in the Woburn Sands aquifer."[7] Grafham Water also exports water to Affinity Water; 84.6 Ml/d (Megalitres a day) were exported in 2020.

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4   Met Office - description of regional climates in the UK
5   Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2017
6   Cambridgeshire County Council Winter Flooding 2020
7   Anglian Water WRZ Sumaries 2019

Map 4.2 Flood Zones

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District Boundary
Flood Zone 2
Flood Zone 3
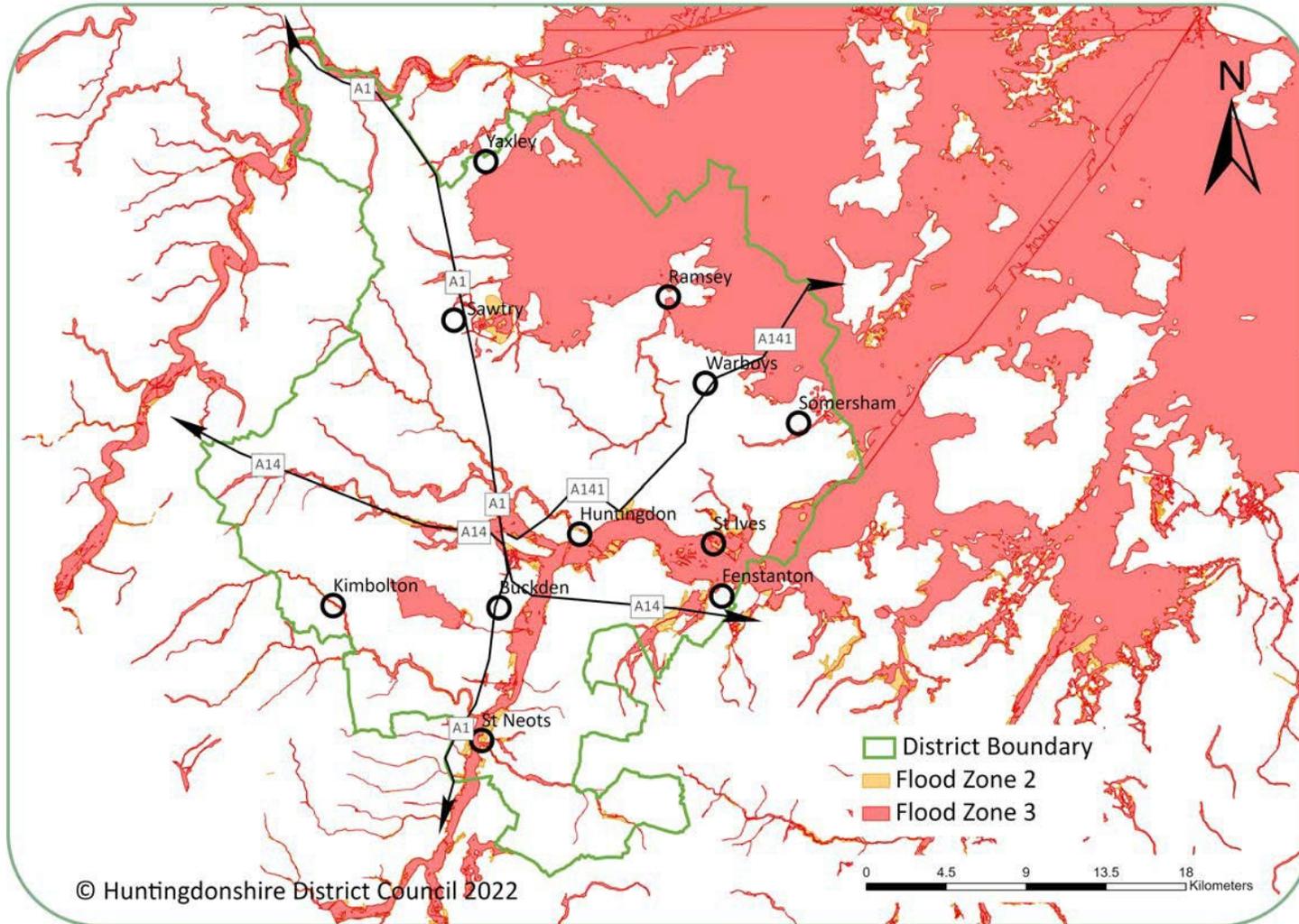
4 | A2: Collecting baseline information

4.36   In the Anglian Water Region, total water demand is expected to increase from 109Ml/d (2017/18) to 1,240Ml/d by 2045 if no further action is taken to manage demand. In general it is assumed that the increase in water demand is a result of population growth as non household demand is expected to decrease from 275 Ml/d (2017/18) to 273Ml/d by 2045. In Ruthamford South water resource requirements as a result of population growth are expected to increase by 13% between 2017/18 and 2045. Notably climate change is expected to increase the vulnerability of the River Great Ouse, which feeds Clapham intake and Grafham Water[8].

4.37   Cambridge Water supplies water to the Eastern edge of Huntingdonshire covering the towns of St Ives and Ramsey and villages such as Bluntisham and Earith, Needingworth and Holywell. Cambridge Water is a Single Water Resource Zone, it typically supplies an average of 80 million litres of water a day (Ml/d), this can increase by up to 20 to 25% during periods of peak demand experienced during hot, dry summers[9].

4.38   Cambridge Water's supply comes from groundwater sources, 97% from chalk aquifers and the remaining 3% from greensand aquifers. Small bulk water supplies are provided to and from Anglian Water and Affinity Water. In the Cambridge Water Region overall household 'dry year' demand is expected to rise between 2017/18 to 2044/45 by around 8 Ml/d. A slow rise in demand is expected by non-household and other business customers over the same time period. 8 of the 28 sources of water supply assessed by Cambridge Water are expected to be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change[10].

4.39   To protect drinking water supply from pollution, the Environment Agency defines a number of Source Protection Zones (SPZ), these zones include areas where the level of risk of contamination is high. This can be exacerbated by certain situations such as storing pollutants like petrol underground or from soakaways from septic tanks. Any development within a SPZ should demonstrate that it will not cause contamination to ensure that water is safe for human consumption. Source Protection Zones in Huntingdonshire run from the east of Huntingdon, south of St Ives to Fenstanton and are also located in Little Paxton and to the south and east of Waresley/ Great Gransden[11].

4.40   The Emerging Water Resources Regional Plan for Eastern England January 2022 identifies that the Environment Agency has classified the whole of Eastern England as being in 'in serious water stress'. Taking into account population growth and climate change and the need to restore and protect the environment, current predictions estimate that by 2050 there will be a water deficit of between 703 Ml/d and 2,267 Ml/d. Around 30 to 98% higher than the region's current water use. In addition, the Plan highlights that shifts in water consumption between water companies has occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which re-distributed population (from towns and cities to rural areas) and instigated more working from home (page 31). Anglian Water and Cambridge Water work together to develop strategic solutions, through Water Resources Management Plans current projects include:

- a proposed new reservoir expected to be located in Lincolnshire (The South Lincolnshire Reservoir)
- a proposed new reservoir in the Fens to the north of Chatteris approximately 6kms from Huntingdonshire
- a proposed new piece of infrastructure that would transfer water from the Anglian Water region to supply Affinity Water customers via potential sources such as the above reservoirs or a new source from the River Trent.
- additional work to increase smart metering combined with behaviour change, leakage reduction and additional water efficiency activity.

Source: Anglian Water

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8   Anglian Water Water Resources Management Plan 2019, pages 27-28, 32
9   Cambridge Water Draft Drought Plan 2021, page 4
10   Cambridge Water, Water Resources Management Plan 2019, pages 14-17, 109
11   Environment Agency - Groundwater Source Protection Zones

4.41   Water Resources East also notes the importance of local water resources to the farming community. Farming relies on local water resources that lie beneath, stored on their farm or flow past their farm. More than 60% of England's abstraction licences for irrigation are located in the Eastern region. Power generation also requires a lot of water. "Energy plants across the region are major users of freshwater, particularly from the River Trent and River Great Ouse", (The Emerging Water Resources Regional Plan for Eastern England January 2022, page 27) and it is incorrect to assume that renewable energy production will not impact on water abstraction or usage. Decreased flows and reduced ground and surface water means less water to abstract for essential services such as food production and power generation.

4.42   Huntingdonshire sits within the Anglian River Basin District. Classification data from the Environment Agency shows the environmental condition or "status" of water bodies in the Anglian River Basin District. 634 water bodies are identified within this District which comprise 526 rivers, canals and surface water transfers, 46 lakes, 13 coastal, 18 esturine and 31 groundwater. Surface and ground waters are also assessed by ecological and chemical status. Tables 6 to 9 below show classification data from the Environment Agency (data was last updated on 22 May 2022).

Table 6 Ecological status for surface waters in the Anglian River Basin District

Ecological status or potential	Bad	Poor	Moderate	Good	High	Total
Number of water bodies	22	105	428	47	0	602
Number of water body elements	111	406	663	824	3,138	5,142

Table 7 Chemical status for surface waters in the Anglian River Basin District

Chemical status	Fail	Good	Total
Number of water bodies	603	0	603
Number of water body elements	1,205	7,007	8,212

Table 8 Quantitative status for ground waters in the Anglian River Basin District

Quantitative status	Poor	Good	Total
Number of water bodies	14	17	31
Number of water body elements	15	109	124

Table 9 Chemical status for ground waters in the Anglian River Basin District

Chemical status	Poor	Good	Total
Number of water bodies	15	16	31
Number of water body elements	23	132	155

4.43   The Environment Agency's approach to managing and protecting groundwater are provided in a series of Groundwater Protection Position Statements. The primary aim of all of the position statements is the prevention of pollution of groundwater and protection of it as a resource.

4.44   Impacts of climate change and growth could increase pressure on water bodies for example through increased surface water run-off. This may impact on the future ecological status of these water bodies in terms of chemical pollutants or reduced ecological status.

4.45   Huntingdonshire's Stage 2: Detailed Water Cycle Study December 2014 provides information about the capacity of the water environment and water services infrastructure to accommodate required growth during the current Local Plan period (2011-2036).

4.46   It identified, at the time of the study, that there was constrained water treatment capacity at the waste water treatment works (WwTW) at Oldhurst, Ramsey, Somersham and St Neots. It also identified that without further capacity measures the WwTW at Buckden and Huntingdon would reach the constraints of water treatment capacity during the current local plan period (up to 2036), based on allocations contained in that plan. Proposals such as the Oxford Cambridge Arc growth corridor and growth in nearby authorities could also place increasing strain on wastewater treatment works, water quality and flooding from all sources which will need to be considered by Huntingdonshire District Council, private water companies and public and private organisations. A revised study will be undertaken as part of the next local plan to understand how capacity has changed and where there may be capacity issues.

Key sustainability issues and problems

- The impacts of climate change will see increases in extreme weather events, leading to increased rainfall, rainfall intensity and sea level rises all of which will increase the impact of all sources of flooding in the district. Potential to impact on existing and new developments, infrastructure and agricultural productivity, social and economic impacts across the district
- Potential need to set aside land for flood mitigation measures due to increased flood risk and understand effectiveness flood management infrastructure
- Increased flood risk may influence where development can be sustainably located
- Ensuring that new growth does not adversely affect water resources or water resources management infrastructure and that there are sufficient measures in place to balance water supply across the district
- Ensuring that homes and businesses are resilient to flooding and provide effective water management to maintain water resources for all
- Ensuring new development does not adversely impact on the ecological and biological status of water bodies

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Inappropriately located development, putting economies, people, ecology and biodiversity at risk
- Lack of water resources to new and existing support residents, businesses and agricultural requirements
- Increased pressure on water resource management infrastructure

Waste and Recycling

4.47   The waste hierarchy, gives priority to preventing the creation of waste in the first place, followed by preparing waste for reuse; to recycling, and then recovery. Disposal, such as landfill, is regarded as the worst option. This moves away from landfilling the majority of waste to a more circular economy where products and materials are recovered and regenerated where possible giving them a new lease of life, maximising their value and minimising waste. It also minimises the harmful environmental impacts of landfills and prolongs the lifespan of existing landfills and reduces the need to use finite natural resources and can help to lower green house gas emissions. This leads to a more sustainable way of consuming and using resources and ultimately a more sustainable way of living.

4.48   All households in Huntingdonshire are provided with a collection for residual and dry recycling waste while 90% of residents have access to an organic waste collection service. Residents have access to a network of 23 textile recycling banks from which all materials collected are re-used. There are three household recycling centres in the district located in Alconbury, Bluntisham and St Neots that are run by Amey for Cambridgeshire County Council (the waste disposal authority).

4.49   The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (adopted July 2021) identifies several Waste Management Areas (WMAs) within Huntingdonshire. These are areas of existing operational sites, and committed sites (i.e. those with planning permission but which are not yet operational) that make a significant contribution to managing any waste stream. There are WMAs in Alconbury, Bluntisham, Buckden, Godmanchester, Hemingford Abbots, Little Paxton, Ramsey, St Neots and Somersham. The Minerals and Waste Local Plan does not allocate any sites for future waste management development as a Waste Needs Assessment prepared alongside the Plan did not identify any capacity gaps.

4.50   Local zero waste initiatives and projects are also available across in and around Huntingdonshire such as toy libraries, refill/ eco shops and pop-up repair cafes, full details on where these are and how to find more information is available on HDC's website. The Council works with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP) to continuously improve waste services, increase recycling and reduce waste and find cost effective and environmentally responsible ways to meet the needs of local communities.

4.51   Figure 4.8 shows that more than 55% of the waste collected has been sent for recycling or composting over the past 10 years. Since 2011, HDC have performed on or above targets. The rates of recycling plateaued between 2015/16 and 2018/19 before picking up again from 2019/20. [12].

Figure 4.8 Recycling rates in Huntingdonshire since 2010/11

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Organic recycling	31.1%	30.2%	29.9%	31.5%	31.3%	30%	31.6%	30%	30%	33%	32%	32%
Dry recycling	26.7%	26.9%	26.2%	25.9%	25.3%	25%	23.9%	26%	25%	27%	27%	26%
Overall	57.8%	57.1%	56.1%	57.4%	56.6%	55%	55.5%	56%	55%	60%	59%	58%
Target by	50%					55%					60%	

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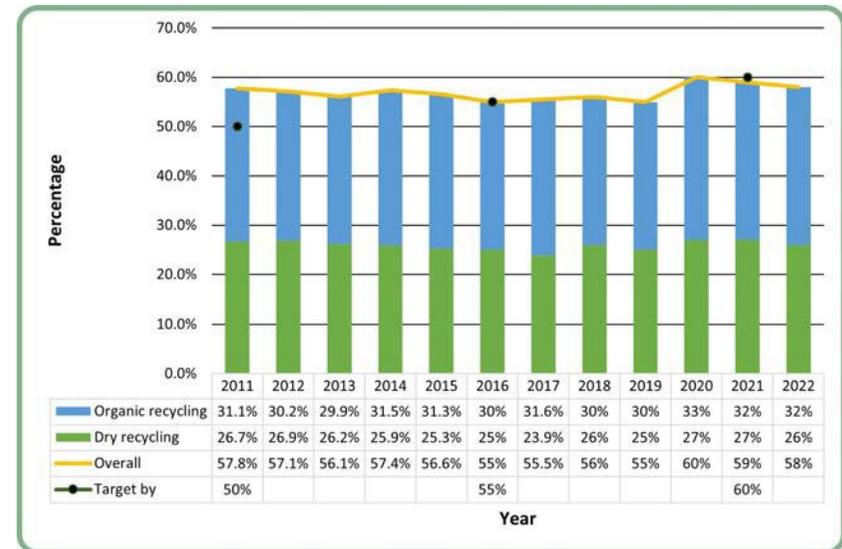
12   Data collected from HDC's Waste and Recycling Team and reported annually in Annual Monitoring Reports up to 2018/19

4.52 Each year the number of domestic properties that the Council's waste collection team service has increased. Despite the increase, Figure 4.9 shows that across domestic properties, the tonnes of waste collected across dry recycling, organic waste and residual waste have stayed relatively constant.

Figure 4.9 Amount of waste in tonnes collected from domestic properties since 2016/17 (sourced from HDC's Waste and Recycling team)

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Residual waste	27,848	27,784	26,595	26,584	23,641	29,524
Organic recycling	21,618	20,264	19,743	21,413	30,123	23,033
Dry recycling	16,974	16,406	17,503	17,636	19,698	18,537
Total waste	66,440	64,454	63,841	65,633	73,462	71,094
No. properties	75,888	76,549	77,315	78,489	79,538	80,534
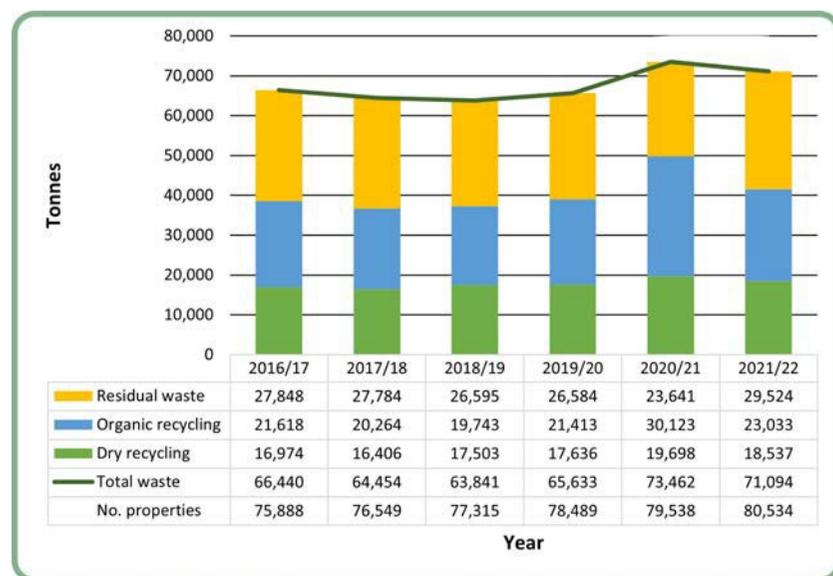
4.53 The contamination of dry recycling has considerable financial implications as well as environmental ones and means waste that could have been recycled may end up in landfill. In 2021/22, the Council's rejections rate of dry recycling material was 5.67% equating to approximately 1,068 tonnes (down from 6.86% in 2019/20 and from 7.97% in 2017/18). HDC's contamination rate is below the national average of 12.7%.

4.54 HDC's Waste and Recycling team carry out customer satisfaction surveys to give the Council an opportunity to gather residents' opinions on communication methods as well as more insight into how residents dispose of their waste. The 2020 survey found that overall 97% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the refuse/recycling service, this was an improvement from 89% in the 2019 survey.

Key sustainability issues and problems

- Many tonnes of waste are sent to landfills and recycling centres
- Increasing levels of recycling and re-using materials reduces how much material ends up in landfills reducing their environmental effects and supporting a circular economy
- Growth places additional demand on existing waste and recycling collection services
- The waste attributed to the construction of new buildings

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Less sustainable reuse of waste, particularly construction material
- Growth may not maximise the inclusion of additional recycling facilities and zero waste initiatives

Environmental Characteristics

Landscape

4.55   Huntingdonshire is a largely rural district. It is 913km^2 (about 350 square miles). Huntingdonshire's landscape comprises many elements formed over millions of years which are constantly evolving through a combination of natural and human influences and exhibit features from different stages in their history and development. The majority of Huntingdonshire lies on Jurassic clay with glacial till covering the higher land in the northern and western parts of the district. The distinctive low lying, flat landscape of the Fens was formed by the post-glacial accumulation and subsequent drainage of peat. Alluvial material has been deposited along the floodplains of the Rivers Nene and Great Ouse giving fertile flood meadows with extensive gravel deposits in the Ouse valley. A small area to the north-west of the district is underlain by Oolitic limestone extensively used in the traditional buildings of the Nene valley.

4.56   The highest land in the district, rising to 70m AOD, lies across the western and southern parts with the eastern parts being typically no more than 30m AOD. The district is incised by the wide valley of the River Great Ouse as well as the steeper, narrower valleys of its tributaries, especially the River Kym, Ellington Brook and Alconbury Brook. The valley of the River Great Ouse flows south to north before turning west to east at Huntingdon. It comprises a broad, shallow sided valley with a wide floodplain which has been extensively worked for gravel extraction shaping the landscape through the resultant large bodies of water. The River Great Ouse flows through or around three of Huntingdonshire's four market towns and historically was a significant transport corridor supporting the local and regional economy allowing the district to prosper.

4.57   The Fens are flat and at or below sea level. Former wetlands they were drained to allow agriculture on the rich, fertile soils. The landscape is dominated by straight, artificial watercourses with deep field ditches and a network of drainage channels. Inland of the fens the land rises steeply into the claylands which gently undulate between 10 and 50m AOD. Streams in this area are typically narrow, and flow generally west to east but they are not a strong visual feature in the landscape.

4.58   Huntingdonshire has nine identified landscape character areas (see Map 4.3), these are:

- The Fens
- Fen Margin
- Central Claylands
- Great Ouse Valley
- South East Claylands
- Northern Wolds
- Grafham Water
- Southern Wolds
- Nene Valley

4.59   These landscape character areas can be broadly divided into the low-lying fens, undulating claylands, upland areas (the Wolds) and main river valleys. A summary of their key characteristics is provided within this report but detailed character assessments of each landscape and pressures going forward are set out in Huntingdonshire's Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022) .

4.60   The identification of landscape character areas is an approach which protects the distinctive features of each type rather than favouring a particular selection, and provides clear criteria for making judgements. The Local Plan will seek to ensure that both the quality and distinctive characteristics of these areas are conserved and enhanced through the allocation process and as subsequent development occurs.

4   A2: Collecting baseline information

Map 4.3 Huntingdonshire's Landscape Character Areas

Landscape Character Areas

- Central Claylands
- Central Claylands sub area of Extensive Woodland
- Fen Margin
- Grafham Water
- Great Ouse Valley
- Nene Valley
- Northern Wolds
- South East Claylands
- Southern Wolds
- The Fens
- District Boundary

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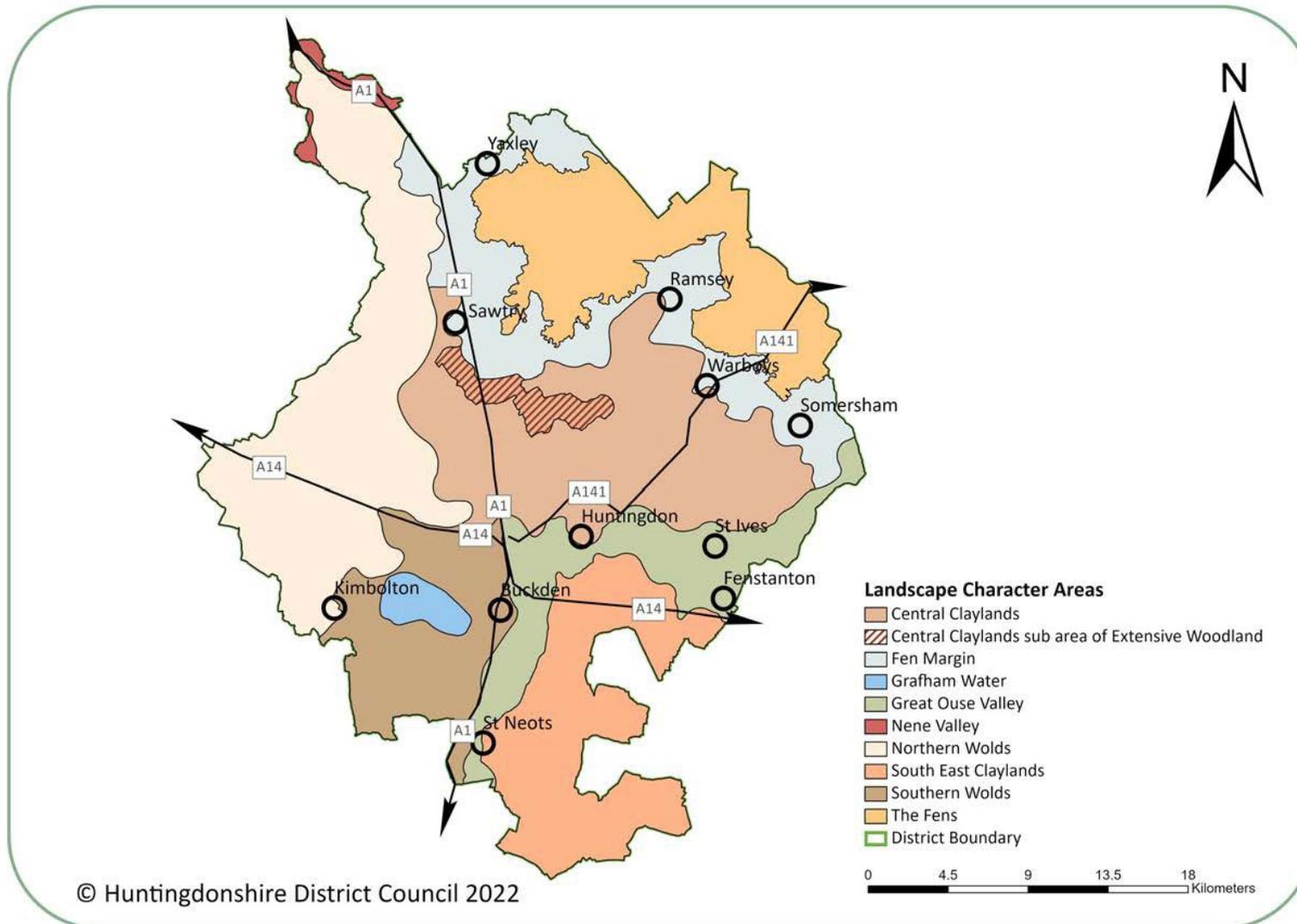
The Fens

4.61   The Fens landscape character area lies in the north east of Huntingdonshire and is distinctive for its low-lying, flat, regular open character arising from its man-made network of drainage channels and waterways. It is predominantly used for arable agriculture on its dark peaty soil, as such there is sparse woodland cover. Settlement is limited to isolated farms, with a few linear villages along main roads. The area includes the Great Fen project which seeks to protect remaining fragments of the ancient fenland landscape, create large areas for wildlife and prevent further loss of the peat soils.

Fen Margin

4.62   The Fen Margin landscape character area comprises a narrow arc forming a transition between the Fens to the north and east and the Central Claylands and Northern Wolds landscape character areas to the south and west. The area is generally well vegetated, with deciduous woodland, hedgerows, trees and orchards. There is a matrix of land uses, comprising arable farmland, pasture, airfield, orchards, woodland and settlements.

Central Claylands

4.63   The Central Claylands is a large character area in the centre of Huntingdonshire. It includes Huntingdon, Alconbury Weald and St Ives and major transport corridors namely the A1/A14. In the northern part of the character area there is a small sub-area of extensive ancient woodland located between Aversley Wood and Wennington Woods.

Great Ouse Valley

4.64   The broad, shallow valley of the River Great Ouse flows roughly south to north between St Neots and Huntingdon then turns to flow west to east via St Ives and exits Huntingdonshire near Earith, thus influencing three of Huntingdonshire's towns. It has experienced large scale gravel extraction; the resultant pits have since been flooded to create habitats for wildlife, nature reserves and fisheries. The floodplain meadows play an essential role for flood storage and flow attenuation and are of high ecological value.

South East Claylands

4.65   The South East Claylands character area is situated in the south eastern corner of Huntingdonshire stretching up to the Great Ouse Valley in the north and west. It includes large areas of high quality landscape with a varied and typically gently undulating landform, established hedgerows and woodland and historic settlement patterns.

Northern Wolds

4.66   The Northern Wolds landscape character area forms a broad north-south strip on the western edge of Huntingdonshire. It has a strong topography of ridges bisected by pronounced valleys. The ridges are generally used for arable farming. The area has been significantly influenced by medieval development with many scheduled monuments present and distinctive historic villages and ecclesiastical architecture.

Grafham Water

4.67   The Grafham Water landscape character area is defined and dominated by the reservoir and its immediate landscape setting. Grafham Water is managed by Anglian Water. It has a strong sense of identity and is unique within Huntingdonshire being predominantly open water and is the third largest reservoir in England by area and is the largest Site of Special Scientific Interest in Huntingdonshire at 806ha. Recreation is a key activity, with facilities for sailing, fishing, walking, cycling and horse riding.

Southern Wolds

4.68   The Southern Wolds landscape character area incorporates the lower valleys of the River Kym and Ellington Brook. It completely encircles the Grafham Water landscape character area. It has a well-wooded landscape, with hedged fields, and some more recent plantations. There are scattered villages and isolated farms throughout.

4 | A2: Collecting baseline information

Nene Valley

4.69   The Nene Valley landscape character area covers land associated with the River Nene just in the north west tip of Huntingdonshire, although the Nene valley stretches beyond the district boundaries into Northamptonshire. The local availability of limestone has strongly influenced the vernacular architecture of the area. The Nene Valley steam railway provides a recreational function, and distinctive landscape feature.

Low-lying Fens landscape

Undulating Claylands

Upland areas known as the Wolds

Main river valleys

Key sustainability issues and problems

- Huntingdonshire's landscape and its distinctive qualities are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, insensitive new development and land management practices
- Water management is key to landscape character throughout much of the district
- The expansive, flat wetlands of the Fens are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change degrading fertile peat soils and its landscape character
- The River Great Ouse flows through or around three of Huntingdonshire's four market towns providing a high quality landscape setting to them and recreational opportunities but also an increased risk of flooding

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Distinctive landscape features such as ancient woodlands, nature sites and orchards which enrich Huntingdonshire's landscape and ecological quality may be harmed or lost
- A scale and nature of new development may be implemented that is detrimental to the character of Huntingdonshire's landscapes
- New developments that are not sensitively integrated with their surroundings and do not incorporate appropriate landscaping may permanently harm Huntingdonshire's landscape and historic settlements
- Poorly managed riverside attractions along the Rivers Great Ouse and Nene may damage the landscape quality of the areas and the framing of villages and towns nearby

Land, Soils and Agriculture

Soils

4.70   Huntingdonshire benefits from good quality agricultural land throughout almost all of the district outside of the built up areas. Map 4.4 shows the distribution of agricultural land grades across the district.

4.71   Grade 1 land is the best and most versatile agricultural land which predominates in the north east of the district where fenland peat is found. Peat is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to increased variability in water levels and higher temperatures affecting the peat. Drying out of the peat may worsen this further by releasing carbon emissions itself and through suffering greater wind erosion causing more depletion of the peat soils which exposes less fertile ground.

4.72   Much of the western and southern parts of the district comprise grade 2 agricultural land which is also highly productive; the only exceptions to this are predominantly found along the Great Ouse Valley and a belt of grade 3 land broadly running east from Woodwalton to Warboys and on to Somersham. The majority of the north west of Huntingdonshire comprises grade 3 agricultural land within which elements of grade 3a land are still classified as best and most versatile and so forming valuable productive agricultural land.

4.73   In terms of underlying geology, the vast majority of the district comprises Oxford clay (mudstone) with the eastern edge being formed of West Walton and Ampthill clay (mudstone). In the south eastern edge of the district Waresley and Great Gransden are situated on a Woburn Sands formation (sandstone). Geologically the northern tip of Huntingdonshire is by far the most diverse with narrow bands of bedrock relating to the River Nene routing. Directly under the river the bedrock mainly comprises Whitby Mudstone, adjoined by Grantham formation of sandstone, siltstone and mudstone. A band of Rutland formation argillaceous rocks with subordinate sandstone and limestone follows the same looping formation. Upper, Lower, Blisworth and Cornbrash limestone are also all present along with small areas of Blisworth and Kellaways clay (mudstone). Overlaying much of the bedrock are superficial deposits comprised of clay, silt, sand and gravel some of which have been extracted often for construction materials.

Map 4.4 Agricultural Land Classification

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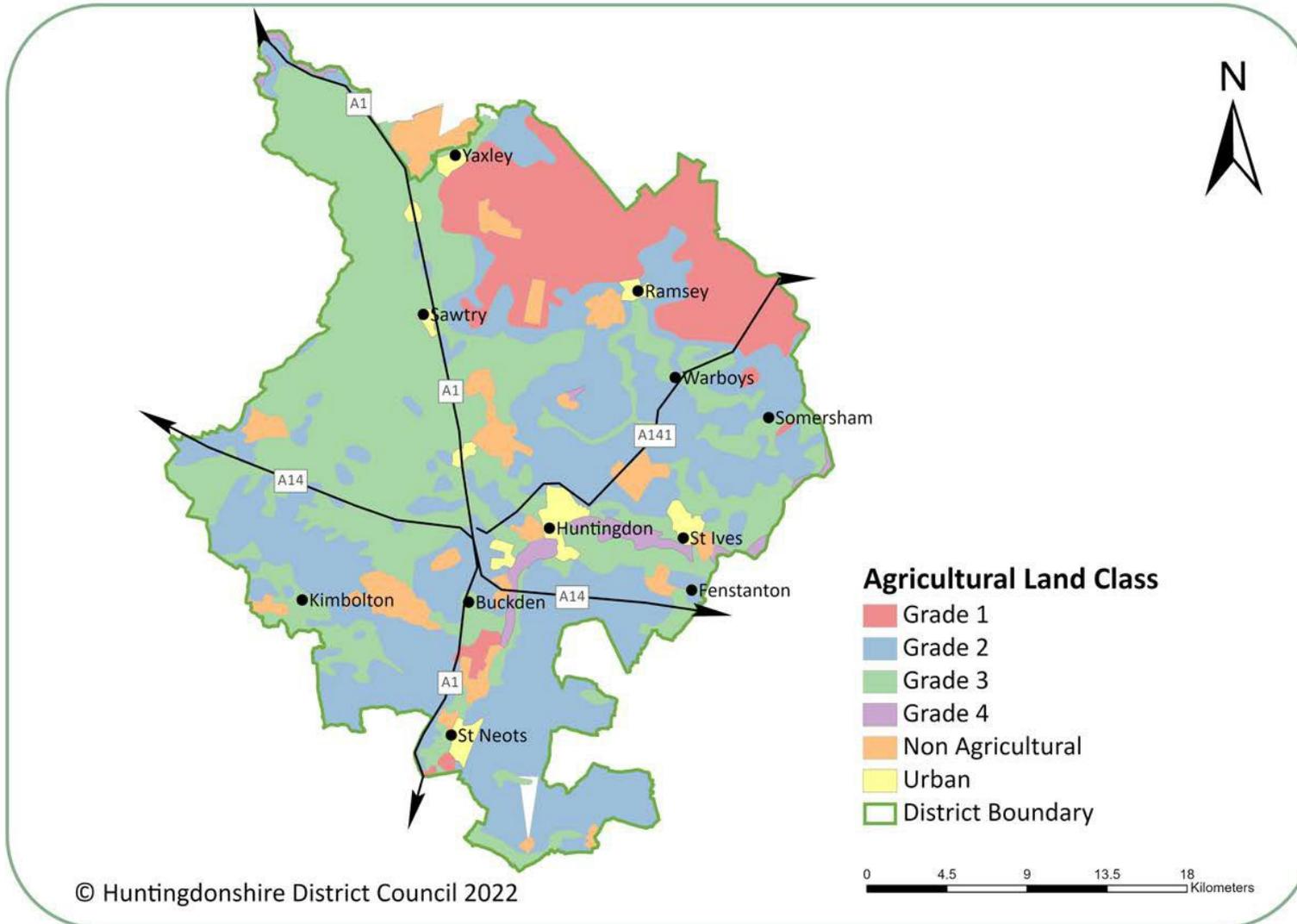
Agriculture

4.74   Most farms in Huntingdonshire focus on cereal and general cropping production with limited amounts of livestock. DEFRA collate data on land and crop areas, livestock populations and agricultural workforce numbers as at 1 June to indicate the nature of the agricultural economy. The figures only include commercial scale production. Table 10 below shows that cereal crops account for just over half (52.8%) of all farmed land within Huntingdonshire with other arable crops comprising the second most extensive farmland. Fruit and vegetable growing has shown a marked increase in Huntingdonshire between 2010 and 2016 although it fell across Cambridgeshire overall. The numbers of livestock kept were more volatile in this period as shown in Table 11. Sheep and poultry numbers both decreased slightly in Huntingdonshire but the proportion of them compared to livestock across the whole of Cambridgeshire decreased significantly due to increases in the numbers kept in Fenland and Peterborough.

Table 10 Agricultural Land Use in Huntingdonshire 2010 and 2016

Crop	Total farmed area (ha)		Cereals (ha)		Arable (excluding cereals) (ha)		Fruit and vegetables (ha)		Grassland (ha)	
Year	**2010**	**2016**	**2010**	**2016**	**2010**	**2016**	**2010**	**2016**	**2010**	**2016**
Huntingdonshire	70,635	74,656	35,976	39,411	20,853	19,021	884	1,296	9,025	8,845
Cambridgeshire	262,465	268,034	130,396	139,552	73,826	70,547	11,069	7,863	29,878	29,735
Proportion grown in Huntingdonshire	26.9%	27.9%	27.6	28.2	28.2	27.0	8.0	16.5	30.2	29.8

Table 11 Numbers of Livestock on Huntingdonshire's Farms 2010 and 2016

Livestock	Cattle		Sheep		Pigs		Poultry	
Year	**2010**	**2016**	**2010**	**2016**	**2010**	**2016**	**2010**	**2016**
Huntingdonshire	8,948	9,194	11,548	9,114	5,226	5,447	685,502	515,491
Cambridgeshire	26,552	27,606	36,037	41,329	29,225	24,903	2,015,238	2,182,263
Proportion produced in Huntingdonshire	33.7%	33.3%	32.0%	22.1%	17.9%	21.9%	34.0%	23.6%

Previously developed land

4.75   Previously developed land is concentrated almost entirely within former airfields and existing towns and villages. To reduce the greenfield land take, Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 allocated all the elements of RAF Alconbury and RAF Brampton that were redundant from military use for redevelopment for new homes, employment and community uses. The built elements of RAF Upwood were also allocated for redevelopment although the airfield itself remained. Some pockets of previously developed land remain available for reuse; others may be identified through a call for sites where existing land uses are of low viability. In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 the Council maintains a brownfield register.

4.76   The percentage of completions on previously developed land within Huntingdonshire since the 2011/12 monitoring year are provided in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10 % of new dwellings completed on Previously Developed Land

Monitoring year	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
% on PDL	42.9%	38.3%	53.9%	36.8%	45.2%	57.1%	69.9%	47.7%	49.1%	48.3%	40.9%
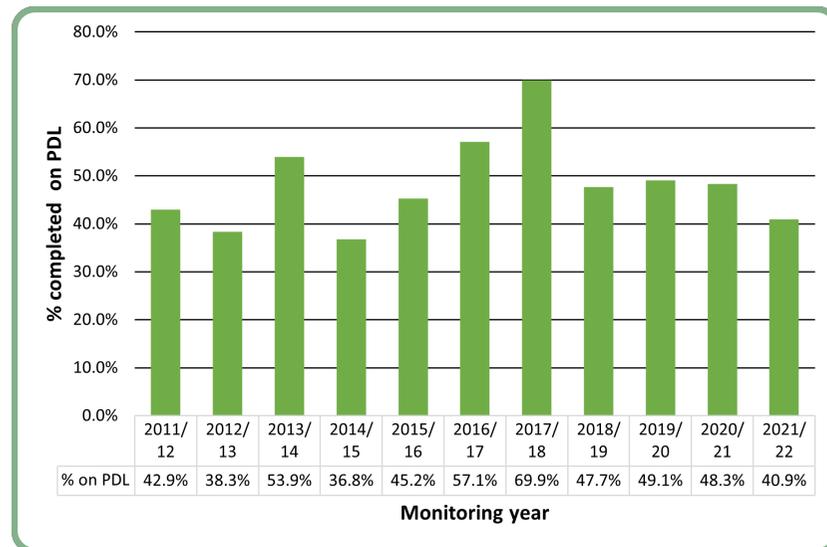
Key sustainability issues and problems

- A very high proportion of the district's agricultural land is classified as best and most versatile, whilst this is beneficial for production and food security it provides challenges for focusing development onto less valuable land
- Degradation of peat and soil erosion resulting in the loss of the most fertile soils
- There are limited remaining opportunities for largescale reuse of previously developed land

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Greenfield land may be at greater risk of development
- Land that is classed as best and most versatile may be permanently lost through development reducing the capability for production and food security

Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment

4.77   Huntingdonshire contains many sites that are of biodiversity importance, including those designated at international level recognising their strategic contribution to biodiversity. Table 12 below identifies natural habitats in Huntingdonshire with international level designations reflecting their high level of importance for nature conservation. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) formerly identified as part of the Natura 2000 ecological network are now designated with the same status under the UK's National Site Network. Designated Wetlands of International Importance (known as Ramsar sites) are not part of the national site network. However, many overlap with SACs and SPAs, and may be designated for the same or different species and habitats and remain protected in the same way.

Table 12 Internationally Designated Sites

Site name	Designation(s)	Area (ha)	Habitat description
Ouse Washes	Ramsar	2,518.66	Seasonally-flooded washland habitat supporting nationally and internationally important numbers of wintering waterfowl and nationally important numbers of breeding waterfowl. Of particular significance are the flocks of teal, pintail, wigeon, shoveler, pochard and Bewick's swan. The site Includes large areas of unimproved neutral grassland primarily managed as traditional hay meadows. The grassland areas are characterised by such grasses as reed and floating sweet-grass, reed canary-grass, marsh foxtail and a variety of sedges and rushes. The watercourses host aquatic species such as the fringed water-lily, greater water-parsnip and duckweeds.
	SAC	337.73	
	SPA	2,498.6	
	Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI)	2,518.66 (45.24 ha in Hunts)	
Portholme	SAC	91.79	Alluvial flood meadow grassland including as Yorkshire fog, yellow oat-grass, meadow foxtail, and meadow fescue. The range of herbs includes lady's bedstraw, pepper-saxifrage and great burnet. Portholme is one of the largest areas of this grassland type in the country and continues to be managed in a traditional manner with seasonal flooding adding nutrients to the otherwise unimproved grassland. Watercourses on the periphery of the site have populations of some uncommon invertebrates, including one dragonfly of nationally restricted distribution.
	SSSI	106	
Woodwalton Fen	Ramsar National Nature Reserve SPA SSSI	209 (all)	Mixed fenland habitat with fen, marsh, reedbeds, open water, scrub and woodland supporting very diverse flora and fauna. Flower-rich mixed fen covers much of the reserve and supports yellow flag, swamp meadow grass and great water dock. The acid peat supports purple moor-grass, ling, bog myrtle, tormentil and saw sedge. Woodwalton Fen provides habitats for some rare fen plants including fen wood-rush and fen violet; ditches support the rare water violet and carnivorous bladderwort. Bird species are found at the site include great bittern, reed bunting, tree pipit, long-eared owl and common teal. The area also provides habitats for around 900 moth species including marsh, lunar yellow underwing, four spotted, white-spotted pinion and silky wave. Over 1,000 beetle species, both terrestrial and aquatic, have also been recorded at the site.

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

4.78   Table 13 below identifies nationally designated sites within Huntingdonshire. By area, 62.9% of SSSIs in Huntingdonshire were judged to be in favourable condition in 2020/21, with a further 32.5% in an unfavourable but recovering state.

Table 13 Nationally Designated Sites

Site name	Designation(s)	Area (ha)	Habitat description
Aversley Wood	SSSI	60	Ancient ash and maple woodland
Berry Fen	SSSI	18	Washland habitat of neutral grassland
Brampton Meadow	SSSI	0.95	Calcareous grassland
Brampton Racecourse	SSSI	21	Species rich neutral grassland
Brampton Wood	SSSI	132	Ancient wet ash and maple woodland with rich neutral grassland flora
Castor Flood Meadows	SSSI	42 (Part in Hunts)	Wet alluvial grasslands and alluvial meadow grassland
Godmanchester Eastside Common	SSSI	29.7	Calcareous loam and calcareous clay grassland
Grafham Water	SSSI	806	Reservoir and marginal land supporting wetland birds
Great Stukeley Railway Cutting	SSSI	34.7	Calcareous clay grassland
Hemingford Grey (Arthur's) Meadow	SSSI	0.67	Calcareous clay grassland
Houghton Meadows	SSSI	4.74	Neutral ridge and furrow grassland
Holme Fen	National Nature Reserve SSSI	63	Remnant fen habitat now containing the largest birch woodland in lowland England, ancient bog, acid grassland and heath. Three meres (lakes) with shallow banks and islands are the result of peat cutting. Holme Fen supports many birds such as siskin, redpoll, nightingale, blackcap and woodpecker. The habitat also supports dragonflies and marsh plants such as golden dock, twayblade meadow rue and fen wood-rush. The damp habitat also supports some 500 species of fungi.
Little Catworth meadow	SSSI	5.23	Calcareous loam grassland

Site name	Designation(s)	Area (ha)	Habitat description
Little Paxton Pits	SSSI Local Nature Reserve	127 59.95	Flooded gravel workings supporting wildfowl and invertebrates with nationally important levels of wintering wildfowl
Little Paxton Woods	SSSI	44	Wet ash and maple woodland with diverse shrub layer and ground flora
Monks Wood	SSSI	157	Broadleaf ancient woodland including oak, ash, field maple and wild service trees with an understorey of hazel, blackthorn, dogwood and sallow. The woodland also supports neutral grassland. The woodland provides suitable habitat for over 400 plant species including greater butterfly orchid, violet helleborine, crested cow-wheat, small teasel and water purslane. Monks Wood also supports a wide variety of birds including tawny owls, red kites and buzzards along with badgers, hares and foxes. Butterflies including white admiral, grizzled skipper and white-letter hairstreak are found along with over 1,000 species of beetles.
The Odd Quarter (linked to Monks Wood)	SSSI	13	Wet ash and maple woodland with wild service trees
Perry Woods	SSSI	67.9	Ancient ash and maple woodland
St Neots Common	SSSI	33.35	Alluvial grassland with willow carr, ponds and ditches supporting aquatic flora and fauna
Somersham LNR	Local Nature Reserve	9.54	Mixed woodland, grassland, lake and wet woodland
Upwood Meadows	National Nature Reserve SSSI	6	Upwood Meadow comprises three fields of lowland grassland bordered by veteran trees and mature hedgerows. Designated for its diversity of flora the meadow supports cowslip, greater burnet, saw-wort, dropwort, sulphur clover and a large colony of green-winged orchids. The flora in turn support a diversity of bees and butterflies. The trees and hedgerows provide nesting habitats for many birds including turtle dove, blackcap and whitethroat and support winter visitors such as fieldfare and redwing.
Warboys and Wistow Woods	SSSI	44.5	Ancient ash and maple woodland also supporting invertebrates
Warboys Claypit	SSSI	12.5	Surface exposure of Upper Oxford lay and Ampthill clay
Waresley Wood	SSSI	62	Ancient ash and maple woodland with diverse flora enriched by varied underlying geology

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Site name	Designation(s)	Area (ha)	Habitat description
Weaveley and Sand Woods	SSSI	76	Ancient ash and maple woodland straddling diverse geological formations
Woodwalton Marsh	SSSI	0.76	Lowland neutral grassland

4.79   Natural England's Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) available through Magic Map are a GIS tool developed by Natural England to make a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks to SSSIs posed by development proposals. They define zones around each SSSI which reflect the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and indicate the types of development proposal which could potentially have adverse impacts.

4.80   Huntingdonshire also benefits from having 135 County Wildlife Sites (CWS) which are judged to be of local nature conservation, biological or geological interest. These cover 2,348.7 ha of the district along with 133.9 kms of linear sites which are waterways where the county wildlife site comprises the river and adjacent semi-natural habitat.

4.81   The district also contains ancient woodland. Ancient woods are areas of woodland that have persisted since AD1600 in England. They cover just 2.5% of the UK, yet these are irreplaceable environments which contain complex communities of plants, fungi, insects and other microorganisms. In Huntingdonshire there are in the region of 45 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) sites and 25 Plantation on Ancient Woodland (PAWS) sites, totaling approximately 1,500ha of woodland. Huntingdonshire's Tree Strategy 2020-2030 states that there are no ASNW or PAWS known to be currently under threat in Huntingdonshire. Some of these ancient woodland sites will also be designated as SSSIs or CWS.

4.82   Huntingdonshire benefits from an extensive network of rivers, drainage canals and lakes which are already widely used for tourism, sport and leisure activities including boating, windsurfing, fishing and birdwatching. They also provide valuable wildlife habitats, for instance the River Great Ouse and its tributaries flow in part into the Ouse Washes, an important area for birds and many other species as shown in Table 12 above. The main rivers running through the district are the River Great Ouse, River Nene, River Kym and Alconbury Brook. Huntingdonshire's Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022) provides further information on their importance in shaping the landscape character of the district and the wildlife habitats they provide and support.

4.83   Enhancing biodiversity has become a bigger focus area at the national level, as demonstrated in the now mandatory minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain for all new developments via the Environment Act 2021. Locally, in 2019 Natural Cambridgeshire set an ambition of doubling nature across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by 2050. This includes land managed for nature. Within this, it aims to create living landscapes, promote good practice for local food and farming, create better places to live, create sustainable jobs, healthy communities and promote heritage, culture and leisure.

Key sustainability issues and problems

- There are several sites designated at an international and national level for their biodiversity and habitat value as well as non-designated sites identified for their local nature conservation value
- Nature conservation sites and ancient woodland are vulnerable to new developments and land management practices.
- Two thirds of SSSIs in Huntingdonshire are in a favourable state, with approximately a third of SSSIs not in a favourable condition, although these are in a recovering state
- Visitor pressures on designated and non-designated sites may harm the quality of these sites for nature conservation and vital habitats
- Nature conservation sites and other natural environments are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change
- Trees are a natural carbon store, with established and mature trees taking in the most carbon

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Development may adversely impact on the condition of designated an non-designated sites and damage vital habitats for wildlife
- Habitats may become fragmented
- Development may adversely impact protected species and their habitats

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Green Infrastructure and Open Space

4.84 The last Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy was completed in 2011 and defines green infrastructure as 'a strategic, multi-functional network of public green spaces and routes, landscapes, biodiversity and heritage. It includes a wide range of elements such as country parks, wildlife habitats, rights of way, commons and greens, nature reserves, waterways and bodies of water, and historic landscapes and monuments. The network comprises rural and urban green infrastructure of different sizes and character, and the connections and links between them. It is part of (and contributes to) the wider environment.'

4.85 The Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy established a series of strategic green infrastructure areas three of which cover land within Huntingdonshire: the River Nene, Huntingdonshire Fens and Woods and the Great Ouse (see Figure 4.11). This has been supplemented by designation of priority landscape scale nature recovery area of which four relate closely to Huntingdonshire: the Nene Valley, Great Fen, Great Ouse Valley and West Cambridgeshire Hundreds.

4.86 Green infrastructure supports a range of functions, including recreation and wildlife as well as landscape enhancement. Green infrastructure is essential to enhancing biodiversity by creating new habitats and helping to protect against habitat fragmentation, it aids mitigation and adaptation to climate change and provides multiple benefits for human health. The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the importance of access to local green space for people's physical and mental health as well as a place for social activity and local tourism. Huntingdonshire District Council collaborates with Natural Cambridgeshire, the local nature partnership, to help deliver the vision of doubling the area of rich wildlife habitats and natural greenspace across Cambridgeshire by 2050.

Figure 4.11 Cambridgeshire Strategic Green Infrastructure Network
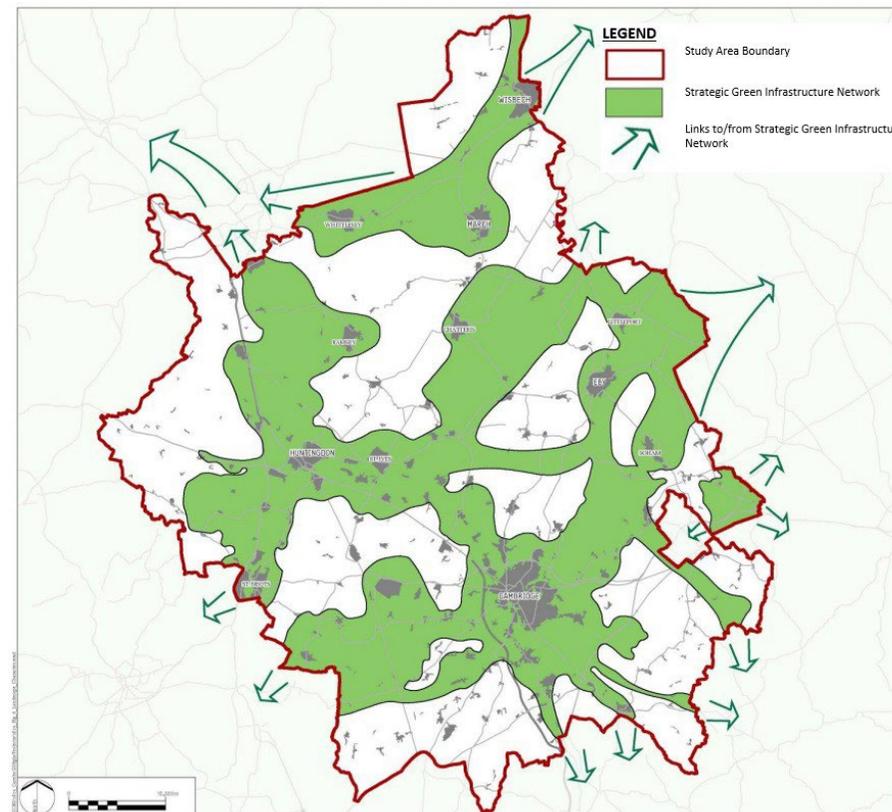
4.87 Huntingdonshire's Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) identified that our communities benefit from a wealth of greenspaces. Across Huntingdonshire there is as average of 87 m^2 of green space per person which is significantly higher than the average across the East of England of 42.75 m^2. Survey results from the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy indicated that 68% of Huntingdonshire's residents visit a greenspace at least once a fortnight compared to the UK average of 57%.

4.88 The Ordnance Survey National Greenspace Map has mapped parks, open spaces, village greens and play areas across Britain. It must be noted that the data set does not include all sites on a local level but gives a good picture at a strategic level the provision of various types of open green spaces available. At this strategic level, mapping data from April 2022 identified that there were 605 open green spaces across the district covering 1,229ha of land, including 276ha of land set out as public parks and gardens. As well as large scale sites 209 play areas were identified covering 16.4 ha of land. Further details can be found in Table 14.

Table 14 Ordanance Survey open green space data as at April 2022

Type of open green space	Number of sites	Total Area (m^2)	% of total open green space
Allotments or Community Growing Spaces	47	615,147.93	5%
Bowling Green	19	55,175.03	0.45%
Cemetery	44	408,093.47	3.32%
Golf Course	10	5,263,372.33	42.81%
Other Sports Facility	36	496,595	4.04%
Play Space	209	164,329.85	1.34%
Playing Field	88	2,120,592.44	17.25%
Public Park or Garden	37	2,758,285.89	22.44%
Religious Grounds	98	392,592.55	3.19%
Tennis Court	17	19,987.93	0.16%
Total open green space	**605**	**12,294,172.42**	**100%**

4.89 Across Huntingdonshire's towns and villages there are also opportunities for more formal sports facilities and play spaces, these are usually managed by parish and town councils and meet the needs of local communities. Additionally, the District Council manages One Leisure centres in Huntingdon, Ramsey, St Ives and St Neots providing for a range of indoor and outdoor sports and leisure activities.

4.90 The Green Flag Award is the benchmark international standard for publicly accessible parks and green spaces in the United Kingdom. As of July 2022, there are three open spaces managed to the Green Flag Award by Huntingdonshire District Council. These are Hinchingbrooke Country Park in Huntingdon (69ha), Paxton Pits Nature Reserve in Little Paxton (75ha) and Priory Park in St Neots (32ha). Sudbury Meadow in St Neots (0.8ha) has not reapplied due to a lack of resources and voluntary commitment. In 2022, the St Neots Riverside Miniature Railway were awarded a Green Flag Community Award. In addition to open spaces managed by the Council, Grafham Water, which is managed by Anglian Water, holds a Green Flag.

Hinchingbrooke Country Park

Little Paxton Pits Weedy Lake

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Key sustainability issues and problems

- Huntingdonshire has several strategic green infrastructure areas: the Great Fen, Nene Valley, Great Ouse Valley and the West Cambridgeshire Hundreds
- Strategic green infrastructure and localised provision of open green space provide important social benefits to human health and wellbeing as well as opportunities for habitat and biodiversity conservation and enhancement
- Green infrastructure and open space must be located in accessible places
- Several public parks and gardens are managed to the Green Flag Award standard, with others aspiring to the standard

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Developments may not provide adequate provision for open green space to meet the needs arising from them and put pressure on existing spaces through overuse
- Open green space may not be provided in accessible locations
- Planning contributions and obligations may not be made/secured to improve the quality and quantity of open green spaces and strategic green infrastructure projects

Pollution

Air Quality and Pollution

4.91   Air quality impacts human health, quality of life, the natural environment and built environment in the short and long term. Air quality across Huntingdonshire is considered to be good, there are however, four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) across the district in Huntingdon, St Neots, Brampton and along the A14 from Hemingford to Fenstanton. These were designated in 2005 and 2006. An AQMA is an area where air pollutant concentrations exceed / are likely to exceed the relevant air quality objectives and are declared for specific pollutants and objectives.

4.92   The main air quality issues within Huntingdonshire primarily relate to NO_2 (nitrogen dioxide) from vehicle emissions, mostly originating from the strategic road network along the A14 and to a lesser extent the A1. Local traffic and congestion within the market towns also contributes to some elevated levels locally, compared to the rest of the district. The AQMA designations reflect these areas where elevated air pollutants are found.

4.93   HDC's Environmental Health team continuingly monitor air quality across the district and produce an Air Quality Annual Status Report every year. The report monitors the presence of air pollutants within each AQMA and assess whether objectives are being met or exceeded. For Huntingdonshire, these objectives were set in the Cambridgeshire Air Quality Action Plan (2009) undertaken in collaboration with Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council.

4.94   In 2021, it was recorded that all sites met the NO_2 objective level (not exceeding 40µg/m3, or 40 micrograms per one cubic metre of air). Results in 2020 were significantly lower than previous years likely due to the relocation of the A14 and travel restriction measures to stop the spread of coronavirus. Results in 2021 were overall very slightly up from 2020 levels but still lower than pre-2020 levels. Although national travel restriction measures were less stringent as those in 2020, they are still likely to have resulted in a reduction in traffic, and therefore an improvement in related pollution levels. These measures, coupled with the continued A14 works to remove the viaduct within Huntingdon centre, have influenced the air quality results, continuing to make it difficult to assess the benefit of relocating the A14.

4.95   Fine particulate matter PM2.5 concentrations for the past five years have shown an overall downward trend and a reduction in the annual mean from 8.67µg/m3 in 2019 to 8µg/m3 in 2021. Also over the last five years, there has been an overall reduction in particulate matter PM10. The annual mean PM10 figure decreased from 15.74µg/m3 in 2019 to 14µg/m3 in 2020 with a slight increase to 15µg/m3 in 2021. Figure 4.12 shows the performance against the annual mean, the Air Quality Annual Status Reports include detailed assessment on each objective.

Figure 4.12 Annual mean monitoring results shown in µg/m3 for PM2.5, PM10 and NO2. For PM10 there was no data recorded in 2018.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
PM2.5	11.8	10.6	11.7	8.67	8	8
PM10	20.39	18.4		15.74	14	15
NO2	39.4	31.9	28	37	25	27
Limit	40	40	40	40	40	40
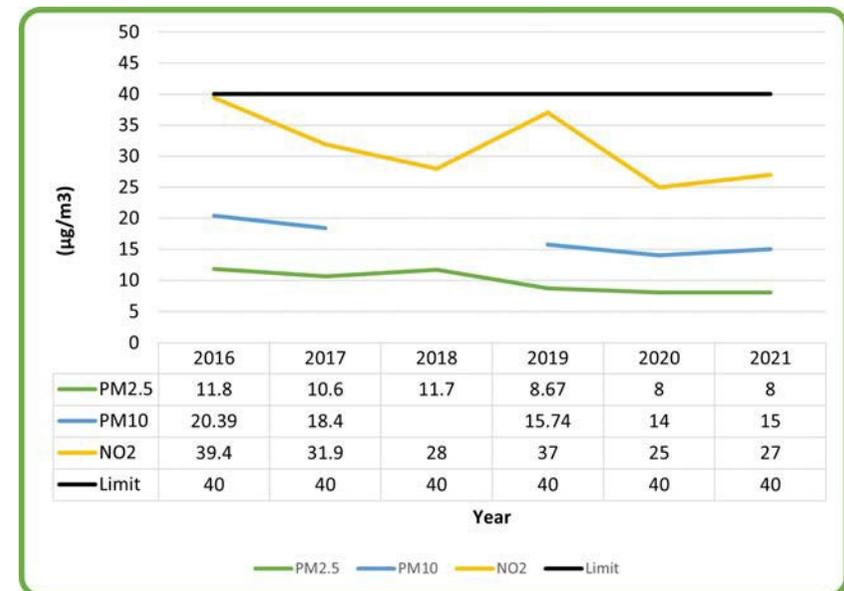
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4.96 As objectives have been complied with over the last several years, the Council proposes to revoke St Neots, Brampton, and the A14 Hemingford to Fenstanton AQMA's. The Huntingdon AQMA will also be reviewed as its objectives are being met, however due to travel restrictions arising from Covid-19 in 2020, it has not yet been possible to fully assess what the impact the re-routing of the A14 has had on air pollution. Also Covid restrictions on traffic means the data is unlikely to be representative of long-term trends in pollutant concentrations. In addition, the A428 upgrade of the route between the Black Cat roundabout and Caxton Gibbet roundabout with a new 10-mile dual carriageway and a number of junction improvements may have an impact on air quality particularly around St Neots.

4.97 The annual all-cause adult mortality attributable to anthropogenic (human-made) particulate air pollution (measured as fine particulate matter, PM2.5) is expressed as the percentage of annual deaths from all causes in those aged 30+. Figure 4.13 shows that the fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution in 2020 (the last available year at the time of writing) was 5.7% in Huntingdonshire, this was slightly higher than the recorded fractions for England (5.6%)[13]. The slight increase in the 2019 and then again in the 2020 data coincides with an increase in the recorded annual means of PM2.5 for 2018 (a figure which has since decreased from 2019) and NO_2 in 2019 (a figure which in 2020 and 2021 has since decreased).

Figure 4.13 Fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Huntingdonshire	5.4%	5.3%	5.5%	5.4%	5.1%	5.5%	5.4%	5.4%	5.5%	5.7%
England	5.4%	5.1%	5.3%	5.1%	4.7%	5.4%	5.1%	5.2%	5.1%	5.6%

Noise Pollution

4.98 Noise can have an effect on health, wellbeing, productivity and the natural environment. Within Huntingdonshire, Defra's strategic noise mapping data shows that along the strategic transport (road and rail) network there are several Important Areas (IAs). These are 'hotspot' locations where the highest 1% of noise levels at residential locations can be found. These are along the A1, A14, A141, A1307, A1123 and the East Coast Mainline Railway.

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13   Office for Health Improvements and Disparities, public health data: indicator D01 - fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution

Light Pollution

4.99   There is increasing awareness of the potential impacts of light pollution on wildlife by interrupting natural rhythms including migration, reproduction and feeding patterns and the quality of life of residents by disrupting sleep and for some increasing levels of anxiety. It can also harm people's enjoyment of the countryside. In 2015, the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) commissioned a national interactive map of England's light pollution. The light pollution maps help define areas of dark skies.

4.100   This maps shows that Huntingdonshire is the 92nd darkest authority area of the 326 within England recorded on the dataset. Huntingdonshire has a greater proportion of its land covered by darker skies when compared to the proportion for all of Cambridgeshire (Figure 4.14 [14]).

4.101   The market towns of Huntingdon and St Neots are shown to be the brightest areas. The strategic road network contributes to increased levels of light particularly along the A1. The rural parts of the district are the darkest with some small concentrations of increased levels of light within villages. Generally, darker skies are also observed where there are nature reserves and sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation, Ramsar, Special Protection Areas and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The Great Fen enjoys dark skies and has been awarded the designation of a Dark Sky Discovery Site by the Science and Technologies Facilities Council at two sites: The Wildlife Trust Countryside Centre and New Decoy Farm Information Point.

Figure 4.14 Light pollution map for Huntingdonshire

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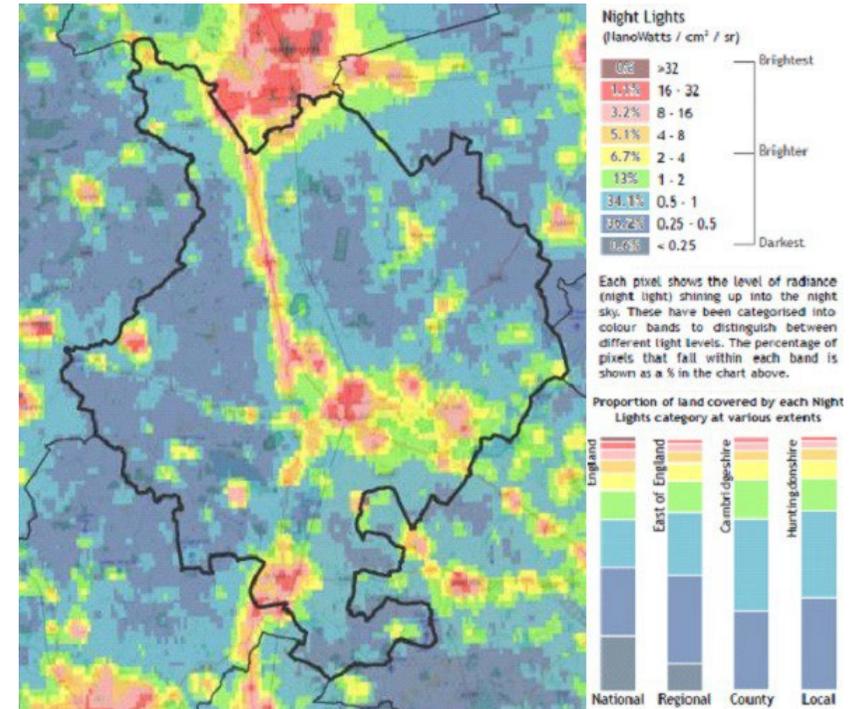
14   Created by LUC Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2016 Image and Data processing by NOAA's National Geophysical Data Center. DMSP data collected by the US Air Force Weather Agency

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Key sustainability issues and problems

- The most significant air quality issues arise from traffic and congestion
- Air, noise and light pollution can have serious implications on the health and wellbeing of people and cause harm to the natural environment and disrupt the lifecycles of wildlife
- Homes, employment, schools, services and facilities should be accessible via walking, cycling and public transport
- Light and noise pollution can reduce the tranquillity of the countryside and green spaces within settlements

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Development may take place without adequate assessment on air quality and may increase concentration levels of pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter
- Development may be located in locations that reinforce car usage rather than in areas that can utilise lower polluting or non-polluting means of travel such as public transport, cycling and walking
- The health and quality of life of Huntingdonshire residents may be adversely affected as a result of air, light and noise pollution
- Development may take place without full consideration on the suitability, location and design of lighting within schemes and as such lighting may be obtrusive

Socio-Economic Characteristics

Housing

Current housing stock

4.102   Huntingdonshire has an estimated 80,021 dwellings as of 1 April 2022. This is based upon the 2011 Census figure of 71,450 plus known completions from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2022. The composition of the housing stock is shown below in Figure 4.15. This illustrates how Huntingdonshire's dwelling stock is strongly weighted towards provision of detached houses at twice the average proportion for these in England. There are correspondingly far fewer flats or maisonettes than the average for England reflecting the district's semi-rural nature and relatively small scale of the towns.

Figure 4.15 Dwelling Type, 2011

	Bungalows	Flats/maisonettes	Terraced houses	Semi-detached houses	Detached houses
Huntingdonshire	10	11	21	23	32
England	9	24	26	24	16

■ Huntingdonshire ■ England
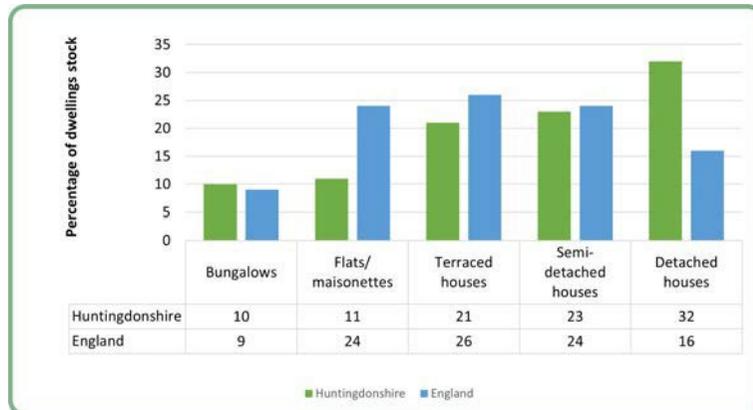
4.103   Figure 4.16 shows housing tenure data from the 2011 Census (table KS402UK). Owner occupied housing dominates at 71.3% which exceeds both the Cambridgeshire average of 66% and the England average of 63.4%. Social rented stock in Huntingdonshire is notably low at 12.9% compared to the Cambridgeshire average of 15.4% and the England

average of 17.7%. However, considerable efforts have been made since 2011 to increase the availability of social and affordable rented properties and to diversify the affordable tenures available to include more shared ownership properties.

Figure 4.16 % Tenure of Dwelling Stock, 2011
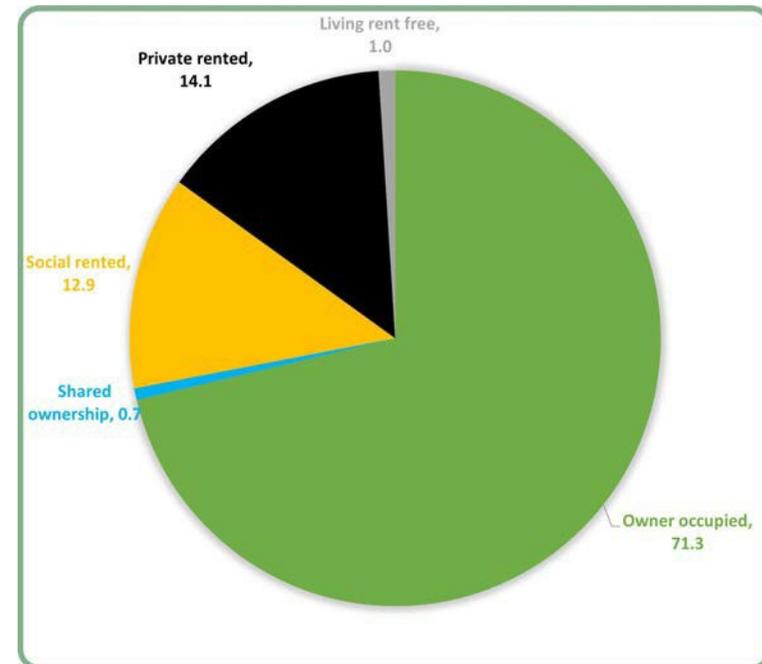
4.104   Recent housing growth has been shaped by Policy LP2 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 which has sought to focus approximately 75% of the district's new housing growth within the four designated spatial planning areas focused on Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey. The remaining 25% is focused on the seven key services centres of Buckden, Fenstanton, Kimbolton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys and Yaxley as well as being distributed around the many smaller settlements. The distribution pattern achieved for completed new homes from 2015/16 to 2021/22 is shown below in Figure 4.17 which illustrates

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how 69.7% of completions in that time were situated within the spatial planning areas. This is expected to increase as homes on more recently granted planning permissions come through to completion, in particular those at the St Neots East strategic expansion location.

Figure 4.17 Distribution of housing growth 2016-22

Affordability

4.105 Housing affordability has been an increasing challenge for Huntingdonshire's residents over the last three decades (see Figure 4.18). In March 2022 the average residential property price based on sales and valuations in Huntingdonshire was £360,295 [15] based on both sales and valuations. This is an increase of £33,539 over the previous 6 months and an increase of £27,214 over the previous 12 months.

4.106 Actual sales prices vary from valuations. The average actual sales price in March 2022 was lower at £320,699 (down by £3,573 on the previous 6 months and down by £11,211 over the previous 12 months). In August 2006 this figure was £205,088. This indicates an increase of 56% across a 15 year period. By way of comparison prices in Cambridge City rose 111% from £265,308 in August 2006 to £560,674 in March 2022 and in Fenland prices rose 57% from £154,234 in August 2006 to £242,460 in March 2022.

4.107   House prices are measured in two ways to indicate the average overall and the average of the lowest priced quarter of the market. The median average comprises the sale price of the middle home in a list of properties ranked from the highest sale price to lowest over a set period of time. The lower quartile house price comprises the sale price which is valued at a quarter of the way through the total range of sales when ordered from lowest to highest. It is used to provide an indicator of the costs incurred by those purchasing homes in the more affordable section of the market.

Figure 4.18 Average House Prices

15   Source: Hometrack data, presented in the quarterly Housing Market Bulletins prepared by the Housing Board for Cambridgeshire, Peterborough & West Suffolk, the last edition was published in July 2022 using data from March 2022

4.108 Affordability ratios are used to assess house prices compared to average earnings to show how many times local income local house prices represent. They are calculated by dividing house prices by gross annual workplace or residence-based earnings. The higher the ratio, the less affordable it is for people to get onto the property ladder. Lower ratios tend to suggest greater affordability but may indicate lower earnings, reduced purchasing power and/or lower demand in an area. It should be noted that affordability ratios are calculated on a district wide basis and can hide significant variations between different locations within the district. The Office for National Statistic publish an annual affordability ratio based on the median price paid for residential property and earnings data, the 2021 data gives a figure of 9.6 for Huntingdonshire.

4.109 In Huntingdonshire the lowest median house price affordability ratio since December 2016 was experienced in June 2017 at 6.5 and the highest in September 2021 at 9.4, this had dropped to 7.6 by March 2022. For those in the lower quartile of earnings and seeking properties within the lower quartile of the market the affordability ratio is even more challenging. The lowest affordability ratio experienced since December 2016 was 8.8 also in June 2017 with the highest being 10.1 in March 2022. By way of comparison elsewhere within the Cambridge sub-region housing market area the worst median affordability ratio as at March 2022 was in Cambridge City at 10.6 and the best in Peterborough being 7.1. Again in March 2022, for the lower quartile the lack of affordability is even more stark with Cambridge City again being worst at 14 and Fenland and Peterborough being best at 9.9. The amount that can be borrowed for a mortgage varies across different lenders but typically ranges between 3 and a maximum of 4.5 times the household's income. Although Huntingdonshire is one of the less expensive district within the housing market area both the median and lower quartile ratios significantly exceed the typical lending ranges indicating considerable financial challenges to those trying to enter the housing market, particularly for the first time or if relocating from a lower value area.

4.110 Around a quarter of homes within Huntingdonshire are rented, either privately or through a range of social landlords. Weekly median private rents in March 2022 were £150 for a 1 bedroom property, £190 for 2 bedrooms, and £229 for a 3 bedroom property. The local housing allowances for the Huntingdon broad market area which covers the majority of the district range from £65.59 for a room, £130 for a 1 bedroom property up to £253.15 for a 4 bedroom property. For all accommodation sizes the local housing allowance is lower than the weekly median private rents. The northern part of the district, including Ramsey and Yaxley fall within the Peterborough broad rental market where prices and local housing allowances are correspondingly lower. Weekly median private rents in March 2022 were £137 for a 1 bedroom property, £172 for 2 bedrooms and £201 for a 3 bedroom property. The local housing allowance ranged from £65.59 for a room, £110.47 for a 1 bedroom property up to £207.12 for a 4 bedroom property.

4.111 Housing associations (also known as registered social providers/ landlords) provide the majority of rented affordable homes in Huntingdonshire. Rent levels vary depending upon the nature of the contract. Net weekly rental charges for general needs housing for 2021-22 for those in social rented properties were £81 for 1 bedroom, £94 for 2 bedroom and £103 for 3 bedroom and for those in 'affordable rented properties were £112 for 1 bedroom, £133 for 2 bedroom and £157 for 3 bedroom. 4 bedroom prices are not listed due to the rarity of such properties.

4.112 As can be seen from the baseline data above, provision of affordable housing remains a major challenge for the next Local Plan.

Homelessness

4.113 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a duty to both prevent and relieve homelessness on local authorities. The prevention duties include activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness within 56 days from becoming homeless which can include relocation to alternative accommodation as well as assisting people to remain in their existing property. For those who are homeless, or become so within the 56 days of the prevention duty period, the relief duty requires local authorities to take all reasonable steps to help eligible people to secure suitable accommodation. Figure 4.19 below shows the significance of the prevention duty in resolving cases with the majority of cases addressed at this stage rather than through the relief duty.

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4.114 Data taken from the DLUHC/ MHCLG Statutory Homelessness detailed local authority level tables financial year 2020-21 show that 928 households were assessed as owed a duty of prevention or relief from homelessness. Where issues cannot be resolved through the prevention actions a household may be counted again within those seeking help under the relief duty. The largest single cause of homelessness was family or friends no longer being willing or able to provide accommodation.

Figure 4.19 Reasons for Homelessness, 2021-22
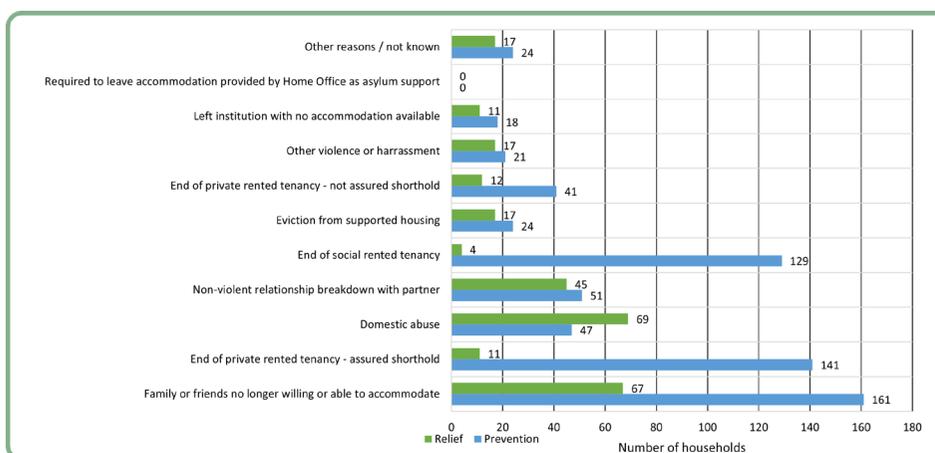
4.115 Of the 659 households for whom the prevention duty ended during 2020-21 accommodation for 6 months or more was successfully secured for 370 households. Of those for whom the relief duty ended accommodation for 6 months or more was successfully secured for 157 households. 172 households were accepted as remaining homeless more than 56 days after the relief duty period started of which 143 households were considered to be in priority need primarily through having dependent children or containing household members with physical or mental health problems. The main duty ended for 145 households during 2020-21 with 113 accepting social housing offers and 2 accepting private rental offers; 10 households however were reclassified as becoming intentionally homeless from temporary accommodation.

Specialist housing

4.116 Older people can have specialist housing needs ranging from properties with improved accessibility within an otherwise standard house type through to care home beds with high levels of support. The Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk Housing Needs of Specific Groups study (2021) indicates the current supply of specialist older people's housing as shown below in Figure 4.20.

Figure 4.20 Specialist Older People's Accommodation by Property Type, 2020
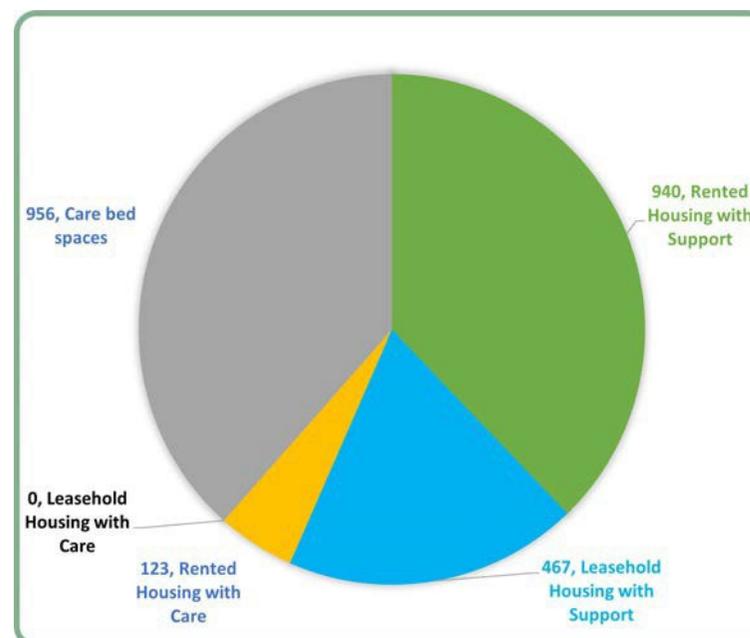
4.117 Based on the SHOP@ Assumptions the level of need for specialist accommodation in Huntingdonshire is forecast to increase by a total of 2,082 units by 2040. The expected housing types for these comprise additional demand for 554 rented housing units with support, 977 leasehold

housing units with support, 241 rented housing units with care and 310 leasehold housing units with care. The provision of a choice of attractive, suitable housing options for older people is a key element of providing a good housing mix. This may enable some older households to downsize from homes that no longer meet their housing needs or are expensive to run and can provide opportunities to move into suitable, accessible accommodation that helps improve people's quality of life.

Household Characteristics

4.118   Average size is one of the key characteristics of households that affects planning for housing. A household may be a single person or any group of people, related or not, who live in a property and share cooking and other facilities; communal establishments such as nursing homes or prisons are excluded. Average household size is the typical number of people living within a single property. Figure 4.21 shows the Office for National Statistics' predicted average household size for Huntingdonshire up to 2043. It reflects a decline from 2.36 people per household in 2018 to 2.20 by 2043.

Figure 4.21 Average household size predictions
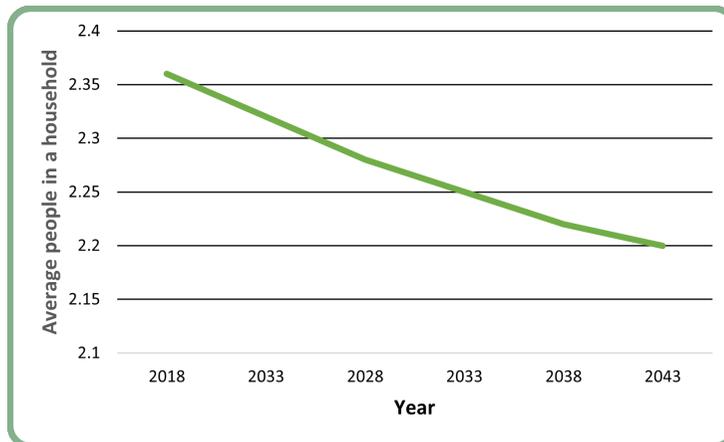
Key sustainability issues and problems

- Ensuring the delivery of an ongoing supply of new homes in sustainable locations
- Ensuring new homes provide a mix of types, sizes and tenures aligned with the composition of the local population with an emphasis on increasing the stock of smaller properties suitable for one and two person households
- Affordability ratios of house prices to around 9 times average earnings create significant stress in the housing market and result in strong social sustainability challenges
- Proactive work through the prevention duty regarding homelessness has high effectiveness rates and reduces social sustainability challenges through the trauma otherwise experienced by those who become homeless
- Ensuring a range of accessible, adaptable and specialist new homes are available suitable to meet the changing needs of residents as the population ages overall

What may happen without a Local Plan

- The amount of new housing provided may be insufficient to meet needs creating further price inflation or an excessive supply may be permitted resulting in uncertainty over delivery of sites
- New housing provision may be less well suited to meeting local needs in terms of size and type
- The specialist accommodation needs of older people may not be met

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Population and Health

Population Characteristics

4.119   The national Census is taken every 10 years and records the current population. The 2021 census recorded a total population for Huntingdonshire as being 180,830 people, this is an increase of 6.7% from the 2011 Census where there were 169,500 people. At 6.7%, Huntingdonshire's population increase is lower than the increase for the East of England (8.3%). Bedford, Cambridge and Peterborough saw their populations increase by around 17.7%, 17.6% and 17.5% respectively, while others such as Fenland saw an increase of 7.6% and East Cambridgeshire saw smaller growth (4.6%).

4.120   The fastest growth rate experienced by Huntingdonshire's population was during the 1960s and 1970s. The 1961 Census gave a population of 66,068; by 1981 this had grown by 89% to 124,773. By 2021, the population had increased by 44.9% over the 1981 figure. These growth rates should be treated with a degree of caution reflecting changes in Census methodologies and area boundaries over time.

4.121   Detailed population data showing the proportion of the population belonging to each ethnic group have not yet been released for the 2021 Census. The 2011 Census recorded that 89.5% of Huntingdonshire's population were white British, with 2.5% recorded as being Asian/Asian British, 1% Back/Black British and 1.5% recording themselves as mixed ethnicity.

4.122   There were 434 residents/km^2 in England in 2021, up from 407/km^2 in 2011. As of 2021, Huntingdonshire is the 14th least densely populated of the East of England's 45 local authority areas, with around one person living on each football pitch-sized area of land.

4.123   The first results of the 2021 census provides data for Huntingdonshire's resident population by 5 year age groups (Figure 4.22). It only provides projections by traditional male or female categories; no data is available for people identifying as gender neutral. Huntingdonshire's census 2021 population is estimated as 49.6% male (89,700 residents) and 50.4% female (91,100 residents). This is a 0.3% change from census 2011. The

gender balance of the population is broadly equal in younger age groups. Broadly, Huntingdonshire has seen higher population growth in older age groups, in particular the 65 years and over age group (increased by 33.7%). In contrast, younger population groups have seen limited growth or small declines (for example, an increase of 1.5% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 1.8% in children aged under 15 years).

Figure 4.22 Age structure of Huntingdonshire's population at the 2021 census
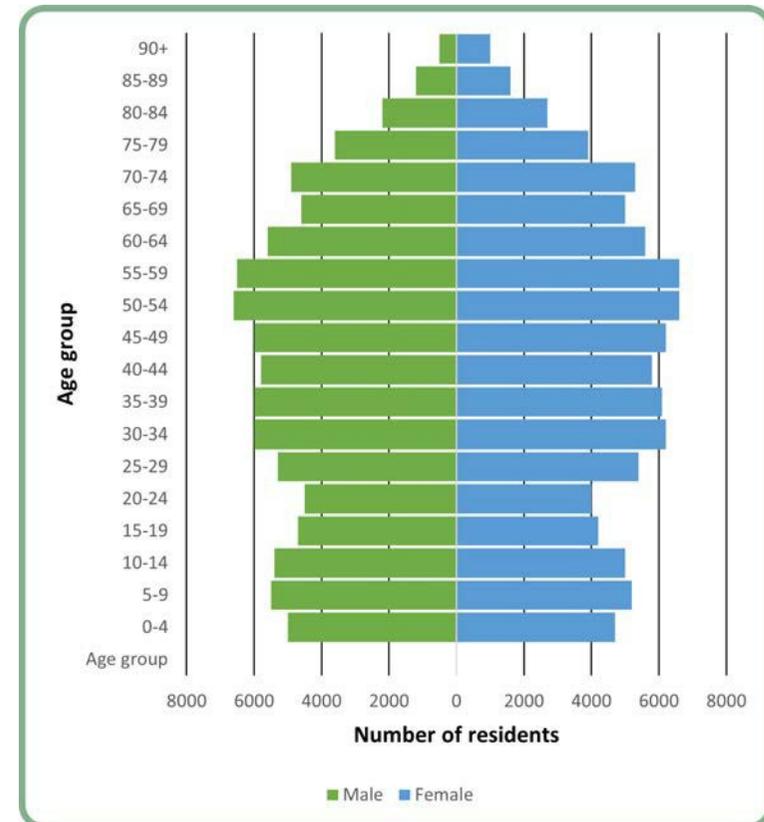
4.124 Huntingdonshire's average population per household (calculated for only residents living in households) decreased from 2.41 in Census 2011 to 2.32 in Census 2021.

4.125 Cambridgeshire Insight are releasing localised Census 2021 outputs. Recent summaries have shown that population growth at ward level in Huntingdonshire has been more unevenly spread compared to other districts in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Huntingdon North is the most populous ward with 12,700 people followed by St Neots Eynesbury (11,640) and then Yaxley (11,200). The least populous ward is St Ives West with 2,970 people. See Figure 4.23 for more details.

Figure 4.23 Huntingdonshire's population by ward, Census 2021
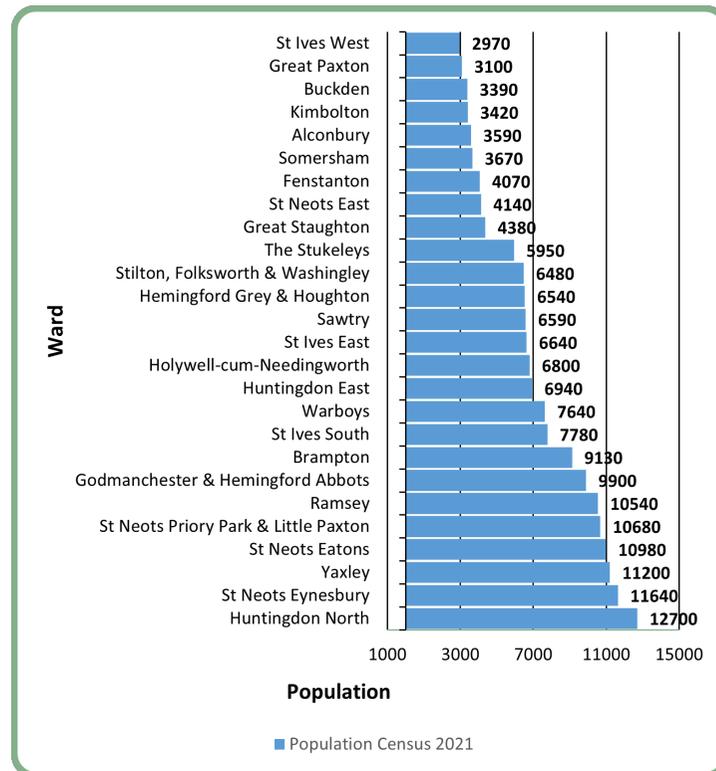
4.126 16 wards have seen population increases since Census 2011, whereas 10 wards have seen population decreases. The largest decrease has been in St Ives East, with a population decrease of -360 residents or -5.2%. In contrast, there has been notable population growth in the wards of:

- **St Neots East**: an increase of 2,240 residents - growth of 118.5% - and an increase of 770 households. This is the second highest percentage population growth in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This is largely attributed to development of Loves Farm and now Wintringham Park.
- **Brampton**: an increase of 2,060 residents - growth of 29% - and an increase of 900 households. This is attributed towards the redevelopment of RAF Brampton and other major developments within the village.
- **The Stukeleys**: an increase of 1,290 residents - growth of 27.6% - and an increase of 670 households. This is a result of the Alconbury Weald development that is ongoing.

4.127 Map 4.5 shows visually the population change between 2011 and 2021 in each of Huntingdonshire's wards. Data has been taken from the Census 2021: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough provisional ward level population summary document published on Cambridgeshire Insight. The map shows that the rural western part of the district has seen population decline throughout with increases focused in and around the towns and larger villages. Population decline gives rise to challenges in supporting local services because there are less people to use them.

Map 4.5 Population change between 2011 and 2021 at ward level

Population change 2011 to 2021
- -360 - -40
- -39 - 220
- 221 - 810
- 811 - 1340
- 1341 - 2240
- District Boundary

© Huntingdonshire District Council 2022
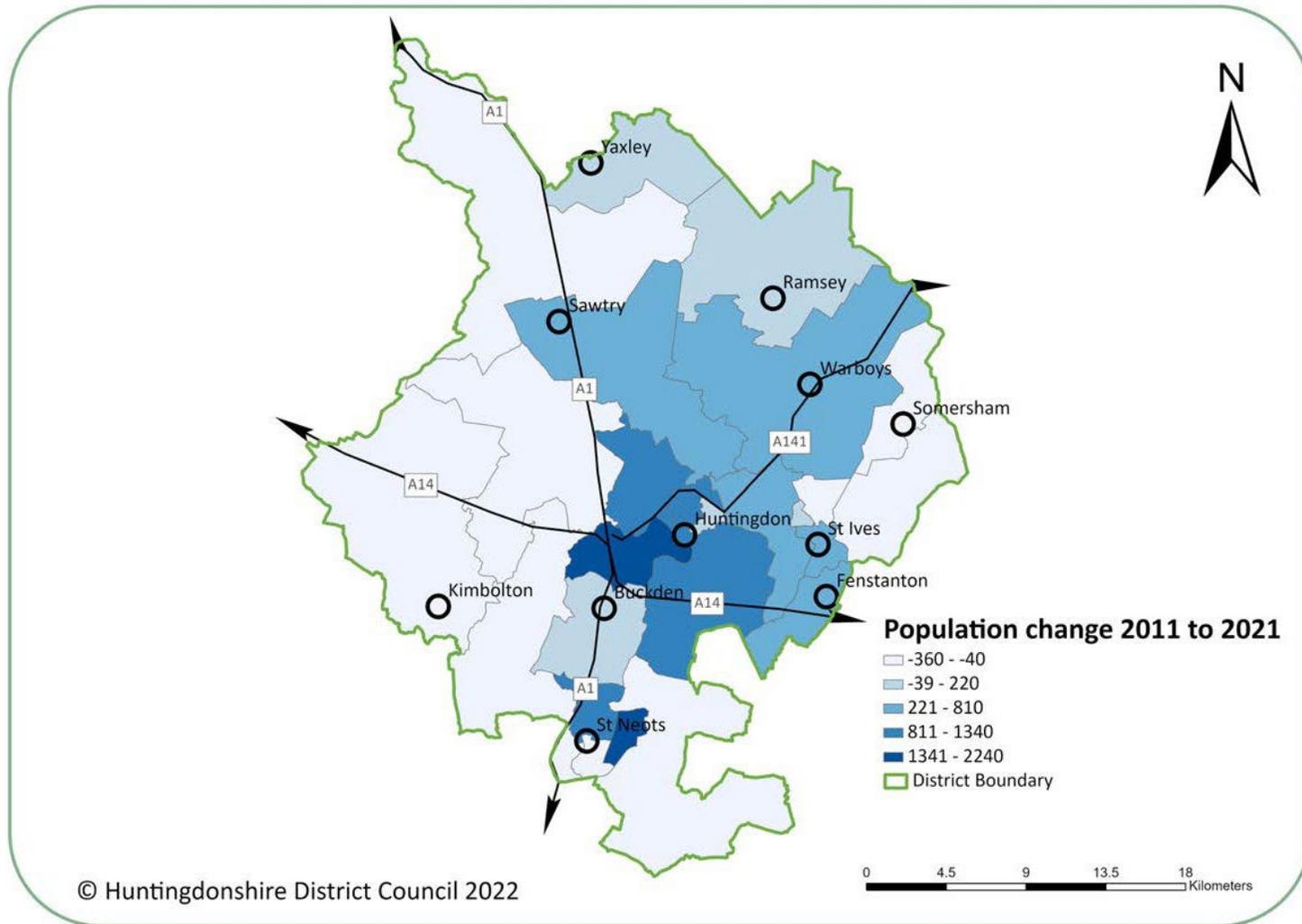
Population Projections

4.128   Figure 4.24 shows the forecasted age structure for Huntingdonshire for 2042 [16]. The data shows that by 2042 the proportion of people aged 0-19 is predicted to decline from 21.9% of the population to 19.7% and those aged 20-64 to decline to 53.7%. In contrast those aged 65-79 are predicted to increase to 17.4%. The greatest relative increase is predicted amongst those aged 80 and over going up to 9.3%.

Figure 4.24 Age structure forecast for 2042
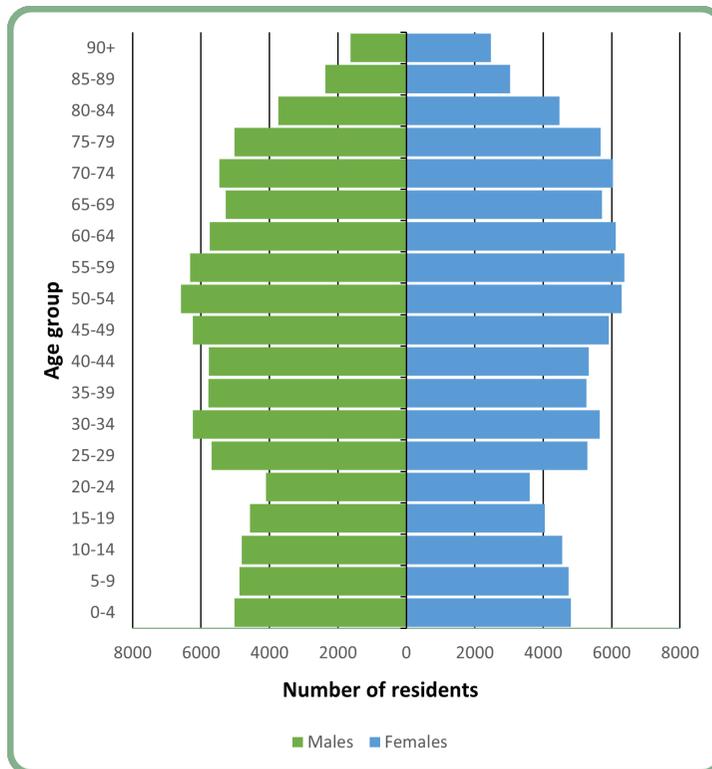
4.129   Life expectancy in Huntingdonshire at birth is higher than the national average for both males and females. The ONS calculate life expectancy based on a three year average figure.

4.130   For a female born 2001-2003 life expectancy was 81.56 years, by a birth date of 2010-2012 this had increased to 84.18 years and by a birth date of 2018-2020 a female's life expectancy had fractionally decreased to 84.14 years. For Cambridgeshire as a whole a female's life expectancy for 2018-2020 was 84.46 years with both being higher than the average for England at 83.14 years. Life expectancy for males was lower than that for females across all dates and locations.

4.131   As of 2001-2003 a male's life expectancy was 77.50 years in Huntingdonshire, increasing to 80.77 years by 2010-2012 and further increasing fractionally to 80.98 years by 2018-2020. Again this was marginally below the average for Cambridgeshire for 2018-2020 at 81.07 years but but were higher than the average for England at 79.40 years.

4.132   Figure 4.25 below shows the trends in live births, deaths and subsequent natural population change for 2011 to 2020. It broadly indicates that annual deaths are exceeding whilst live annual births are decreasing. Natural change is still giving rise to a small positive growth rate but this has declined significantly over the decade from a peak natural change growth of 875 in 2011 to just 112 in 2020. Given the projected population profile for Huntingdonshire by 2042 it is likely that natural change rates will be negative.

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16   These projections are produced by the Office for National Statistics, the last available data are 2018-based population projections. ONS aim to update these projections towards the end of 2022 following the data outputs from the 2021 census

4 | A2: Collecting baseline information

Figure 4.25 Natural change rate of population 2011 to 2020
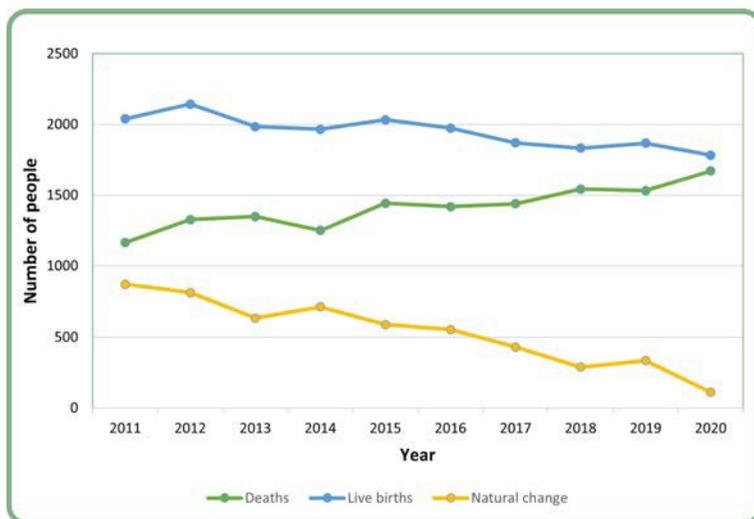
4.133 The Office for National Statistics has recorded weekly death occurrences by all causes and those specifically attributed to Covid-19. There were two distinct peaks of Covid-19 related deaths, firstly in spring 2020 and secondly in the first quarter of 2021. In 2020, week 20 saw 50% of deaths recorded in Huntingdonshire as being related to Covid-19. The first quarter of 2021 saw a peak of 40% of deaths attributed to Covid-19 in week 4, since then rates continued to fall.

4.134 A range of NHS primary care facilities are available within Huntingdonshire to support the local population's health (see Map 4.6). Hinchingbrooke Hospital is a 304 bed district general hospital located in Huntingdon offering a range of general surgery, specialist units, maternity and emergency care along with a 23 bed treatment centre. Residents also frequently access services at Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge and Peterborough City Hospital.

4.135 There are 21 full time General Practioner Surgeries with also many offering extended hours on specific evenings and the St Neots Health Centre offering some weekend access. The greatest concentrations of GP surgery provision are within Huntingdon and St Neots reflecting the greater density of population in these towns. Four surgeries provide GP access on a part time basis in smaller settlements each offering services at least three days a week. In September 2020 the Church Street Surgery in Somersham closed down which also resulted in the closure of its two branch surgeries in Earith and Bluntisham which had limited opening hours. Again for some residents the nearest GP surgery may be outside Huntingdonshire.

Map 4.6 Health Facilities in Huntingdonshire, March 2022

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Legend:
- GP - Full time
- GP - Part time
- Hinchingbrooke Hospital
- Pharmacies
- District Boundary
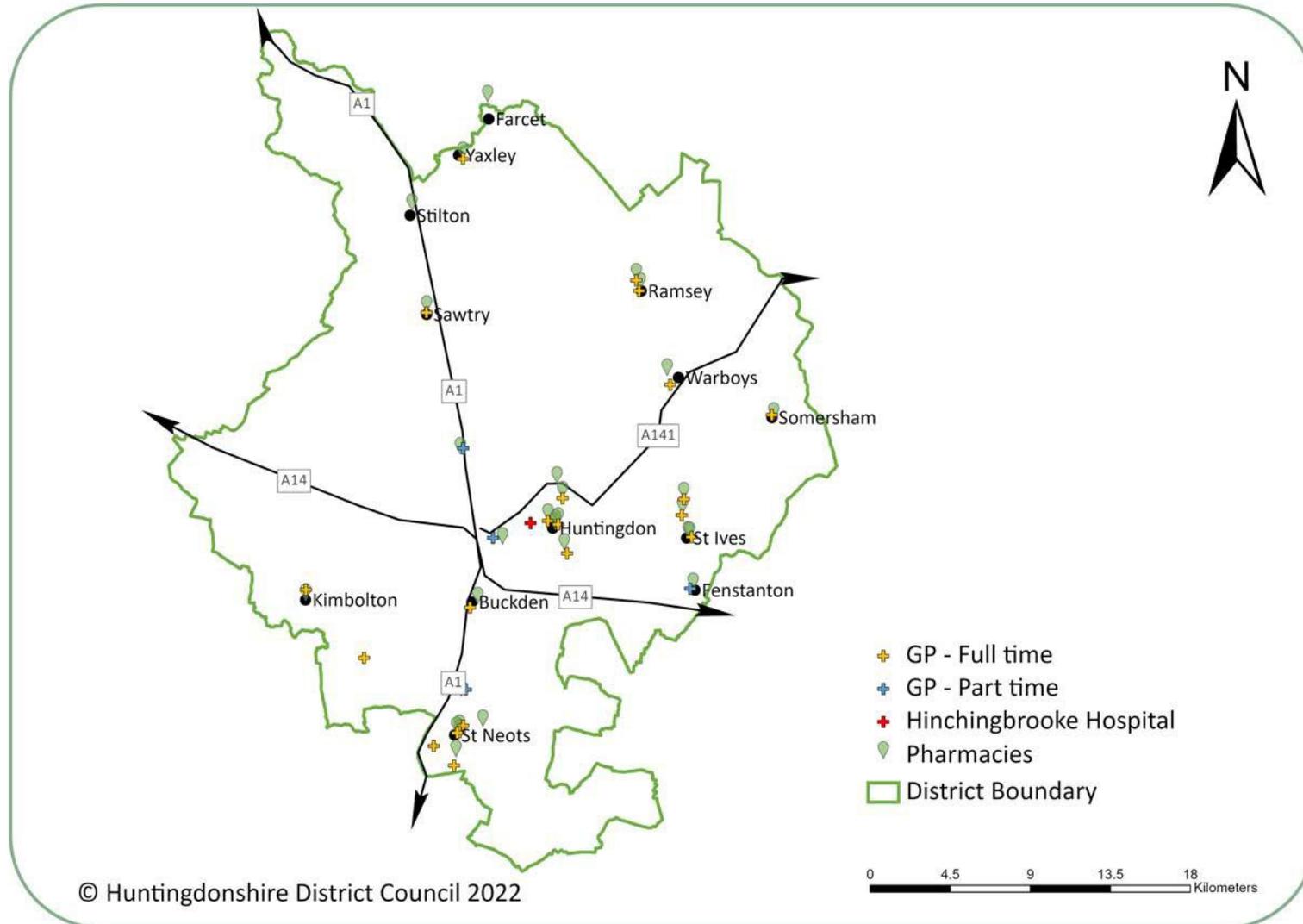
4 | A2: Collecting baseline information

4.136 Data from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities indicates that in overall terms the health of Huntingdonshire's population is slightly better than that for England as a whole. A small range of health indicators which relate reasonably closely to impacts of the built environment on health are presented in Table 15 below to provide a summary picture of this.

Table 15 Health Indicators

Indicator	Date range	Huntingdonshire	England
Fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution	2020	5.7%	5.6%
Percentage of physically active adults	2020/21	68.6%	65.9%
Under 75s mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases (1 year range)	2020	55.8 per 100,000	70.4 per 100,000
Hip fractures in people aged 65 and over	2020/21	509 per 100,000	529 per 100,000
Under 75 mortality rate from cancer (1 year range)	2020	104.6 per 100,000	125.1 per 100,000
Percentage of adults (aged 18+) classified as overweight or obese	2020/21	65.3%	63.5%
Prevalence of obesity or severe obesity for children in Year 6 (10-11 years old)	2019/20	19.6%	21.0%

Key sustainability issues and problems

- The ageing and in some locations declining population may lead to challenges for the social sustainability of communities, for health and social provision and provision of appropriate housing options
- Decreasing proportion of the population is of working age raising the proportion of dependants
- Natural change is decreasing and may result in a negative rate of population growth unless in-migration is sufficient to counterbalance falling population numbers
- GP surgeries are concentrated in larger settlements necessitating residents of almost all villages to travel for appointments or rely on telephone or other remote forms of consultations
- Health indicators suggest that Huntingdonshire's population is typically slightly healthier than that for England on average but deaths from particulate air pollution were higher than average in 2019 although it should be noted that this was prior to the rerouting of the A14 and consequent impact on air quality management areas

What may happen without a Local Plan

- New homes may not contribute to the provision of additional healthcare provision designed to meet the increased needs generated
- Less emphasis may be placed on development of sustainable neighbourhoods facilitating active forms of travel which can boost people's physical and mental health
- Less emphasis may be placed on construction of safe, accessible developments which facilitate ease of access for all
- Rural areas may continue to see their populations decline and subsequent loss of any remaining services

Income and Deprivation

4.137   The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation in England and is part of a suite of outputs that form the Indices of Deprivation (IoD).The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 measures deprivation levels across England based on 7 topic areas:

1.   Income
2.   Employment
3.   Education, Skills and Training
4.   Health Deprivation and Disability
5.   Crime
6.   Barriers to Housing and Services
7.   Living Environment

4.138   Each topic area has a subset of detailed indicators to derive a comprehensive assessment of deprivation across geographical areas such as Local Authority areas and Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA)[17]. Huntingdonshire is the 69th least deprived district out of 317 English Local Authorities. Of other Cambridgeshire authorities, South Cambridgeshire is the 16th least deprived, East Cambridgeshire is 45th least deprived, Cambridge City is the 107th least deprived, and Fenland and Peterborough rank 80th and 51st respectively. When comparing all LSOA across England results show that Huntingdonshire has two LSOAs that fall within the 20% most deprived (H 008A in Huntingdon West and H 008B in Huntingdon North). A summary report on deprivation in Huntingdonshire can be found at Cambridgeshire Insight.

4.139   Map 4.7 shows the Index of Multiple Deprivation by deciles across Huntingdonshire. Of the deprivation categories identified in the IMD for Huntingdonshire, 'Barriers to Housing and Services' ranks as the lowest nationally (117 out of 317 authorities of which 1 is the most deprived). 'Income', 'Employment' and 'Health and Disability' categories perform above average, ranking 250th, 245th and 242nd out of 317 local authorities respectively.

4.140   Within Huntingdonshire income deprivation rankings vary significantly. Of the 105 LSOAs in Huntingdonshire, 1 LSOA falls within the 2nd decile of most income deprived areas (this is Huntingdon North), whereas 20 fall within the 10th decile (the least deprived).

4.141   In Huntingdonshire 79.7% of the working age population (16 to 64 years) were in employment (Jul 2021-Jun 2022) [18], this compares to % in the 80.3% in the Eastern region and 78.6% for Great Britain.

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17   A LSOA is split in areas that contain up to 3,000 people or 1,200 households Source: ONS: Census Geography
18   Employment and unemployment (Jul 2021 - Jun 2022) - ONS Annual Population Survey from NOMIS Local Authority Profiles

Map 4.7 Index of Multiple Deprivation by Deciles - 2019
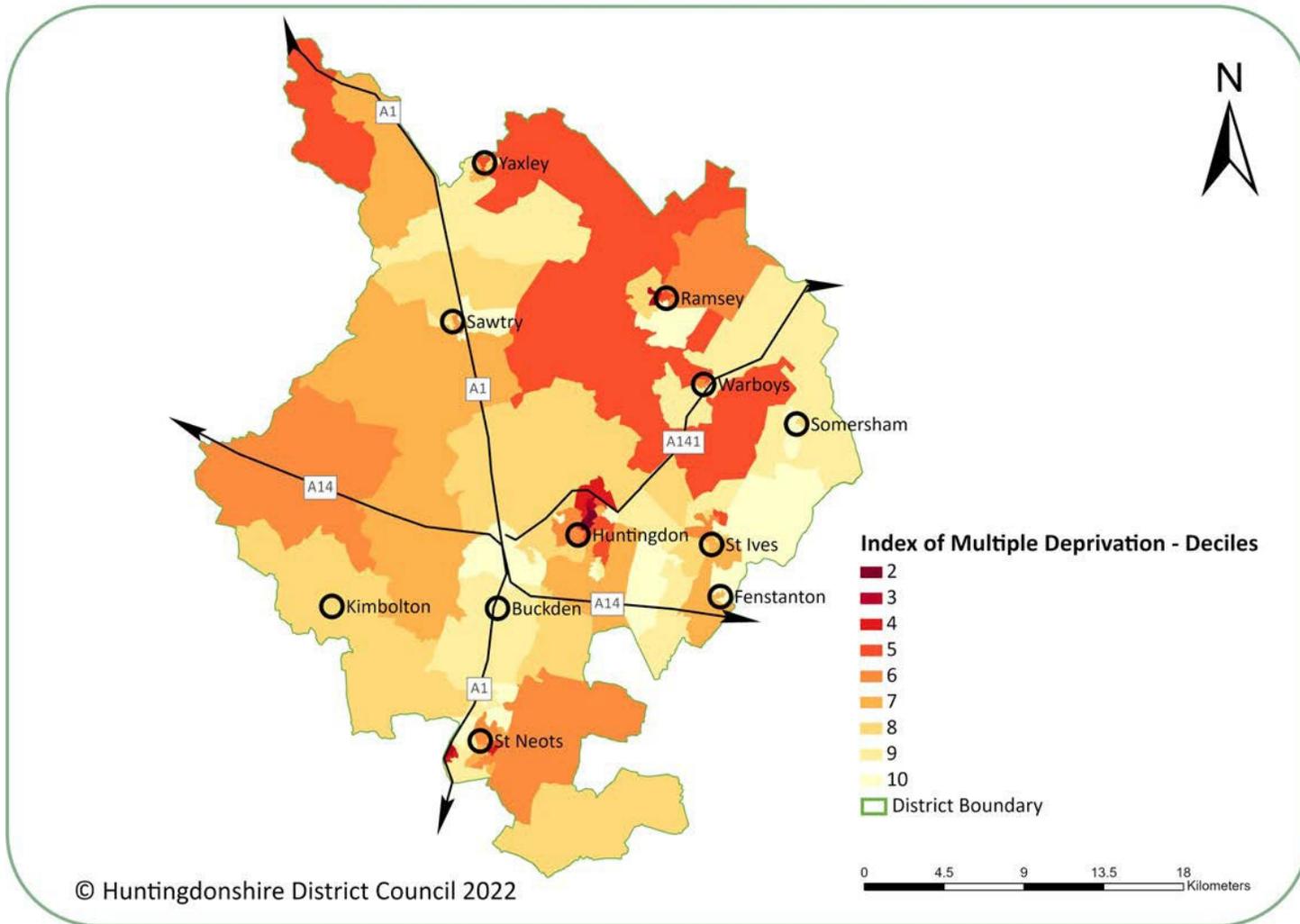
© Huntingdonshire District Council 2022

4.142 Median weekly pay (gross) in Huntingdonshire has bucked local and regional trends (Figure 4.26). The ONS annual survey of hours and earnings (resident analysis 2021) demonstrates that although median weekly pay continues to rise in Cambridgeshire, regionally and nationally, pay in Huntingdonshire has been slowly declining since 2018. Weekly median pay in Huntingdonshire peaked at approximately £600 in 2018. 2020 saw a temporary decrease in weekly pay across the country as a result of the pandemic, however other authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have recovered to demonstrate increasing pay since. Currently median weekly pay in Huntingdonshire sits at approximately £589, this is below regional and English pay of around £628 and £613 respectively. Residents in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire earn on average more ranging between £728 and £783 respectively. It is notable that median weekly pay in East Cambridge was £629 in 2021 (the third highest within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough), whilst Peterborough and Fenland sit below the national average at approximately £565 and £546 respectively.

4.143 Although median weekly pay has decreased in Huntingdonshire, the claimant rate as a proportion of economically active residents aged 16+ has remained in line with local and national trends (Figure 4.27). Claimant rates peaked in 2021 appearing to coincide with the post lockdown impacts on businesses and the gradual repeal of the national furlough scheme. As at September 2022 claimant rates in England, the East and across Cambridgeshire have continued to decline. Within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area Huntingdonshire has the third lowest claimant count rate (2.2 as at September 2022) after South Cambridgeshire (1.8) and East Cambridgeshire (2.0). (ONS Claimant Count - Claimants as a proportion of economically active residents aged 16+)) Distributed across age ranges approximately (as at September 2022) 16% of claimants in Huntingdonshire were aged 16 to 24 and 25% aged 50 or over; the majority of claimants sit within the 24 to 49 age group (59%). There remain future challenges ahead including but not limited to increasing energy price rises, uncertainty surrounding the economy and the impact that this may have on the cost of living.

Figure 4.26 Weekly Pay (Gross)

Figure 4.27 Claimants as a proportion of economically active residents aged 16+
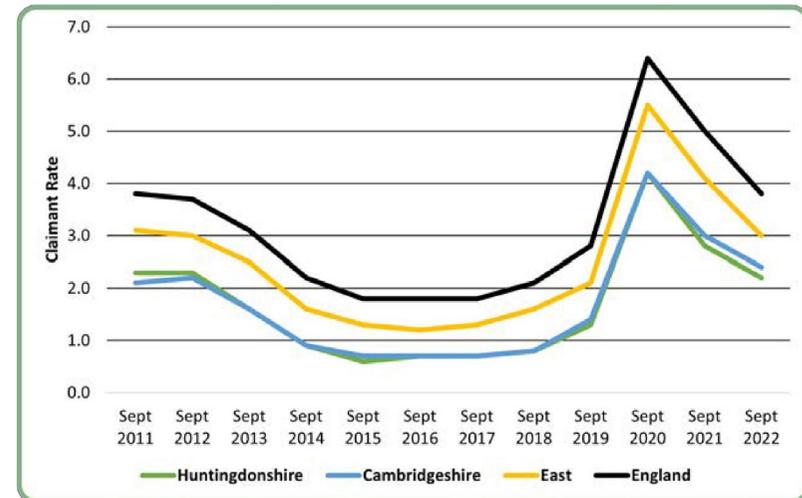
4 | A2: Collecting baseline information

Key sustainability issues and problems

- Huntingdonshire shows great disparity across the district in terms of income and deprivation
- Median weekly pay in Huntingdonshire is in decline potentially creating a less financially stable population

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Income and deprivation disparity may continue to increase
- Residents across the district may continue to face financial hardship exacerbating the cost of living crisis

Employment and Businesses

4.144   There are approximately 86,000 employees in Huntingdonshire, the fourth highest in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough after Cambridge City Council (133,000), Peterborough (130,000) and South Cambridgeshire District Council (97,000)[19]. The number of jobs in Huntingdonshire declined by 4.4% between 2019 and 2020; the decline although greater mirrors a downward trend in the Eastern region of 0.76% and in England of 3%. South Cambridgeshire also saw a decline of 2.2% however other local authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have bucked the national decline, see Figure 4.28.

Figure 4.28 Number of Jobs 2020

4.145   Huntingdonshire has a diverse range of occupations (Figure 4.29), 22.5% of residents are employed in Professional Occupations, this occupational classification requires residents to have "a degree or equivalent
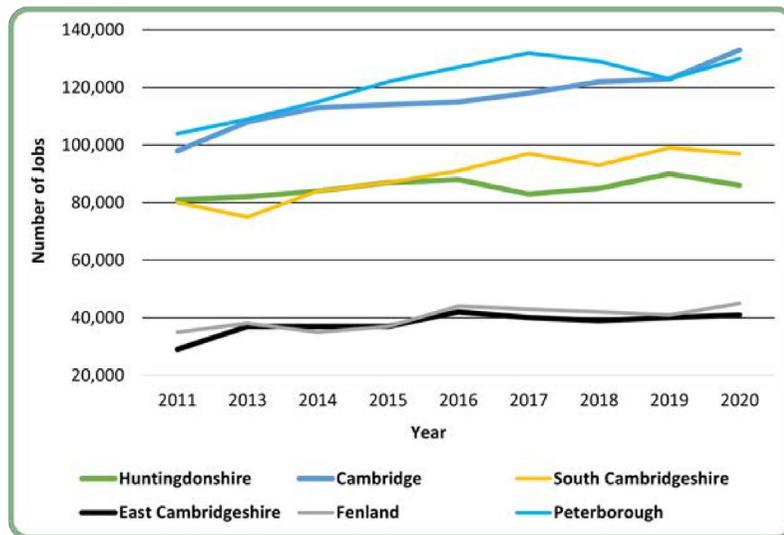
qualification, with some occupations requiring postgraduate qualifications and/or a formal period of experience-related training"[20]. This is generally in line with trends in the Eastern region (21.9%) and in England (23.4%). The neighbouring authorities of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire exhibit a higher percentage of high level occupations than average displaying 41.5% and 39.9% of their population in Professional Occupations. Conversely those in Managers, Directors and Senior Officials occupations in Huntingdonshire (10.3%) is more similar to Cambridge (10.5%) and South Cambridgeshire (12.6%). when comparing Huntingdonshire to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area, those in Skilled Trades and Occupations (12.7%) are second proportionately only to Fenland (18.2%).

Figure 4.29 Employment by Occupation
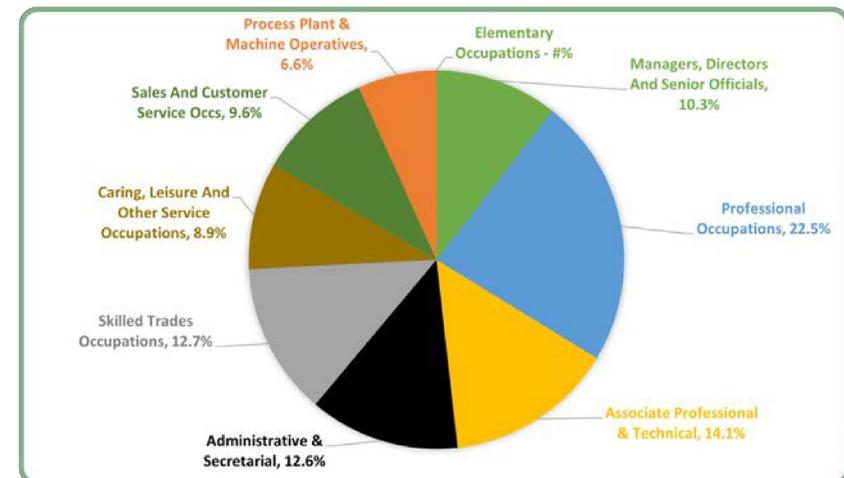
Source: ONS Annual Population Survey - Employment by occupation (Oct 2020-Sep 2021)

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19   Source: ONS jobs density 2020. Total jobs includes employees, self-employed, government-supported trainees and HM Forces
20   ONS: SOC2010 volume 1: structure and descriptions of unit groups

4   **A2: Collecting baseline information**

4.146   Huntingdonshire has approximately 7,845 enterprises (Figure 4.30). 89.93% of which are classed as Micro organisations (employ 0-9 workers), 8.29% are Small (10 to 49), with 1.47% Medium (50 to 249 employees) and 0.38% Large (employing over 250). The percentage of businesses by size is generally reflective of County, Regional and English distribution (Source: Inter Departmental Business Register 2022 (ONS)[21] The effects of Covid and Brexit appear to have impacted on the number of enterprises in Huntingdonshire, declining by approximately 3.7% between 2020 and 2022. This decline is largely reflected across the Eastern Region, with the exception locally of Cambridge (no change), Peterborough (increase of 6.05%) and Fenland (increase of 3.46%). Generally across England the number of Enterprises has remained relatively stable with a slight increase of 0.71%, whilst the Eastern region has returned to positive position (0.48% increase since 2020); Cambridgeshire demonstrated a decrease of -1.70%.

Figure 4.30 Number of Enterprises
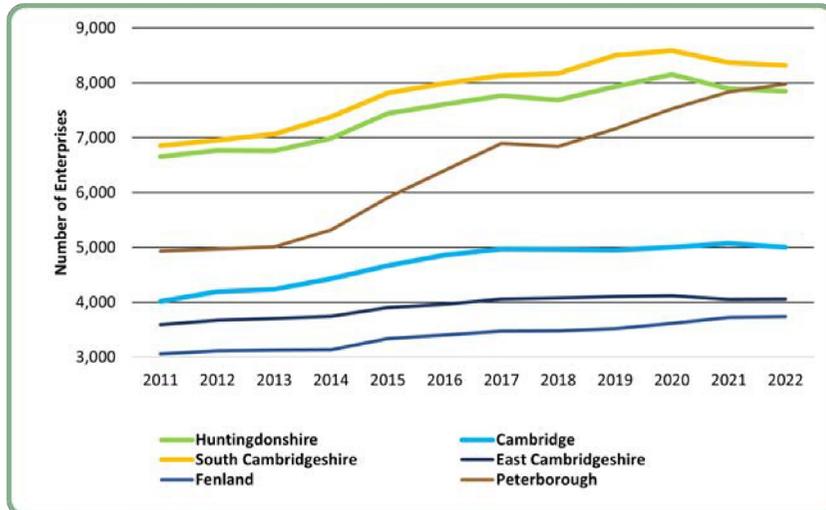
4.147   Table 16 shows the *Industries by Size of Business* and sets out the main types of business that reside within Micro, SME and Large categories. Unsurprisingly the table demonstrates that the majority of micro organisations include small scale businesses such as hairdressers, builders, plumbers, electricians and accountancy services; more surprisingly some micro organisations fit within the creative, digital and biotech industries. This could be as a result of the 'Cambridge effect', however more research would be required to understand if this is the case. SME organisations clearly demonstrate the district's links with manufacturing and advanced manufacturing which is a high priority sector for the district (Huntingdonshire's Economic Growth Strategy For Huntingdonshire District 2020-2025), whilst the influence of organisations such as Hinchingbrooke Hospital can be clearly seen in the Large organisation category.

Table 16 Industries by Size of Business

Micro 0-9 employees	SME 10-249 employees	Large 250+ employees
• Creative and digital industries • Building, plumbing, electrician • Computer consultancy • Biotech • Hairdressing & beauty therapy • Accounting & auditing services	• Management consultancy • Plastics manufacturing • Paper manufacturer • Composites • Metal fabrication • Hospitality • Primary education • Freight transport • Retail • Financial management	• Meat processing & preserving • Food manufacturing • Hospital & other human health activities • Utilities (Water collection, treatment & supply) • Manufacture of electrical equipment • Secondary education

Source: ONS Inter Departmental Business Register (2021).

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21   An **enterprise** can be thought of as the overall business, made up of all the individual sites or workplaces. It is defined as the smallest combination of legal units (generally based on VAT and/or PAYE records) that has a certain degree of autonomy within an enterprise group.

4.148   As with the number of enterprises, the trend in the number of local units over time is similar, with local units seeing a decline of approximately 3% between 2020 and 2022. Around 9,075 local business units exist in Huntingdonshire (Figure 4.31). The distribution of these local units across industry show a high proportion of businesses in the construction and professional, scientific and technical industries. Since 2015 a downward trend has occurred in the wholesale, information and communication, agriculture and public administration and defence, whilst there has been more substantial growth in transport and storage, accommodation and food services, construction and motor trades.

Figure 4.31 Business Counts in Huntingdonshire

Industry	2015	2022	2015 vs 2022	Trend
1 : Agriculture, forestry & fishing (A)	525	480	-9%	
2 : Mining, quarrying & utilities (B,D and E)	65	75	15%	
3 : Manufacturing (C)	545	555	2%	
4 : Construction (F)	1,005	1,245	24%	
5 : Motor trades (Part G)	275	335	22%	
6 : Wholesale (Part G)	455	380	-16%	
7 : Retail (Part G)	640	670	5%	
8 : Transport & storage (inc postal) (H)	345	510	48%	
9 : Accommodation & food services (I)	400	525	31%	
10 : Information & communication (J)	660	570	-14%	
11 : Financial & insurance (K)	155	155	0%	
12 : Property (L)	265	310	17%	
13 : Professional, scientific & technical (M)	1,290	1,275	-1%	
14 : Business administration & support services (N)	750	735	-2%	
15 : Public administration & defence (O)	120	110	-8%	
16 : Education (P)	170	190	12%	
17 : Health (Q)	395	400	1%	
18 : Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services (R,S,T and U)	520	550	6%	
Total	**8,585**	**9,075**	**6%**	

Source: UK Business Counts - local units by industry and employment size band, 2022

4.149   Although the number of local units show that Huntingdonshire has a high proportion of businesses in the construction and professional, scientific and technical industries, it is manufacturing (C) and human health and social work (Q) that employ the largest proportion of employees at 12.8% and 10.3% respectively. Manufacturing and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles account for 15.4% of employment in combination. See Figure 4.32.

Figure 4.32 Employee Jobs by Industry 2021
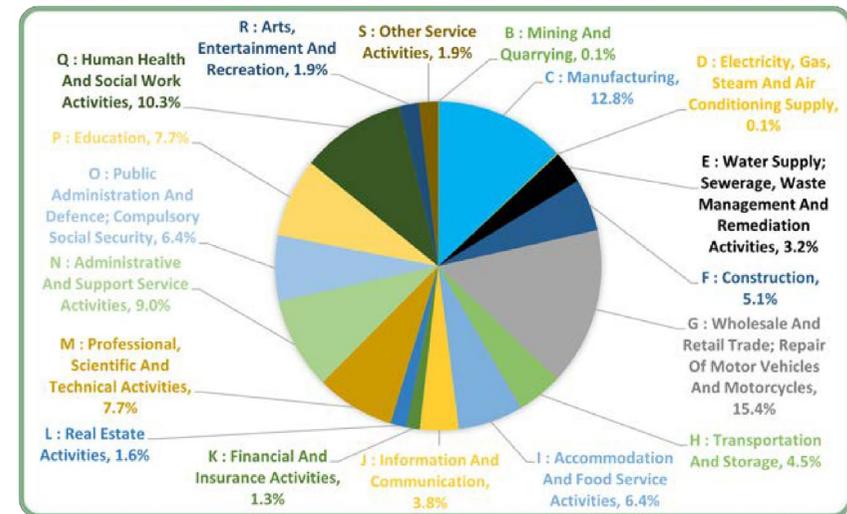
Source: Employee Jobs 2021: ONS Business Register and Employment Survey. [22]

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22   Latest data as at October 2022 was for the year 2021. The definition of employee jobs excludes self-employed, government-supported trainees and HM Forces and farm-based agriculture.

4 | A2: Collecting baseline information

4.150 Research by the Council's Economic Development team identifies that the business density is higher in the district's market towns of St Neots, Huntingdon and St Ives. Clear business clustering can also be seen around Ramsey, Sawtry and Yaxley (see Figure 4.33).

4.151 The black dots represent the location of employees (i.e. trading address/registered office). The size of the dot represents the number of employees in that place. The blue lines represent kernel density bands which show the relative density of the combined dots across the entire District demonstrating where both the number and total employees across the district are grouped closely together.

Figure 4.33 Kernel density estimations of all enterprises, scaled to number of employees
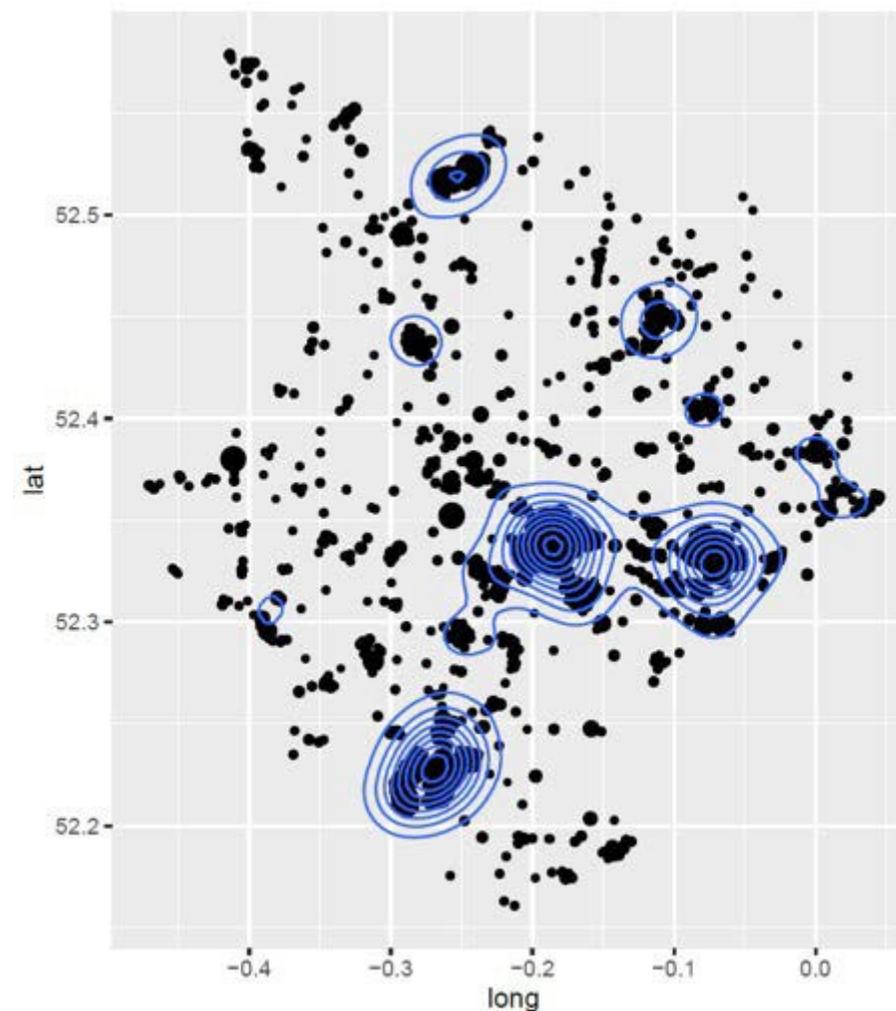
Source: FAME (2021) and IDBR (2020) data

4.152 The graphic below (Figure 4.34) shows the contribution of the main industry sectors to GVA in Huntingdonshire. Sectors with a dashed border denotes location of Knowledge Intensive (KI) subcategories[23] within the overall sectors that contain both KI and non-KI subcategories. The sectors of *manufacturing* include high-tech & life sciences; *administrative and support services* includes KI services; *professional, scientific and technical services* includes life sciences and *information and communication*, and *other service activities*, include ICT all of which are major contributors to overall GVA within the District.

Figure 4.34 Main Industry Sectors
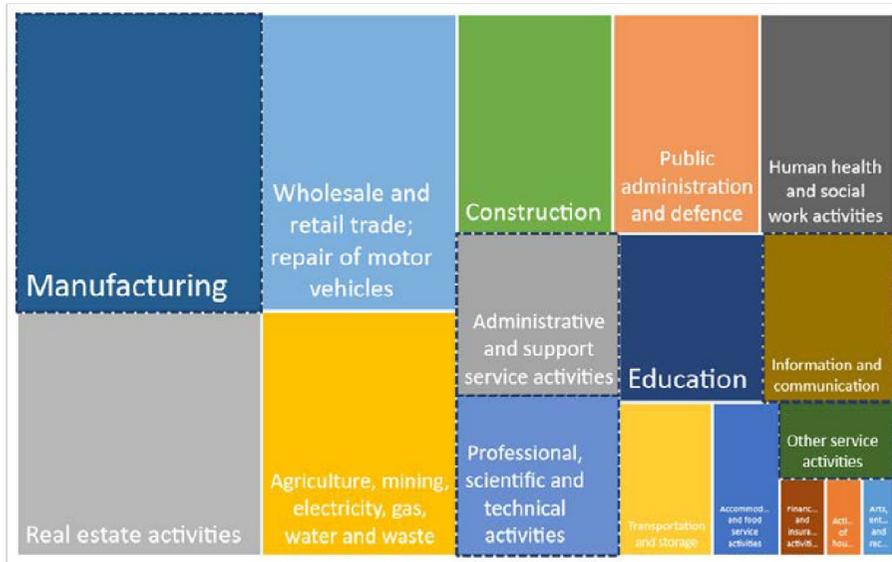
Source: ONS Regional Accounts (2018) data. GVA by subcategory is not available.

Key sustainability issues and problems

- Post-pandemic recovery: addressing the decline in the number of jobs in the district
- Supporting and maintaining a stable economy: facilitating growth of key industries by providing appropriate land for development and expansion
- Supporting rural enterprises to provide sustainable job opportunities in outside the existing employment clusters
- Addressing the post-pandemic decline in the number of enterprises in the district
- Facilitating access to higher level occupations where required across the district
- Addressing the contribution that Huntingdonshire makes to Knowledge Intensive industries
- Providing complementary enterprises to support supply chains and economic growth

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Continued decline in the number of jobs and enterprises resulting in less sustainable access to employment
- Reduced opportunity for rural enterprises to thrive, limiting employment opportunities in rural areas
- Lack of land to facilitate economic growth resulting in the loss of key industries outside the district
- Inability to to deliver sustainable development and a strong and competitive economy

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23   as defined by Cambridge Ahead's Cambridge Cluster Insights methodology: CBR Database Methodology - Companies in the wider Cambridge region 2021

4   ## A2: Collecting baseline information

Travel and Transport

4.153   Huntingdonshire has very good connections to the national and regional strategic road network including the A14, A1 and A1(M), A428, A141, A1123, A1096, A1198 and A605. In terms of rail travel, the district is bisected by the East Coast mainline railway and is served by railway stations at Huntingdon and St Neots providing services south to London St Pancras International and onwards to the South Coast and north to Peterborough where onward connections run north to Edinburgh.

4.154   High quality bus services are provided via The Busway which operates three routes within the district primarily linking Cambridge to St Ives and Huntingdon supplemented by connecting services to Peterborough and several villages. St Neots is served by buses connecting Cambridge to Bedford as well as to Huntingdon. Several bus operators provide commercial services within the district connecting villages to our

St Ives bus station

market towns and on to larger service centres in surrounding districts. Bus services in the north-east and western parts of the district are less frequent although a Ting service now covers the West Huntingdonshire area including key towns such as St Neots, Huntingdon, Sawtry and surrounding villages. The service has been introduced to West Huntingdonshire to improve transport links for those living in rural areas, removing young people's dependence on parents for lifts and allowing local residents to lessen their reliance on cars.

4.155   A variety of active travel routes are found across the district. National cycleway routes 12, 24 and 51 all run through parts of Huntingdonshire. A cycleway also runs parallel to The Busway providing an off-road route from St Ives towards Cambridge. Dedicated cycleways serve parts of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives, generally as shared routes with footpaths. Grafham Water offers a significant leisure cycling opportunity. Within towns and villages roadside pavements provide high levels of local

connectivity with footpaths often providing more direct linkages and shortcuts only available to people walking. Extensive networks of bridleways and public rights of way offer horse riding and walking opportunities throughout the district.

4.156   Waterways provide leisure travel routes around the district with several marinas facilitating long and short stays along with boat servicing and maintenance. The River Great Ouse provides a major route through St Neots, Huntingdon and St Ives and the River Nene provides routes around the northern edge of the district. The Middle Level Navigations offer a network of Fenland leisure routes.

The Waits at St Ives

4.157   A range of transport infrastructure improvement projects are underway or proposed which have the potential to significantly enhance transport opportunities and connectivity for Huntingdonshire's residents and businesses. The main projects are briefly summarised below.

4.158   Improvements to the A14 are drawing to an end with the main new carriageway section having opened in May 2020 and the previous route being reclassified as the A1307. Pathfinder Link Road connecting the eastern section of A1307 into Huntingdon ring road at Mill Common opened in October 2019. Views Common Road linking the north western section of the A1307 to Hinchingbrooke Park Road opened in September 2020. Mill

A14 bypass south of Godmanchester

Common Link Road will provide a connection between Pathfinder Link Road and the junction of Edison Bell Way near the railway station using the line of the old A14 but at lower grade. Preparation for demolition of the A14 viaduct across the East Coast mainline began in 2019 and

demolition completed in 2022. This is followed by works around Huntingdon railway station to improve the forecourt and improve connectivity between different travel modes.

4.159   The A428 between the Black Cat and Caxton Gibbet roundabouts is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project as it is a large, complex infrastructure project which needs to be brought forward under a Development Consent Order (DCO). The DCO was granted by the Secretary of State for Transport in August 2022. The proposal is to upgrade the A428 route between the Black Cat roundabout on the A1 and the Caxton Gibbet roundabout at the junction of the A428 with the A1198 which is the only remaining single carriageway stretch on the A421/ A428 route from Milton Keynes to Cambridge and a focal point for traffic congestion regularly affecting people travelling between St Neots and Cambridge. Proposed improvements include provision of a 10 mile stretch of dual carriageway, a three tier junction at the Black Cat roundabout to allow traffic to flow freely on the A1 and new junctions at Caxton Gibbet and at Cambridge Road St Neots to connect the proposed route to the existing A428. Intended works also include new bridges over the River Great Ouse and East Coast mainline railway and improved routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders that connect with existing public rights of way.

4.160   The A141 around the north of Huntingdon connects westwards to the A14 and A1 at Brampton Hut junction and eastwards to Warboys, Chatteris and onto Wisbech serving as a major route into the Fens. The road network around St Ives includes the A1123, A1096, B1040 and B1090; the Busway crosses the A1096 at the south eastern tip of the town from where the route transfers eastwards onto the formal guideway. Congestion levels can be high particularly at peak times with road safety issues and lack of safe cycling and walking routes impeding take up of active travel options. Promoted by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority options for potential improvements were published for consultation in 2021 with further consultation in 2022. The intention is for the highway works to be complemented with support for active travel and public transport improvements to aid sustainable travel options alongside reducing

congestion and improving safety on the roads. Further details of the project are expected to be developed through 2022 through a Strategic Outline Business Case.

4.161   Recent improvement to the East Coast mainline railway targeted at increasing capacity include a grade separated tunnel at Werrington, extra track and a new platform at Stevenage and track and signalling upgrades on the approach to Kings Cross. Network Rail's Eastern Region Strategic Plan (2021) sets out their delivery aspirations for 2019-24. Huntingdon: A Prospectus for Growth published by the District Council in 2020 recognises the importance of the proposal to add a railway station at Alconbury Weald and join it to the national rail network and acknowledges the challenges of doing so.

4.162   East West Rail proposes a new rail route connecting Oxford to Cambridge via Bicester, Bletchley and Bedford. From Oxford to Bedford the route involves existing and refurbished tracks, however, from Bedford to Cambridge a wholly new route is required. This is the section of greatest relevance to Huntingdonshire. A preferred route corridor has been identified; in 2021 public consultation was held on possible route alignments within this preferred corridor including suggestions for a new railway station south of St Neots or at Temspford. The proposed scheme offers opportunities for faster and better long-term connectivity for local residents to Cambridge and Bedford and beyond, investment in economic growth and new jobs and further transport infrastructure improvements joining any new railway station into St Neots and the existing railway station.

4.163   Cambridgeshire County Council published a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for consultation in 2021 which identified priority cycling and walking routes in main urban areas across the county. The plan will be used to seek funding for improvements to the walking and cycling network which focus on actions likely to significantly enhance the ability of walkers and cyclists to travel between key employment, school, leisure and shopping destinations and particularly favours routes to schools. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority are strong advocates of active travel including walking, cycling and horse riding along with micro-mobility options such as e-bikes and e-scooters. Improvement

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projects and trials of innovative travel modes are funded and supported with some as pilot projects to ascertain their suitability for use across wider areas of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

4.164   In October 2022, Cambridgeshire County Council commenced consultation on a transport strategy for Fenland and Huntingdonshire. These will provide a strategy and an action plan of schemes to address the transport challenges facing those districts, whilst also looking at sustainable access to services and a safe and healthy environment. The County Council are also consulting on an Active Travel Strategy which aims to make active travel the 'go to' option for local journeys.

4.165   Daily travel patterns have been disrupted throughout 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic with uncertainty remaining over their form and scale going forwards. Hybrid working options are impacting some previous commuting patterns, use of deliveries has affected shopping trip patterns and changes to use of cars, public transport, cycling and walking both for business and leisure have yet to settle down into new routines. There is limited data availability at district level with most being published at county or wider areas.

4.166   The Department for Transport (DfT) produce some statistics at individual district level which provide indications of the levels of accessibility residents experience to key services and facilities. These indicate that in 2019 85% of Huntingdonshire's primary school pupils lived within 15 minutes walking or public transport distance and 97% were within 30 minutes. In contrast just 18% of secondary school students were within 15 minutes by walking or public transport. However, 74% were calculated as being within 15 minutes by cycle based on 16 kms/h; it is noted that this seems extremely high given some of the traveling distances involved particularly from western parts of Huntingdonshire into catchment schools in Huntingdon and St Neots and from many villages into Ramsey. DfT statistics also indicated that in 2019 17% of Huntingdonshire's households were within 15 minutes walking or public transport time of a town centre, 45% of households were within 15 minutes cycle distance of a town centre and 76% within 30 minutes cycle distance. In terms of traveling to work, the DfT consider access for the population aged between 16 and 74. Of this group some 77% are within 15 minutes walking or public transport travel

of an employment centre offering between 100 and 499 jobs with 85% within 15 minutes by cycle. Access to larger employment centres offering between 500 and 4,999 jobs can be obtained within 15 minutes walking or public transport travel for 66% of the group and by cycle for 85%.

Key sustainability issues and problems

- Huntingdonshire is well located in terms of the strategic road network creating pressure from logistics businesses for new sites and generating high levels of road based through travel and locally generated car travel
- A variety of road and active travel infrastructure improvements are proposed which may reduce congestion, improve journey times and increase the attractiveness of active travel modes for journeys
- The district's semi-rural nature means some parts are relatively remote which increases reliance on private vehicles and engenders viability challenges for public transport; the distances involved can make walking and cycling unattractive options for many journeys

What may happen without a Local Plan

- An increase in developments reliant upon the strategic road network may arise
- Encouragement of infrastructure provision for active travel would be more dependent upon countywide or national policies
- Reduced coordination with local and strategic transport infrastructure providers impacting on effective cooperation and timely provision of interdependent infrastructure and other developments

Digital Infrastructure and Communications

4.167 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 allows residents to access online services, such as banking and retail, to promote home working and to gain access to essential emergency services. 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 smaller population sizes.

4.168 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.

4.169 Data from Ofcom's Connected Nations update: Spring 2019 sets out the most recent information on mobile and broadband connectivity. Connection speeds reflective of standard broadband speeds between 10Mb to 20Mb for uploads and downloads, are only really 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). The rollout of full fibre connections is the next stage in improving internet reliability and speed; it uses fibre-optic cables replacing the old copper connections. Speeds with full fibre connectivity can reach speeds of one gigabit per second[24]. Broadband connectivity in Huntingdonshire is as follows:

- Percentage of premises that have Superfast Broadband (SFBB, 30Mbit/s to less than 300Mbit/s) coverage - 40.8%
- Percentage of premises that have Ultrafast Broadband (UFBB, 300Mbit/s or greater) coverage - 54.8%
- Percentage of premises that have coverage from a full fibre service - 3%
- Percentage of premises that do not have access to services above 30Mbit/s - 4.4%

4.170 Across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough the type and availability of services is variable, in 2019 Fenland district saw the highest percentage of properties with access to full fibre (26.3%), whilst Cambridge demonstrates the majority of properties have access to Ultrafast Broadband (87.5%), see Figure 4.35.

Figure 4.35 Broadband availability as a percentage of all premises

24   https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/features-and-news/full-fibre-future
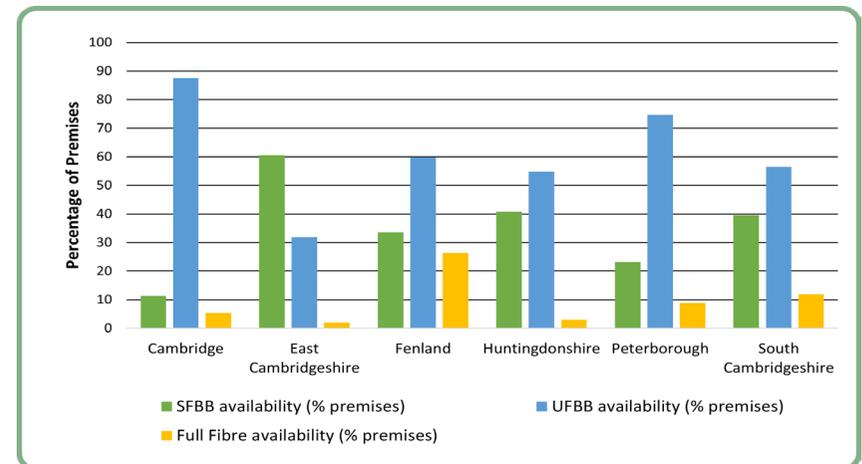
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4.171   The most recent data from Ofcom (2019) demonstrates that the rollout of Ultra-Fast broadband connections is mostly centred around the more urban areas in the district (Map 4.8). Whilst largely rural areas show that Ultra-Fast broadband is not readily available, some rollout has occurred.

Map 4.8 Pecentage of properties with Ultra-Fast Broadband
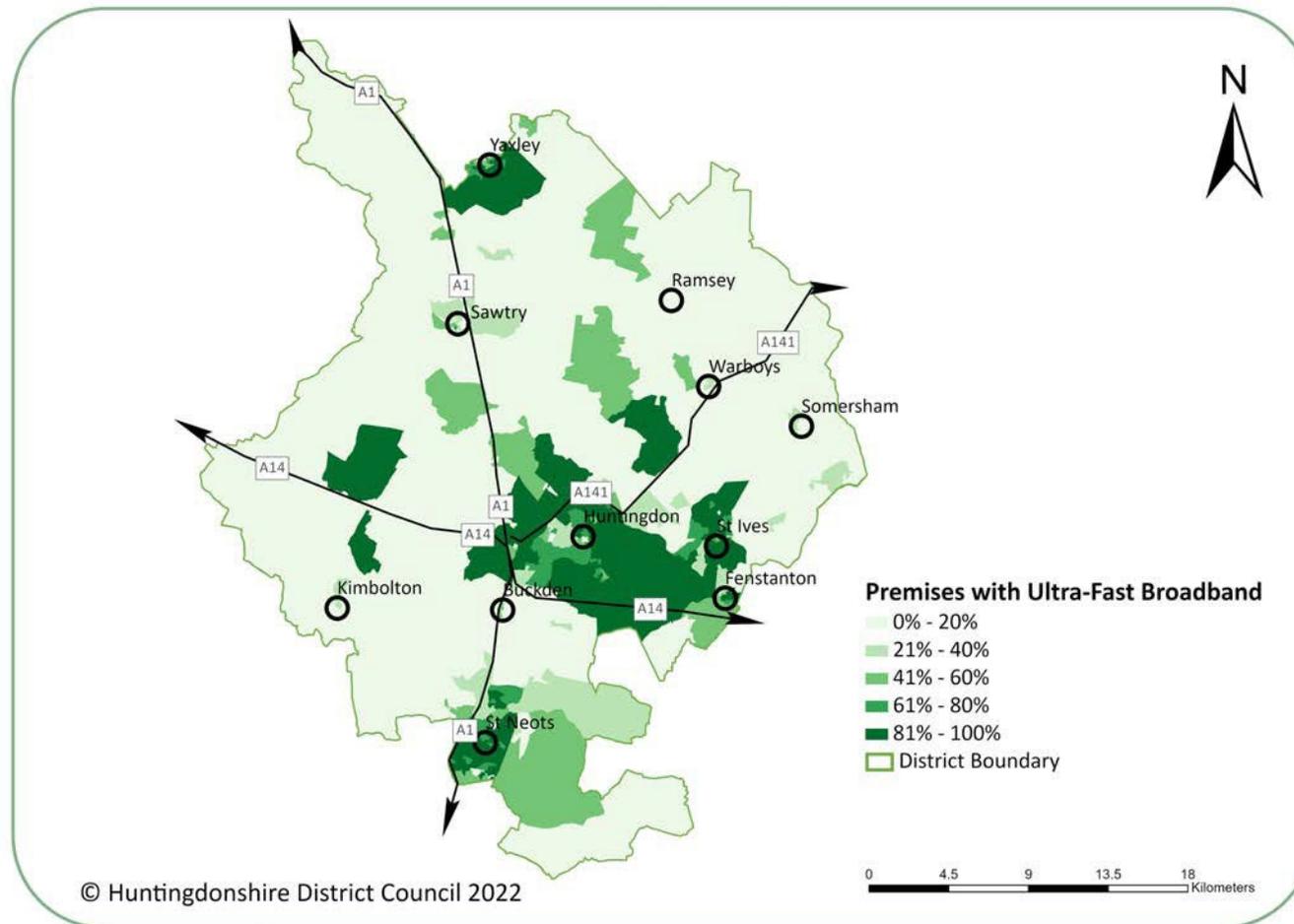
Source: Ofcom: Connected Nations update: Spring 2019 - Fixed Local and Unitary Authority Data

4.172 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[25].

4.173 Figure 4.36 below shows the percentage of local authority area and the number of providers that provide indoor access to the 4G network. Data from Ofcom's Connected Nations update: Spring 2019 shows that indoor 4G coverage with an adequate choice of providers (all operators) has not yet been fully implemented across the whole of Huntingdonshire (only 68.92% of the district), meaning the choice of available network providers and as such the cost options available to residents, reflecting the range of people on varying incomes that can access mobile service provision varies across the district. This is reflective of the rural nature of the district, all round provision across the district is lagging behind the more urban authorities of Cambridge and Peterborough.

Figure 4.36 Number of 4G providers that provide indoor 4G networks by Local Authority
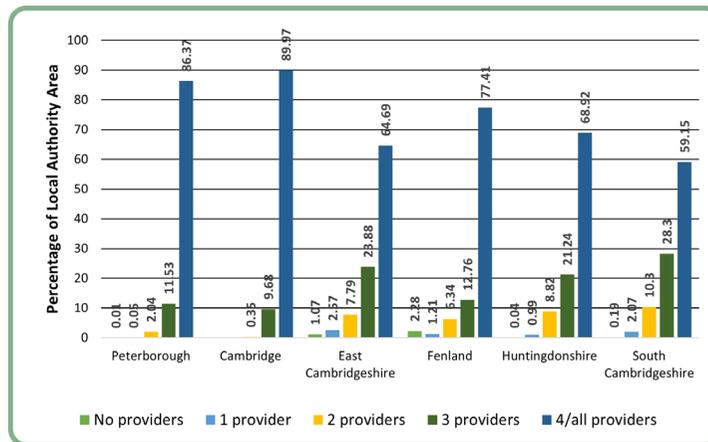
4.174 In contrast however, Ofcom's Connected Nations update: Spring 2019 shows that outdoor 4G provision in Huntingdonshire is much more achievable:

- Percentage of geographic area that can receive a 4G signal (indoor) from all operators - 68.92% , 21.24% from 3 operators, 8.82% from 2 operators, 0.99% from 1 operator
- Percentage of premises that (outdoor) that receive a 4G signal from all mobile operators - 95.27%
- Percentage of geographic area that can receive a 4G signal (outdoor) from all operators - 97.1%

Note: all operators refers to four mobile network providers: EE, O2, Vodaphone 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.

4.175 A number of improvements have been made in the district through the Connecting Cambridgeshire Strategy including:

- Upgrades in Spaldwick from superfast to gigabit broadband in July 2021 following a successful Community Fibre Partnership with Openreach using the Government's Gigabit Broadband Voucher scheme to fund the installation of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) to the majority of premises. FFTP allows every single building the opportunity to access ultrafast speeds up to 900 Mbps, resulting in improved reliability and faster speeds at affordable prices (page 5)
- Expansion of CambWifi across Huntingdonshire's market towns allowing free public access to Wifi in public buildings, village halls and community sites (page 6)
- "Smart market towns Digital totems are being installed in Huntingdon town centre to display useful information for residents and visitors about what's on, shopping, and travel options, which will also be accessible via mobile phones." (page 9)

Source: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Digital Connectivity Strategy 2021-2025

25   Matt Warman's Keynote Speech at Connected Britain 2020, 23 September 2020

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Key sustainability issues and problems

- Reducing inequality, economic opportunity and vital access to services via digital infrastructure
- Reducing social exclusion by providing improved access to improved online services especially in rural areas
- Enabling businesses and rural businesses to thrive through improved broadband and mobile coverage
- Decreasing rural isolation through improved broadband and mobile coverage

What may happen without a Local Plan

- The lack of improved broadband and mobile coverage in rural areas will continue to create a divide between rural and urban areas
- Social inclusion, economic opportunity and maintaining and developing successful enterprises in rural locations will be difficult to achieve

Retail and Town Centres

4.176   Huntingdonshire sits within a largely rural district, key retail, services and facilities are largely based around the four market towns of Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey, acting as service centres for nearby settlements (Huntingdonshire contains one other town, Godmanchester.) Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 also identified seven further settlements that were considered to provide a healthy concentration of services and facilities that could provide services to other nearby communities, these are: Buckden, Fenstanton, Kimbolton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys and Yaxley.

4.177   The market towns of Huntingdon and St Neots also provide additionality in the form of 'Out-of-Town' Retail parks. These out of town retail parks provide access to more specialised retail such as hardware and DIY stores, warehouse retailing, garden centres, furniture stores etc. where a larger store footprint is required and car use to transport goods is more essential due to the nature of the items purchased. This can provide an offer to the wider area and is a signifier of a larger settlement. The most notable retail parks include:

- Stukeley Road Retail Park, Huntingdon
- Huntingdon Retail Park, Huntingdon
- Quora Retail Park, St Neots
- Abbey Retail Park, St Ives

St Ives, Market Hill

Quora Retail Park, St Neots

4.178   Further work is underway by the Council to enhance the market towns in Huntingdonshire. The Council has secured funding from the Government's Future High Streets Fund, £12.8 million is anticipated to be invested in St Neots town centre. The investment will deliver six projects, transforming the market town for the benefit of local people, businesses, and visitors. Construction associated to the six projects is expected to commence in 2023.

4.179   The Council is working on a Market Towns Programme to develop interventions to improve the town centres of Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey is also underway. Studies and baseline reports have been commissioned by the Council which have informed a 'masterplan' for each area outlining interventions to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centres. These masterplans have been out for consultation during the Autumn of 2022. The Masterplans follow on from previous work on the 'Prospectus for Growth' documents which identified a vision and key objectives to enhance the three market towns.

4.180   The 2021 Baseline Reports for Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey identify a number of key insights into the health of the town centres and retail. The reports identify that footfall in Huntingdon and St Ives is strongly concentrated between 8am and 5pm. In Huntingdon the night-time economy only accounts for around 10% - 12% of total quarterly expenditure, seemingly limited in comparison to the size of the town. St Ives' evening economy however accounted for 20% of daily spend in 2020 and retail spend is reported to rely more on attracting residents from other towns and visitors to the area than the towns of Huntingdon and Ramsey. In fact Ramsey exhibits a very small evening economy with 70% of retail spend coming from people living within 10km of the town.

4.181   In Huntingdon St Benedict's Court (comprising 29 commercial units) has been unsuccessful in finding a tenant for the former Waitrose unit (Unit 15); the 2,538 sq. m. unit has lain empty since 2017. The impact of more recent Permitted Development Orders on the health of the high streets are also currently unknown; these include:

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- the amendment to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987[26] in July 2020 which consolidated a number of uses, including but not limited to uses such as shops, restaurants, financial services, offices, indoor sports and fitness facilities, certain types of medical and health services and nurseries to a single Commercial, Business and Service Class E use; and
- the amendment to the General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015[27] which allows for the change of use of Class E properties to residential (limitations/exemptions apply).

4.182   In the wider Huntingdonshire area the Baseline reports (using CoStar data) identified that retail market values in 2021 fell below £200 per square foot, whilst market yields have increased since 2018 to 6.9%, this expected to increase to over 7% in 2022. Yields for retail space in Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey were estimated in 2021 to be 8.5%, 9% and 9.5% respectively. These figures are reflective of a good secondary high street location (Knight Frank Yield Guide notes that good secondary high street retail locations are generally achieving yields in the order of 8.25% - 8.50%, whilst secondary/tertiary retail high streets are achieving yields of circa 10%).

4.183   It is well known that the use of online retailing services increased during the pandemic. The Office of National Statistics notes that there has been a continuing decline in online retail spending which peaked in February 2021 (36.8%). Whilst the online spending represented 26.9% in November 2021, this does however still remain far higher than the proportion of online retail spending in February 2020 before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which was 19.7%. [28]. The general trends towards increasing online sales has had a marked effect on high streets across the country[29].

Key sustainability issues and problems

- Increase in retail/ town centre use vacancies in key locations that provide accessible sustainable access to leisure, services and retail, impacting on social and economic health of the district
- Potential contraction of the high street and detrimental impacts on business viability
- Perceived safety threats from vacant units and low activity levels potentially creating inhospitable and unsafe neighbourhoods
- Ensuring high streets in the district provide easy access to leisure, services and retail

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Decline of the high street and retail centres
- Decrease in viability for remaining high street businesses due to reduced high street 'offer'
- Lack of sustainable access to leisure, services, retail and centralised employment opportunities
- Increased perception of unsafe neighbourhoods

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26   Through The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020
27   Introduced through Class MA of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development etc.) (England) (Amendment) Order 2021
28   Source: ONS, Retail Sales, Great Britain, November 2021
29   The Royal Society for Public Health's study Health on the High Street 2019 - Running on Empty

Tourism and Leisure

4.184   Huntingdonshire has a smaller tourism sector than other parts of the county such as Cambridge and Peterborough but it is diverse and widely spread across the district. Due to the predominately rural nature of the district, tourist attractions are comparatively modest in nature but do nevertheless contribute to the local economy.

4.185   There is limited up to date data at local authority level on tourism, the Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS) is however a useful resource to gain an insight into tourism trends. The GBTS is a national consumer survey measuring the volume and value of domestic overnight tourism trips taken by residents in Great Britain and provides detailed information about trip and visitor characteristics. Data from the most recently published report and survey have been extracted for Huntingdonshire and other Cambridgeshire authorities to gain an insight into the trends up to 2019 in the tourism sector [30].

4.186   The most recently published data from the GBTS shows that on average, between 2017 and 2019, 1.38 million trips were taken each year to Cambridgeshire, of which 198,000 where to Huntingdonshire. These equated to 3.75 million nights per year to Cambridgeshire and 560,000 nights per year to Huntingdonshire. The annual value of these trips were £210 million and £28 million respectively [31]. As shown in Figure 4.37, only Cambridge and Peterborough had a higher number of trips and higher annual value for them. Most trips within Huntingdonshire and also across Cambridgeshire were to visit family and friends.

4.187   The impact of the pandemic on levels of domestic and localised tourism remains to be seen. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that as a result of the pandemic, people will be visiting more local tourist attractions and undertake leisure pursuits closer to home. As restrictions relating to international travel cease, the longer term impact on local tourism destinations will be more apparent.

Figure 4.37 Average number of trips, nights and money spent for all Cambridgeshire authorities 2017-2019

	Cambridge	East Cambridgeshire	Fenland	Huntingdonshire	Peterborough	South Cambridgeshire
Trips (in millions)	0.510	0.109	0.102	0.198	0.322	0.143
Nights (in millions)	1.257	0.237	0.250	0.562	1.047	0.399
Spending (millions £)	90	11	15	28	45	19

Cambridgeshire authorities average for 2017-2019
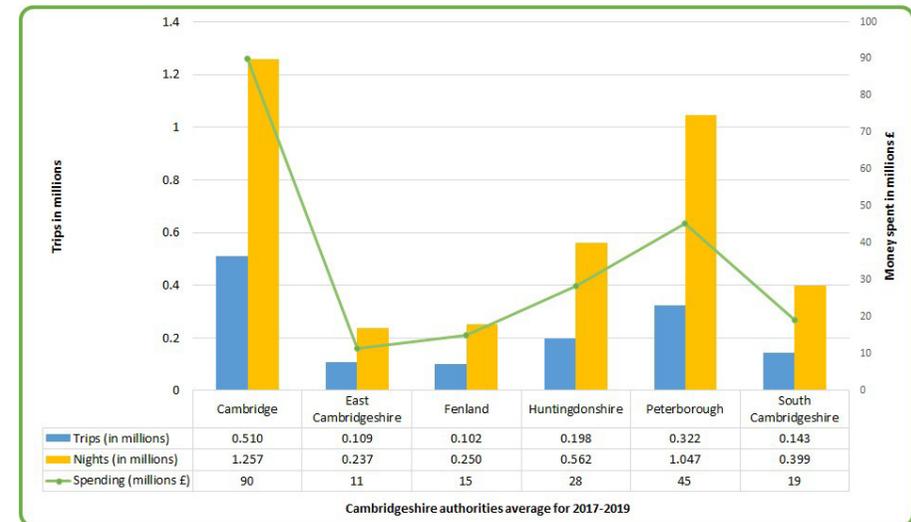
4.188   Due to the abundance of wildlife sites, strategic green infrastructure areas and variety of landscapes found across the district, Huntingdonshire's tourism sector is primarily nature and conservation based with opportunities to enjoy the wildlife and undertake leisure pursuits such as walking, cycling and water based activities.

4.189   Huntingdonshire has an extensive public rights of way (PROW) network enabling access to the countryside and to leisure opportunities. There are also three national cycle routes that run through parts of the district, these

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30   The survey is undertaken continuously throughout the year, however, there has been a disruption to this due to the coronavirus pandemic. Fieldwork resumed in April 2021 with plans to publish results in the Autumn of 2022.

31   The GBTS 2019 Annual Report is available from Visit Britain's website , on page 121 of the report (table 2.8 – Local authority destination and purpose) there is a link to download Local Authority data

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are routes 12, 24 and 51. Route 12 runs in sections from Enfield Lock in north London to Spalding via Stevenage, St Neots and Peterborough. This route connects to the Grafham Water circular route. Route 24 is a traffic route on the network and is found south of St Ives heading through Fenstanton. Route 51 is a long-distance cycling route that connects several cities in southern England, on its route from Oxford to the coast at Felixstowe, it runs through Huntingdonshire via St Neots, Huntingdon and St Ives. A cycleway also runs parallel to The Busway route from St Ives towards Cambridge where access to and views across the Great Ouse Valley landscape character area can be enjoyed.

4.190   The River Great Ouse provides recreational opportunities for water based sports and past times with a long distance footpath extending the whole length of the area. The numerous lakes, linked by the river provide boating and canoeing opportunities along with fishing, walking and wildlife viewing. Sensitive restoration of many gravel workings has enabled them to blend successfully into the landscape as nature reserves and fishing lakes, Paxton Pits is an example. There are several marinas across the district such at Buckden, Huntingdon, Hartford which provide a range of fixed and floating moorings to suit the majority of craft types found on inland waterways. Huntingdon Boathaven also provides caravan pitches for camping and caravanning trips as does the Crystal Lakes leisure and fishing park in Fenstanton.

4.191   Grafham Water attracts thousands of visitors throughout the year for walking, cycling and watching wildlife at the Wildlife Trust nature reserve, as well as attending events such as triathlons and fishing competitions. It is home to an array of wildlife with 170 species of birds recorded there.

River Great Ouse   **Sailing at Grafham Water**

4.192   The Great Fen is a strategic habitat restoration project of national significance. As well as the environmental benefits of the project, it is promoting the eco-tourism sector within the district. There are several key sites to visit namely Ramsey Heights Nature Reserve, Woodwalton Fen, Holme Fen and New Decoy. There are walks and trails, there is also an electric all-terrain electric Tramper which is available to hire for those with mobility issues. Another key aim of the project is to celebrate and preserve the fenland heritage through education and outreach programmes.

4.193   Another aspect of Huntingdonshire's tourism sector is the historic environment. There is an abundance of historic buildings and structures found across the district, as well as villages that have retained their historic form and historic landscapes, monuments and registered parks and gardens.

4.194   There are several key attractions found across the district, a sample are: Houghton Mill, a working 18th-century watermill and campsite managed by the National Trust; Huntingdon Race Course which hosts a number of national horse racing events every year with dining and hospitality services; Hamerton Zoo, a popular attraction for families with its collection of rare and endangered animals; the ruins of Ramsey Abbey managed by the National Trust; and Elton Hall and its gardens.

4.195 The market towns provide the greatest draw for tourism due to the concentration and mix of restaurants, cafes, shops and built heritage as well as their connecting routes out in to the countryside. The River Great Ouse flows through or around all towns but Ramsey which has routes out into the Fenland landscape. Each of Huntingdonshire's market towns have their own museum: the Norris Museum in St Ives, the St Neots Museum, the Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon, and Ramsey Rural Museum. The Cromwell Museum was recorded as being the 15th most visited free attraction in the East of England for 2020 [32]. These museums are frequently involved in local history events and weekends and visited by schools. Huntingdon and St Ives also have weekly markets with all market towns hosting farmer or themed markets throughout the year.

4.196 Improvements to the tourism and leisure offer within the market towns are underway through the District Council's Market Towns Programme .

Houghton Mill and the River Great Ouse

Key sustainability issues and problems

- The conservation of wildlife and landscapes are not harmed through tourism and leisure pursuits
- Tourism and leisure play an important role in people's health and well being so needs to be accessible to all
- Growth places additional demand on existing tourist attractions and leisure facilities
- Local tourist attractions and leisure facilities contribute towards the local economy and supports local communities through employment, voluntary opportunities and celebrating local heritage and past times

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Development may take place without adequate assessment on the additional demand they will place on existing tourist attractions, strategic green infrastructure and leisure facilities
- Development may be located in locations that are not accessible by walking and cycling to tourist attractions, strategic green space and leisure facilities
- Opportunities for the improvement or expansion of existing tourist attractions may not be realised

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32   Visit England's Annual Survey of Visits to Visitor Attractions: Latest results

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Community Services and Facilities

4.197   The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 states that healthy communities require shared spaces and community facilities to promote social interaction and healthy lifestyles. It identifies local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship (Paragraph 93 a). This section will focus on those spaces that have not been covered in other sections - i.e. libraries, community centres, town and village centres and public houses.

4.198   The library provision in the district is centered primarily in the market towns and larger villages (see Map 4.9). There are eight libraries in total plus two community libraries in Brampton and Somersham. Libraries are important community centres, often including more than just library services with activities and events, volunteering, community support, and Local Authority services among the services offered.

4.199   According to Cambridgeshire Insight's Library Data, 31,356 people attended 2,118 event dates hosted by Huntingdonshire's eight libraries in 2019. Between April 2018 and December 2019 the District's libraries were visited 830,616 times. Buckden Library received the least visits with 13,653, whilst Huntingdon Library received the most with 321,310. These attendance figures highlight the key role libraries play as community centres.

4.200   As of April 2022 there were two mobile library services operating in the district - Fenland and Huntingdonshire mobile libraries. Mobile libraries increase accessibility to services allowing those who cannot travel to the main libraries to benefit from the service. The two mobile libraries operate monthly or twice monthly visits to over 113 stops throughout the district. Overall, library services can be accessed in 68 out 81 parishes in the District.

4.201   Community centres, village halls and other halls, for example church halls or scout halls - are vital meeting places that provided indoor space for a variety of purposes, such as pre-school and after school activities, parish meetings, sports activities, community support groups as well as other social events throughout the year.

4.202   As of April 2022, community centres (which may also include public services) were located in the market towns and some of the district's larger villages, whilst village halls were located in villages in rural areas, ensuring the availability of these spaces throughout the district (see Map 4.10). There are approximately 68 identified village halls in the district; work is currently underway through the Huntingdonshire Built Facility Strategy to assess the 'offer', demand for the halls, quality and accessibility.

Map 4.9 Library Provision in Huntingdonshire

© Huntingdonshire District Council 2022
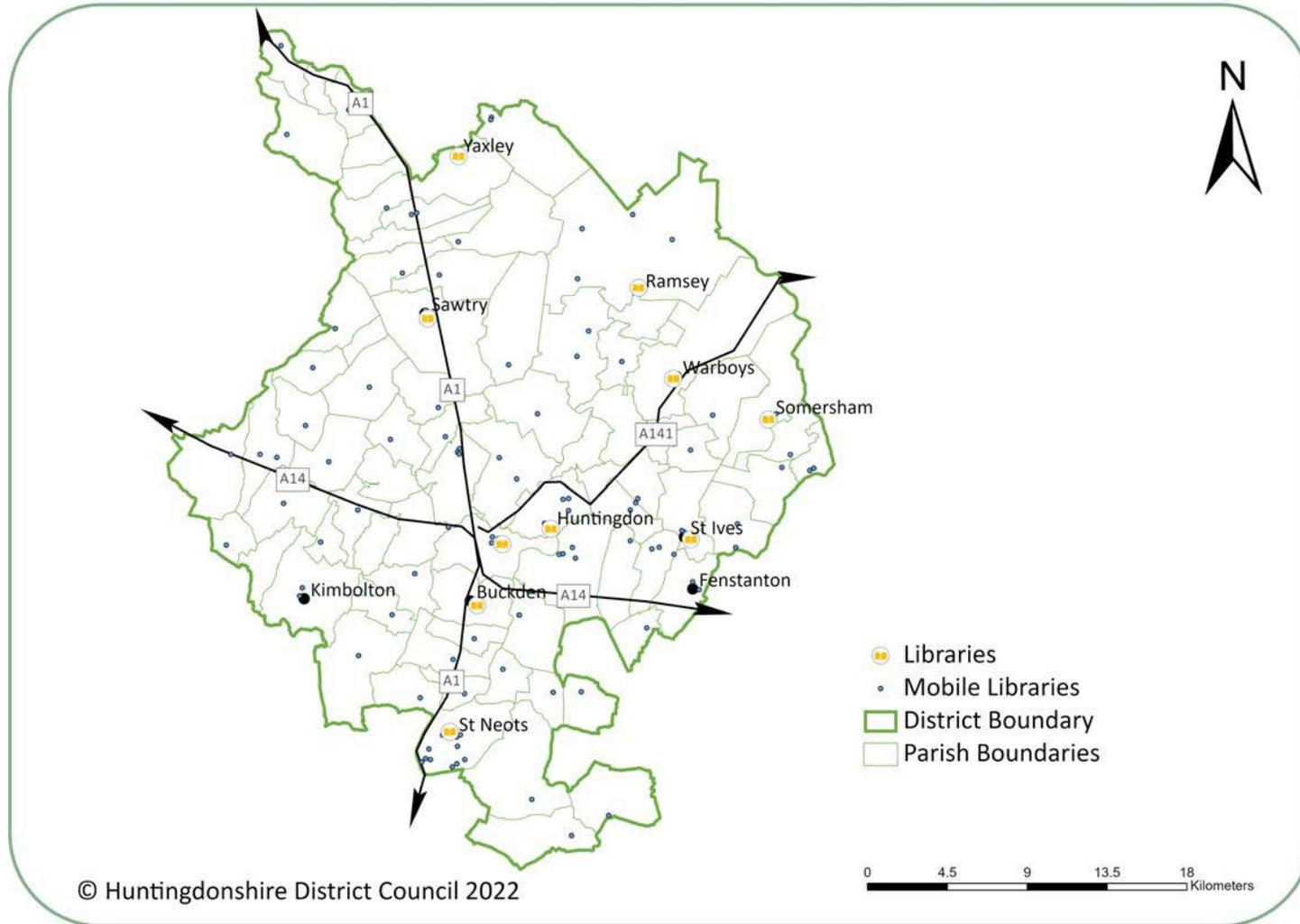
4   **A2: Collecting baseline information**

Map 4.10 Community Facilities in Huntingdonshire
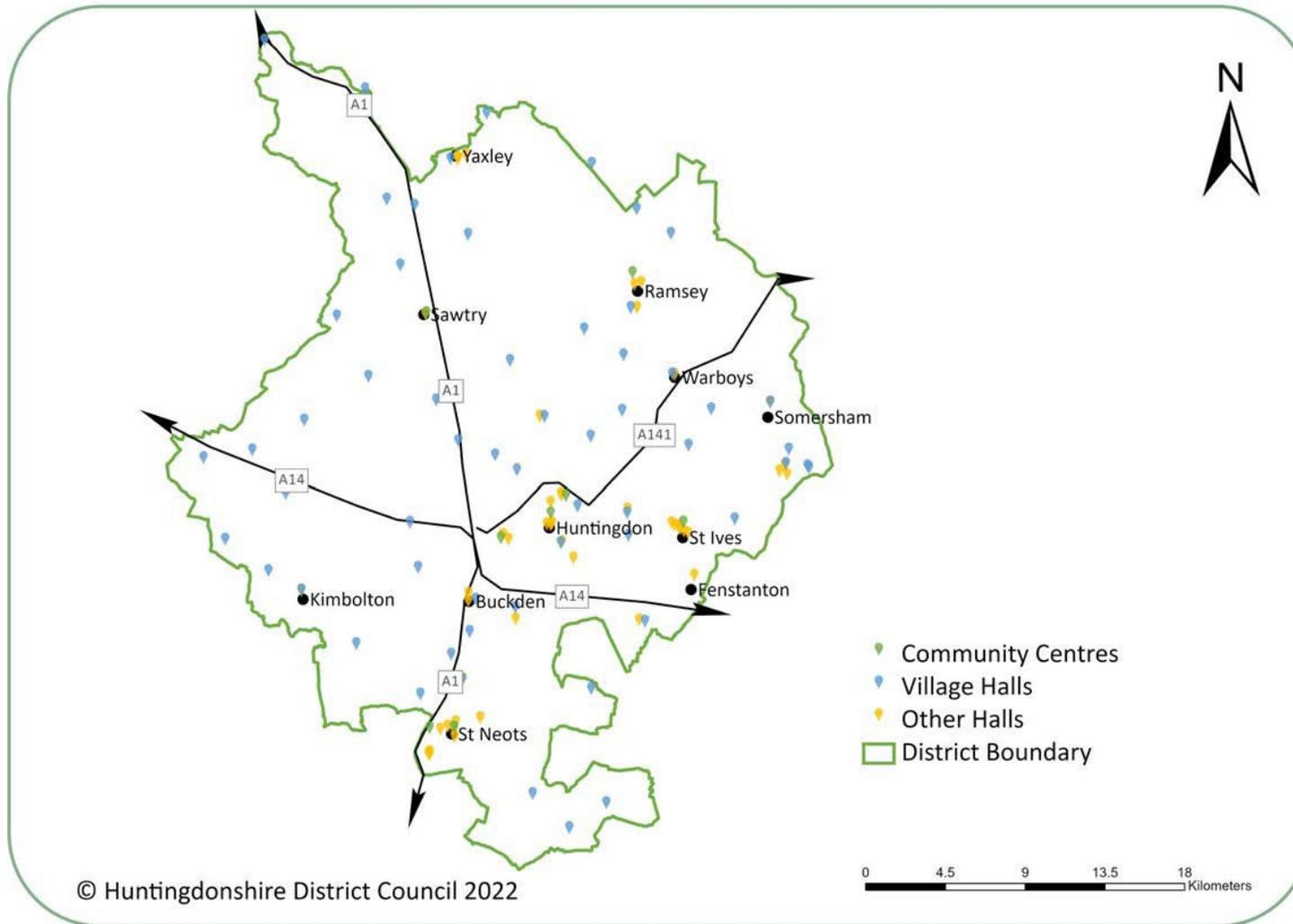
4.203 The Community Right to Bid aims to keep valued buildings or land in use by a community. Local community groups can nominate buildings or other land to be included on the Council's list of Assets of Community Value. To be classed as an Asset the building or land should contribute to the community's social well-being or social interests. Once on the register, if an asset is put up for sale or lease, community groups are given a moratorium period of six months to determine if they can raise the finance to purchase or lease the land or building, delaying sale on the open market and allowing the community the time to potentially buy the Asset for their community.

4.204 As of October 2022, there were 28 Assets of Community Value on the Council's *List of Community Assets*. The assets were registered by 14 different town or parish councils and one by the Huntingdonshire Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). Little Paxton and Houghton and Wyton Parish Councils have registered the most assets - eight and six respectively. Six parishes registered 1 asset; whilst St Neots has registered 3, Great Gransden 2, and Hemmingford Grey 4.

4.205 Sixteen of the community asset nominations are located in small settlements, reflecting the difficulty of maintaining services; a further 11 are located in Spatial Planning Areas - specifically Godmanchester, St Neots and Little Paxton. Public houses are by far the most commonly registered community asset. The types of registered Assets of Community Value are shown in Figure 4.38.

Figure 4.38 Assets of Community Value - Oct 2022
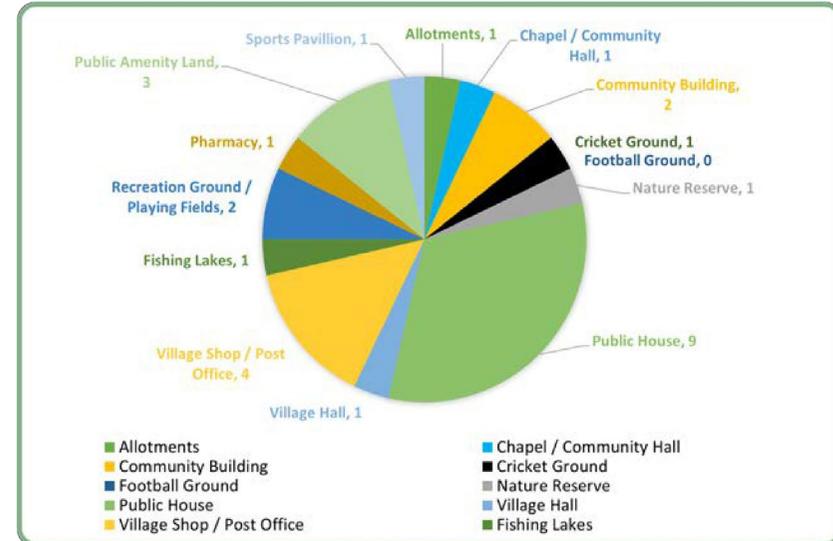
4.206 Public houses are considered to provide a number of benefits to the community, presenting themselves as community hubs where people can gather and share ideas and trades, meet new people and socialise. As of April 2022, 29 pubs across 14 parishes had closed in the district since 2012 according to the Campaign for Real Ale What Pub? webpage. This is an important loss as according to the same organisation there were 155 pubs in the district as at April 2022. Public houses were therefore in decline prior to the recent Covid-19 pandemic, the effects of which on the financial stability of these community facilities has yet to be determined. The current situation is illustrated further by the fact that Public Houses are the most commonly registered Assets of Community Value - 9 in total and spread over 9 different settlements, highlighting their value and precarity across the district.

4   A2: Collecting baseline information

Key sustainability issues and problems

- Availability of multi-use community spaces where people can gather
- Sustainable access to services and facilities across the district
- Retention of and long-term sustainability of community services and facilities

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Development in areas without access to services and facilities
- Loss of existing services and facilities
- Increasing reliance on motorised transport for access to services and facilities
- Access to services for the ageing population

Education

4.207 Good quality education contributes to the creation of sustainable communities by reducing inequality and deprivation and providing more future economic opportunity for children. Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) is the education authority, in Huntingdonshire they oversee 7 infant schools, 7 junior schools, 49 primary schools, 7 secondary schools (all with a sixth-form) and 3 schools that specialise in Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (see Map 4.11). Catchment areas allow for Huntingdonshire pupils to be educated in the district but some families choose to school their children outside the district. Huntingdonshire has one public school provider, Kimbolton School for boys and girls with currently 1,100 pupils aged 4 to 18 years.

4.208 The following secondary schools and further education providers are available in Huntingdonshire:

- Abbey College, Ramsey - secondary and sixth form
- Cambridge Regional College, Huntingdon - sixth form/further education provider
- Ernulf Academy, Eynesbury - secondary and sixth form
- Hinchingbrooke School, Huntingdon - secondary and sixth form
- Longsands Academy, St Neots - secondary and sixth form
- Kimbolton School - preparatory, secondary and sixth form
- St Ivo School, St Ives - secondary and sixth form
- St Peters School, Huntingdon - secondary and sixth form
- Sawtry Village Academy, Sawtry - secondary and sixth form

4.209 Huntingdonshire Regional College merged with Cambridge Regional College to become Cambridge Regional College in 2017. The college provides post-GCSE programmes, further education qualifications and some higher education courses. T Levels started being rolled out in September 2020 which are equivalent to 3 A levels developed in collaboration with employers and businesses combining classroom and on the job training.

4.210 CCC's Cambridgeshire's 0-19 Education Organisation Plan 2021-2022 (Page 64) identified that the average annual cohort size of Huntingdonshire residents attending sixth forms or sixth form college provision in the period 2016-18 was 860. Of those 9% travelled to Cambridge City or South Cambridgeshire, 1.7% travelled to Peterborough and 0.3% to Fenland. For Further Education in the same time period the cohort was 570, of these 32.2% went to providers in Cambridge City or South Cambridgeshire, 20.1% went to Peterborough and 17.3% outside Cambridgeshire (for example Bedford) and 0.4% to Fenland. It is expected that future planned provision in the district and through new developments such as Alconbury Weald will meet future needs to 2036.

4.211 Huntingdonshire has three schools that specialise in Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND):

- Riverside Meadows Academy, St Neots - Secondary School
- Samuel Pepys School, Eynesbury - Pre-school, Primary and Secondary (ages 2 to 19)
- Spring Common Academy, Huntingdon - Pre-school, Primary and Secondary School (ages 2 to 19)

4.212 These schools provide specialist, tailored education to pupils who have severe or complex learning difficulties, disabilities, or have additional needs such as medical, social, emotional, behavioural and sensory or physical, or those who require modification to the curriculum and personalised learning approaches. Improvements have been made to the Spring Common Academy to address issues with suitable accommodation; the Samuel Pepys School in St Neots is currently operating at capacity. As a result the County Council has identified a project to expand the school by 63 places, this is due to be fulfilled by September 2023. Further SEND provision will be required as a due to the development at Alconbury Weald, this is anticipated to be addressed by the building of an 'Area Special School' (Prestely Wood) containing 150 places covering the ages of 2 to 19 and be run by the Spring Common Academy Trust [33].

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33   CCC's Cambridgeshire's 0-19 Education Organisation Plan 2021-2022 (pages 70-71)

4 | A2: Collecting baseline information

Map 4.11 Cambridgeshire County Council provided schools across Huntingdonshire

Huntingdonshire Schools
- Schools that specialise in Special Education Needs and Disabilities
- Secondary School + Sixth Form
- Primary School
- Junior School
- Infant School
- Market Towns and Key Service Centres
- District Boundary

© Huntingdonshire District Council 2022
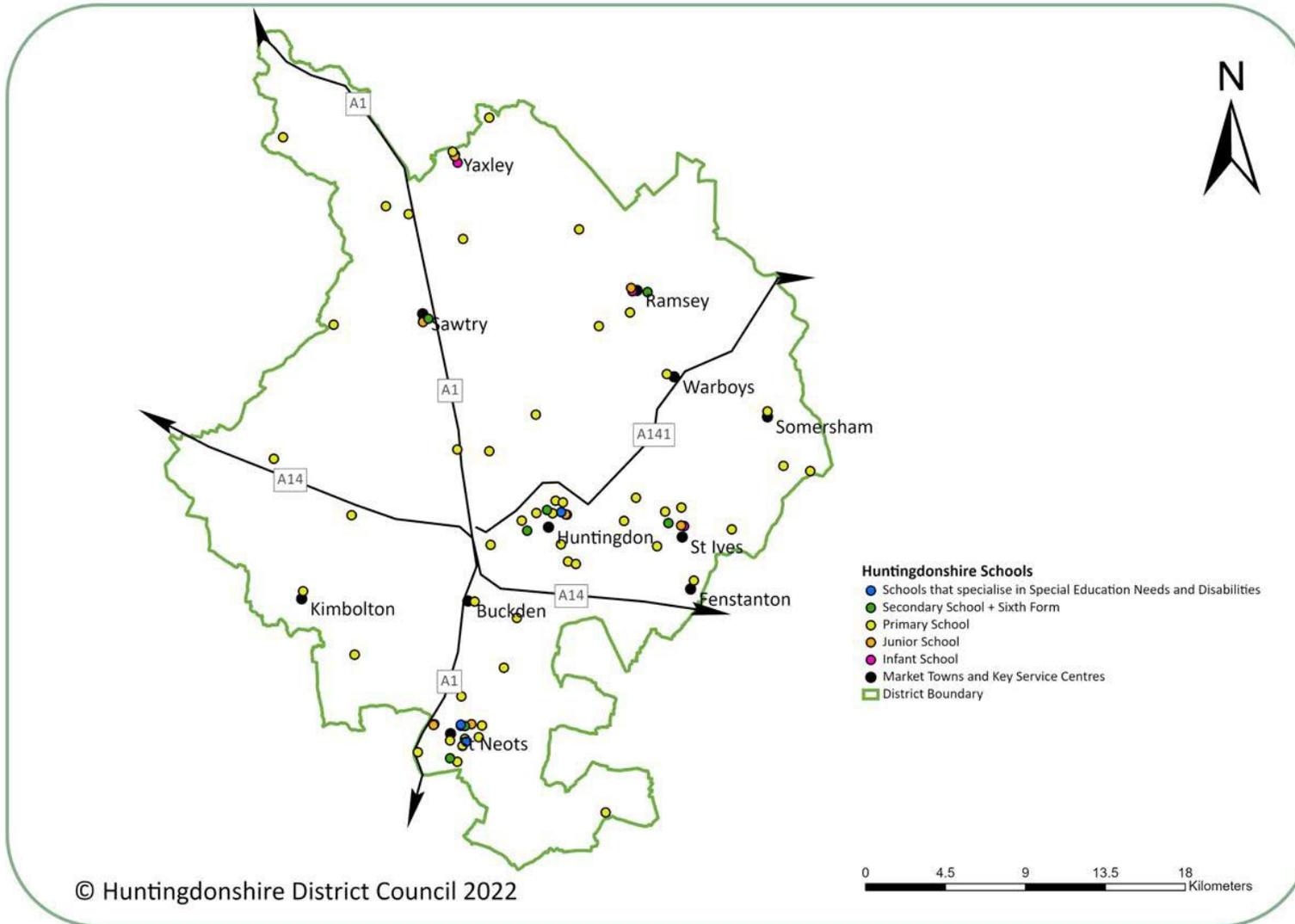
4.213   Local childcare is a particular requirement for those with young children. CCC's statutory responsibility in respect of early years and childcare includes: securing sufficient, accessible, flexible and affordable childcare to enable parents to work or to undertake education or training which could lead to employment. A directory of childcare providers can be found on the County Council's website. Provision of sufficient pre-school and nursery facilities allows families to return to work (where possible or wanted) and help to draw people with young children to an area, thus helping to stimulate the economy and improve the prosperity of residents. 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.

4.214   Figure 4.39 shows that since 2011 Huntingdonshire has seen an increase in the percentage of residents aged 16 to 64 who have qualifications equivalent to and including NVQ level 1 and above [34]. In particular, the percentage of those with an NVQ Level 3 (or equivalent) has increased from 48.8% in 2011 to 60.7% in 2020[35]. Those with no qualifications has decreased from 8.9 % to 2.1% between 2011 and 2020, demonstrating improvements in Cambridgeshire County Council's strategy to support all children to achieve their potential.

Figure 4.39 Percentage of Huntingdonshire residents ages 16 to 64 with qualifications
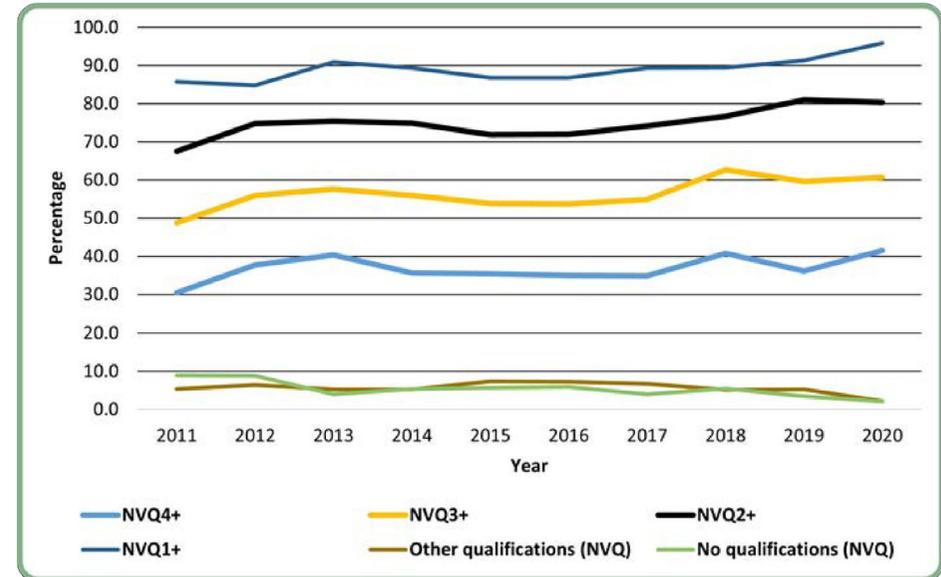
Source: ONS annual Population Survey

4.215   When compared against the average qualification levels across England, the percentage of residents with an NVQ 4 or above or equivalent (41.5%) is slightly below the English average of 42.8%. Huntingdonshire trails behind Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire when compared with those who have NVQ level 3 or equivalent or above. See Figure 4.40.

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34   Definitions: NVQ Level 1 (equivalent to 1-4 GCSEs), NVQ Level 2 (equivalent to 5 or more GCSEs), NVQ Level 3 (equivalent to 2 or more A Levels or equivalent), NVQ Level 4 or above (equivalent to first or higher degree, or equivalent professional qualifications), Other qualifications (other vocational work, work related qualifications and non-UK foreign qualifications).

35   All data is measured from January to December

4 | A2: Collecting baseline information

Figure 4.40 Percentage of residents ages 16 to 64 with qualifications
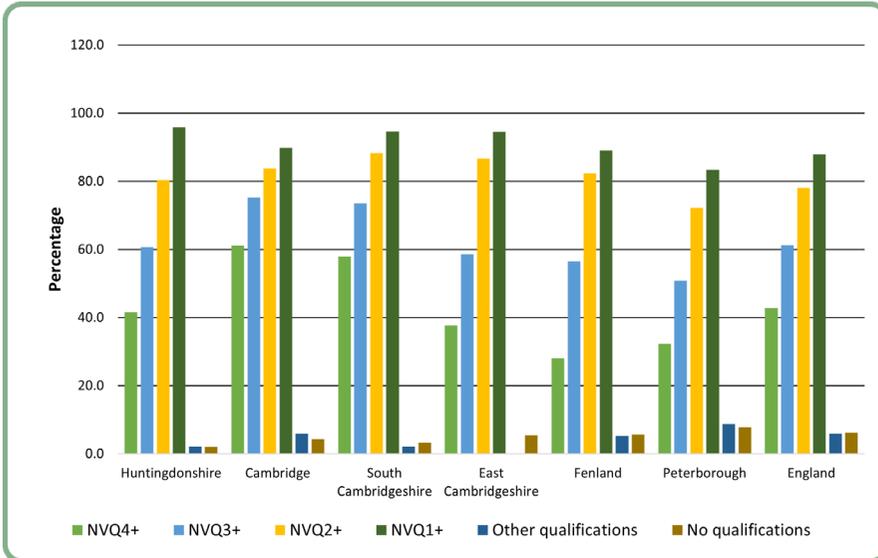
Key sustainability issues and problems

- Ensuring residents have access to a range of educational providers in sustainable locations to meet the growing population
- Ensuring education levels and range of qualifications are available for all to facilitate social mobility and job prospects for residents, intern contributing to the economic growth of the district
- Providing enough SEND provision as a result of new growth

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Limited access to education may limited resident social mobility and economic growth of the district
- Lack of pre-school provision could limit parents who wish to return to work, limiting household income
- Lack of access to a range of qualifications and education providers may lead to some residents relocating elsewhere

Heritage

4.216 Huntingdonshire has a rich history and this is reflected in the large number of historic structures and environments found within the district, many of which are protected as listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens and scheduled monuments. These heritage assets and their setting and the historic environment more widely play an important role in placemaking by shaping high quality design reflective of local character. Huntingdonshire's Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022) provides further details.

4.217 Listing marks and celebrates a building or structure's special architectural and historic interest. Listing also brings them under the consideration of the planning system, so that they can be protected for future generations. Structures that can be listed range from bridges, signposts, walls and gates that have architectural or historic value.

4.218 Listed structures across Huntingdonshire are incredibly varied ranging from medieval parish churches, timber framed buildings, vernacular cottages, grand houses, Georgian town houses, Victorian/Edwardian terraced houses, agricultural buildings and outbuildings, former mill and industrial buildings, bridges, commemorative statues, war memorials, walls and railings. There are also local variations across the district reflecting the variety of building materials used. For example, limestone and stonework detailing are a characteristic of historic properties located in the Nene Valley to the north of the district.

4.219 At the time of writing, there are some 2,216 designations across Huntingdonshire listed on Historic England's website. Gradings for listings are as follows:

- 62 grade I designations (2.8%)
- 130 grade II* designations (5.9%)
- 2,024 grade II designated (91.3%)

4.220 The above includes five registered parks and gardens (one at grade II* and four at grade II), these are: Elton Hall, Abbots Ripton Hall, Hamerton, Hilton Maze and Leighton Bromswold. Parks and gardens include gardens, grounds and other planned open spaces, such as town squares. They are protected due to their significance as a 'designed' landscape and are popular local tourist attractions.

4.221 A full list of these can be found on Historic England's website and visually on HDC's Planning Policies map and Conservation webpage. Historic England also have several Advice Notes such as Advice Note 3 The Setting of Heritage Assets and Good Practice Advice in Planning 1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans.

4.222 Between 2011 and April 2022, there have been 25 new listings across Huntingdonshire, all grade II. The majority of these are war memorials but this also includes the How in St Ives which was listed in 2019. Since 2013, there have been 2 delists.

Elton Park

Hartford Church and cottages

4.223 Scheduled monuments are the oldest form of designation and relates to nationally important archaeological sites. There are 84 such sites across Huntingdonshire ranging from deserted medieval villages, ruins of a castle and abbeys, former Bishop's palaces and sites of Roman settlements.

4.224 Huntingdonshire contains extensive archaeological remains dating from successive waves of settlement, and reflecting its diversity of landscape types with the Fens and the river valleys having been particular areas of activity. Roman towns existed at Godmanchester and Water Newton, along the line of the Roman Road (Ermine Street) which runs across the district from south east to north west. Ramsey Abbey was

4   A2: Collecting baseline information

established on a peninsula in the fen in the tenth century, and smaller monastic houses in St Ives, St Neots and Huntingdon had a major impact on the growth of these towns. The main threats to these remains are agriculture and development. This makes it particularly important that provision is made for appropriate excavation, analysis, recording and preservation in areas of archaeological potential.

4.225   Despite the growth that has taken place across the district, many of Huntingdonshire's smaller villages retain some of their historic form. Nucleated forms, with development clustered around a church and/or village green, and linear patterns are both common. Hamlets are comparatively rare in Huntingdonshire, but isolated farms are scattered across the area.

4.226   Huntingdonshire also has 61 designated conservation areas. The areas vary significantly in character and size from a relatively small group of buildings to a substantial part of an individual town or village. Character assessment statements have been prepared for many of these and can be found on the Council's website as Conservation Area Documents.

Listed buildings along the Causeway in Godmanchester

Listed buildings in St Neots Market Square

4.227   The Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) is a comprehensive source of information on non-designated heritage assets and archaeological sites and finds in Cambridgeshire. The County

Council are working in collaboration with Huntingdonshire and other Cambridgeshire authorities on compiling a local listing criteria with the intention of identifying non-designated heritage assets.

4.228   Huntingdonshire has a wealth of heritage, some of which is at risk. Historic England maintains a Heritage at Risk Register, which includes several listed structures and 4 scheduled monuments 'at risk' in the district.

4.229   Overarchingly, climate change poses significant risks to the historic environment, including the preservation of archaeology, flood and water damage, soil shrinkage and changes in temperatures leading to increased fungal, plant and insect infestation in historic buildings.

Key sustainability issues and problems

- There are many designated and non-designated structures assets, a small proportion are judged to be at risk
- Heritage assets face pressures from future development that may cause harm to them and to their setting
- Conservation areas may see a gradual erosion of their special features which may undermine the original reasons for designation
- Significant archaeology may yet to be discovered
- Climate change and flooding events pose significant risks to the historic environment

What may happen without a Local Plan

- More listed structures and scheduled monuments may go onto the Heritage at Risk Register
- More designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings may see a harm or a gradual erosion of significance
- Sites of archaeological potential may go undiscovered or lost through development without proper investigation

5 A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

STAGE A	STAGE B	STAGE C	STAGE D	STAGE E

- A1: Identifying relevant policies, plans, programmes and objectives
- A2: Collecting baseline information
- **A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems**
- A4: Developing the SA framework
- A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA

5.1   The purpose of this task is to help focus the SA and streamline the subsequent stages, including baseline information analysis, setting the SA objectives, prediction of effects and monitoring.

5.2   At the end of each of the topic chapters within the A2 stage, a box summarises the key issues and problems. These have been used to inform the A3 phase of work within the scoping process. Tables 17 to 19 consolidate the identified sustainability issues for each of the three groupings (climate emergency, environment and socio-economic). The tables also then take these issues a step further by exploring how these issues will shape the SA framework.

5 | A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

Key sustainability issues and problems

Table 17 Sustainability issues and how these could shape the SA framework for climate emergency baseline topics

Sustainability issues and problems	How this could shape the SA framework
Carbon Emissions and Targets: • Increased summer temperatures will impact on comfort and usability of existing properties • Drier summers and wetter winters will create issues for flooding, water storage and management, soil and agricultural productivity and habitat survival • CO_2 emissions are reducing across industrial, commercial, domestic and public sectors • CO_2 emissions are very high for transport, influenced by the presence of the A1, A14 and East Coast Mainline Railway coupled with the largely rural nature of the district • Per capita emissions are significantly higher than for England but typical for Cambridgeshire • Increasing the climate resilience and energy efficiency of buildings and spaces	SA framework objectives could include: • Support transition to low carbon and eventually zero carbon • Reduce carbon emissions arising from transport • Reduce reliance on private car usage • Locate development in sustainable developments that can utilise sustainable modes of transport • Development must be resilient to the impacts of climate change and be low or zero carbon • Support provision of electric vehicle charging points
Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency: • Renewable power generation within Huntingdonshire has shifted from a focus on wind turbines to solar farms requiring extensive areas of land but with some scope for complementary agricultural use • The age of the housing stock means that retrofitting of energy efficiency measures will be crucial in boosting the sustainability of the district's homes • Fuel poverty was already an issue for over 1 in 10 households before the April 2022 price rises; this is expected to become more intense in the short term • Access to mains gas is not universal throughout the district with some locations relying on individual oil tanks; in such circumstances alternative community heating systems may offer a more sustainable solution • The visual impact of on-shore renewable energy production needs to be balanced with the impact on local landscape and communities	SA framework objectives could include: • Support appropriate renewable energy generation • Support community energy generation projects to meet local need and reduce reliance on oil tanks to heat homes, particularly in rural parts of the district • Promote retrofitting of older properties to make them more energy efficient and reduce the cost to residents • Build homes to a high standard of energy efficiency • Support provision of electric vehicle charging points • Ensure there is capability and capacity for new development to be connected to the national grid
Flooding and Water: • The impacts of climate change will see increases in extreme weather events, leading to increased rainfall, rainfall intensity and sea level rises all of which will increase the impact of all sources of flooding in the district. Potential to impact on existing and new developments, infrastructure and agricultural productivity, social and economic impacts across the district	SA framework objectives could include: • Support flood mitigation measures and flood management infrastructure • Minimise the risk to life and property arising from flooding events

A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

Sustainability issues and problems	How this could shape the SA framework
• Potential need to set aside land for flood mitigation measures due to increased flood risk and understand effectiveness flood management infrastructure • Increased flood risk may influence where development can be sustainably located • Ensuring that new growth does not adversely affect water resources or water resources management infrastructure and that there are sufficient measures in place to balance water supply across the district • Ensuring that homes and businesses are resilient to flooding and provide effective water management to maintain water resources for all • Ensuring new development does not adversely impact on the ecological and biological status of water bodies	• Locate development in areas that are not in an area at risk of flooding • Ensure there is sufficient water supply to service growth • Use water sustainably • Locate development where there is waste water capacity or where it can be made available • Avoid harm to the ecological and biological status of water bodies
Waste and Recycling: • Many tonnes of waste are sent to landfills and recycling centres • Increasing levels of recycling and re-using materials reduces how much material ends up in landfills reducing their environmental effects and supporting a circular economy • Growth places additional demand on existing waste and recycling collection services • The waste attributed to the construction of new buildings	SA framework objectives could include: • Reduce waste production and increase reuse, recycling and composting • Promote the reuse of materials, particularly in construction to support a circular economy • Promote sustainable waste management

Table 18 Sustainability issues and how these could shape the SA framework for environmental baseline topics

Sustainability issues and problems	How this could shape the SA framework
Landscape: • Huntingdonshire's landscape and its distinctive qualities are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, insensitive new development and land management practices • Water management is key to landscape character throughout much of the district • The expansive, flat wetlands of the Fens are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change degrading fertile peat soils and its landscape character • The River Great Ouse flows through or around three of Huntingdonshire's four market towns providing a high quality landscape setting to them and recreational opportunities but also an increased risk of flooding	SA framework objectives could include: • Protection of important landscapes and their characteristics • Mitigate the impacts of climate change on the natural environment • Minimise the impact of human actions on the landscape through sustainable land and water management and agricultural practices

5 | A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

Sustainability issues and problems	How this could shape the SA framework
Land, Soils and Agriculture: • A very high proportion of the district's agricultural land is classified as best and most versatile, whilst this is beneficial for production and food security it provides challenges for focusing development onto less valuable land • Degradation of peat and soil erosion resulting in the loss of the most fertile soils • There are limited remaining opportunities for largescale reuse of previously developed land	SA framework objectives could include: • Promote the reuse of previously developed land • Make most efficient use of land • Restore peatland and minimise soil erosion • Support sustainable agricultural practices vital for food supply and a prosperous rural economy
Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment: • There are several sites designated at an international and national level for their biodiversity and habitat value as well as non-designated sites identified for their local nature conservation value • Nature conservation sites and ancient woodland are vulnerable to new developments and land management practices. • Two thirds of SSSIs in Huntingdonshire are in a favourable state, with approximately a third of SSSIs not in a favourable condition, although these are in a recovering state • Visitor pressures on designated and non-designated sites may harm the quality of these sites for nature conservation and vital habitats • Nature conservation sites and other natural environments are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change • Trees are a natural carbon store, with established and mature trees taking in the most carbon	SA framework objectives could include: • Protection and enhancement of biodiversity for species and habitats in designated and non-designated areas • Preserve ancient woodland • Improve the condition of SSSIs across the district • Minimise visitor pressures to nature sites • Conserve and enhance tree coverage across the district
Green Infrastructure and Open Space: • Huntingdonshire has several strategic green infrastructure areas: the Great Fen, Nene Valley, Great Ouse Valley and the West Cambridgeshire Hundreds • Strategic green infrastructure and localised provision of open green space provide important social benefits to human health and wellbeing as well as opportunities for habitat and biodiversity conservation and enhancement • Green infrastructure and open space must be located in accessible places • Several public parks and gardens are managed to the Green Flag Award standard, with others aspiring to the standard	SA framework objectives could include: • Support and enhance the strategic green infrastructure network • Enhance connectivity and accessibility to green infrastructure and open space • Sustainably manage areas of open space and strategic green infrastructure • Provide additional open spaces to support growth

A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

Sustainability issues and problems	How this could shape the SA framework
Pollution: • The most significant air quality issues arise from traffic and congestion • Air, noise and light pollution can have serious implications on the health and wellbeing of people and cause harm to the natural environment and disrupt the lifecycles of wildlife • Homes, employment, schools, services and facilities should be accessible via walking, cycling and public transport • Light and noise pollution can reduce the tranquillity of the countryside and green spaces within settlements	SA framework objectives could include: • Reduce air, light and noise pollution • Support walking and cycling opportunities • Reduce reliance on private cars for journeys • Locate development in sustainable locations

Table 19 Sustainability issues and how these could shape the SA framework for socio-economic baseline topics

Sustainability issues and problems	How this could shape the SA framework
Population and Health: • Ensuring the delivery of an ongoing supply of new homes in sustainable locations • Ensuring new homes provide a mix of types, sizes and tenures aligned with the composition of the local population with an emphasis on increasing the stock of smaller properties suitable for one and two person households • Affordability ratios of house prices to around 9 times average earnings create significant stress in the housing market and result in strong social sustainability challenges • Proactive work through the prevention duty regarding homelessness has high effectiveness rates and reduces social sustainability challenges through the trauma otherwise experienced by those who become homeless • Ensuring a range of accessible, adaptable and specialist new homes are available suitable to meet the changing needs of residents as the population ages overall	SA framework objectives could include: • Increasing housing supply including affordable housing in sustainable locations • Delivery of new homes that offer a mix of types, sizes and tenures to meet local needs including gypsy and traveller pitches • Planning for demographic changes and changing needs of residents
Housing: • The ageing and in some locations declining population may lead to challenges for the social sustainability of communities, for health and social provision and provision of appropriate housing options. • Decreasing proportion of the population is of working age raising the proportion of dependants. • Natural change is decreasing and may result in a negative rate of population growth unless in-migration is sufficient to counterbalance falling population numbers	SA framework objectives could include: • Supporting sufficient growth in all communities to maintain current population levels in order to support existing services • Supporting employment growth with complementary housing provision to attract people of working age to live here • Reducing air pollution to decrease its contribution to respiratory diseases

5 | A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

Sustainability issues and problems	How this could shape the SA framework
• GP surgeries are concentrated in larger settlements necessitating residents of almost all villages to travel for appointments or rely on telephone or other remote forms of consultations • Health indicators suggest that Huntingdonshire's population is typically slightly healthier than that for England on average but deaths from particulate air pollution were higher than average in 2019 although it should be noted that this was prior to the rerouting of the A14 and consequent impact on air quality management areas	
Income and Deprivation: • Huntingdonshire shows great disparity across the district in terms of income and deprivation • Median weekly pay in Huntingdonshire is in decline potentially creating a less financially stable population	SA framework objectives could include: • Supporting employment growth in locations accessible to lower income and more deprived areas • Supporting enhanced skills and diversity of employment opportunities
Employment and Businesses: • Post-pandemic recovery: addressing the decline in the number of jobs in the district • Supporting and maintaining a stable economy: facilitating growth of key industries by providing appropriate land for development and expansion • Supporting rural enterprises to provide sustainable job opportunities in outside the existing employment clusters • Addressing the post-pandemic decline in the number of enterprises in the district • Facilitating access to higher level occupations where required across the district • Addressing the contribution that Huntingdonshire makes to Knowledge Intensive industries • Providing complementary enterprises to support supply chains and economic growth	SA framework objectives could include: • Supporting employment growth and providing appropriate and attractive sites to facilitate growth and expansion of key industries • Supporting diversity of employment opportunities • Enhancing availability of higher level employment opportunities
Travel and Transport: • Huntingdonshire is well located in terms of the strategic road network creating pressure from logistics businesses for new sites and generating high levels of road based through travel and locally generated car travel • A variety of road and active travel infrastructure improvements are proposed which may reduce congestion, improve journey times and increase the attractiveness of active travel modes for journeys • The district's semi-rural nature means some parts are relatively remote which increases reliance on private vehicles and engenders viability challenges for public transport; the distances involved can make walking and cycling unattractive options for many journeys	SA framework objectives could include: • Reducing reliance on private cars for journeys • Support an enhanced network of walking and cycling routes and public transport provision • Development located in sustainable locations within or near to existing communities

A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

Sustainability issues and problems	How this could shape the SA framework
Digital Infrastructure and Communications: • Reducing inequality, economic opportunity and vital access to services via digital infrastructure • Reducing social exclusion by providing improved access to improved online services especially in rural areas • Enabling businesses and rural businesses to thrive through improved broadband and mobile coverage • Decreasing rural isolation through improved broadband and mobile coverage	SA framework objectives could include: • Enhance digital infrastructure (mobile and internet provision) across the district but in particular in rural areas
Retail and Town Centres: • Increase in retail/ town centre use vacancies in key locations that provide accessible sustainable access to leisure, services and retail, impacting on social and economic health of the district • Potential contraction of the high street and detrimental impacts on business viability • Perceived safety threats from vacant units and low activity levels potentially creating inhospitable and unsafe neighbourhoods • Ensuring high streets in the district provide easy access to leisure, services and retail	SA framework objectives could include: • Promote and support the vitality of the district's market towns • Tackle vacancy rates within town centres • Provide a mix of sustainable uses to support the needs of the local population
Tourism and Leisure: • The conservation of wildlife and landscapes are not harmed through tourism and leisure pursuits • Tourism and leisure play an important role in people's health and well being so needs to be accessible to all • Growth places additional demand on existing tourist attractions and leisure facilities • Local tourist attractions and leisure facilities contribute towards the local economy and supports local communities through employment, voluntary opportunities and celebrating local heritage and past times	SA framework objectives could include: • Support existing tourism and leisure across the district • Minimise any harmful impacts of tourism and leisure pursuits on the natural environment and historic environment • Enhance the tourism offer across the district
Community Services and Facilities: • Availability of multi-use community spaces where people can gather	SA framework objectives could include: • Support existing community services and facilities

5 | A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

Sustainability issues and problems	How this could shape the SA framework
• Sustainable access to services and facilities across the district • Retention of and long-term sustainability of community services and facilities	• Promote social cohesion • Promote multi-use community spaces to support their long term vitality • Locate new community services and facilities in sustainable locations
Education: • Ensuring residents have access to a range of educational providers in sustainable locations to meet the growing population • Ensuring education levels and range of qualifications are available for all to facilitate social mobility and job prospects for residents, intern contributing to the economic growth of the district • Providing enough SEND provision as a result of new growth	SA framework objectives could include: • Ensuring that the educational needs of all residents can be met locally • Enhance learning and training opportunities across the district
Heritage: • There are many designated and non-designated structures assets, a small proportion are judged to be at risk • Heritage assets face pressures from future development that may cause harm to them and to their setting • Conservation areas may see a gradual erosion of their special features which may undermine the original reasons for designation • Significant archaeology may yet to be discovered • Climate change and flooding events pose significant risks to the historic environment	SA framework objectives could include: • Conservation and enhancement of the historic environment • Preserve designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting • Recognition of the importance of archaeological heritage

6 A4: Developing the SA framework

STAGE A	STAGE B	STAGE C	STAGE D	STAGE E
• A1: Identifying relevant policies, plans, programmes and objectives				
• A2: Collecting baseline information				
• A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems				
• **A4: Developing the SA framework**				
• A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA				

6.1   The purpose of this task is to provide a means by which the environmental performance of the plan or programme and alternatives can be assessed.

The Framework

6.2   The SA framework comprises SA objectives and supporting decision aiding questions, which together provide a means by which the sustainability performance of the plan and alternatives can be assessed. SA objectives are used to help show whether the objectives of the plan are beneficial compared to the effects of alternatives. SA objectives should be informed by the previous tasks as they can often be derived from objectives which are established in law, policy, or other plans or programmes as identified in task 3 'A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies', in task 4 'A2: Collecting baseline information' and in task 5 'A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems'.

6.3   The Sustainability Appraisal Framework for Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 was last updated in 2013. It was necessary to review this in the light of the updated baseline information and changes to the policy context within which the next local plan will be prepared, as established through the review of plans and programmes at international, national and local level. The SA framework and objectives have been updated to reflect the key sustainability issues for the district identified in task A3; in particular they have been updated to reflect an increased emphasis on responding to the climate emergency.

6.4   The SA framework has been structured using the three groupings of the climate emergency, environmental and socio-economic. This approach is favoured over structuring it by topic because it avoids duplication between objectives and reflects that some topics and hence their objectives are interconnected. Each grouping has a number of SA objectives which are the overall sustainability goals that have been derived from the analysis carried out in stage 5 'A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems'.

6.5   Each SA objective is accompanied by a series of decision aiding questions which will be used to appraise options for the strategy and its alternatives, site allocations and development management policies. Different decision aiding questions are used for each of the strategy and its alternatives, site allocations and development management policies to allow for a more refined assessment. For the strategy and alternatives (including new settlement proposals) the questions are relatively high level and seek to distinguish the broad differences in sustainability between different approaches. For the potential site allocations the questions are more specific with a mixture of qualitative questions and more specific quantifiable questions for some indicators to provide a more detailed comparative assessment. For the development management policies the questions are predominantly qualitative whilst being more specific than those for the strategy and alternatives.

6.6   A scoring system/matrix has been devised in order to score how each option performs against the appropriate decision aiding questions.

6 | A4: Developing the SA framework

Table 20 SA framework

	SA Objective	Decision aiding questions for use in appraising options for		
		The Strategy and alternatives (inc. new settlement proposals)	**Sites**	**Development Management policies**
		Will the approach/ option help to:	**Will allocation of the site:**	**Will the option/ proposed policy:**
	Climate emergency			
SA 1	Contribute to achieving the district's ambition to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2040.	• Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with, or exceeding, nationally or locally set targets? • Promote enhancements to green infrastructure networks to facilitate increased absorption and dissipation of nitrogen dioxide and other pollutants?	• Promote low and zero carbon technologies? • Support the provision of renewable energy infrastructure? • Not contain, and be at least 200m from an air quality management area? • Support the circular economy through the reuse and recycling of existing land, buildings or materials?	• Promote energy efficient design? • Increase the amount of CO_2 captured by plants and trees?
SA 2	Improve adaptability to the unavoidable impacts of the climate emergency.	• Concentrate new development in locations that maximise opportunities to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of the climate emergency? • Support habitats in adjusting to the impacts of the climate emergency?	• Maximise opportunities to support the use of sustainable design and construction techniques in new development?	• Help protect against the increased extremes of weather anticipated from the climate emergency? • Promote opportunities for adaptation to unavoidable impacts of the climate emergency?
SA 3	Manage Huntingdonshire's water resources in a sustainable manner and reduce the risk all potential sources of flooding to people, properties and the environment.	• Maintain and where possible improve the quality and availability of water resources? • Minimise the risk of flooding from all sources?	• Be served by existing water and waste water infrastructure or will it support the delivery of new infrastructure? • Use land in flood zone 1 taking into account the impact from	• Reduce or help prevent water resource pollution from all sources? • Promote efficient use of water resources? • Reduce the risk of flooding from all sources?

A4: Developing the SA framework

	SA Objective	Decision aiding questions for use in appraising options for		
		The Strategy and alternatives (inc. new settlement proposals)	Sites	Development Management policies
		Will the approach/ option help to:	Will allocation of the site:	Will the option/ proposed policy:
			surface water flood risk and an allowance for climate change?	
	Environmental			
SA 4	Make efficient use of land by maximising development on previously developed land where this is not of high biodiversity value and minimising that on the best and most versatile agricultural land.	• Enable the use of land that has previously been developed in preference to greenfield land? • Promote development in locations that are grade 3 agricultural land or lower (including urban and non-agricultural land) in preference to higher grades?	• Prioritise development of previously developed land? • Prioritise development on land of agricultural land grade 3 or lower (including urban and non-agricultural land)?	• Promote the use of previously developed land in preference to greenfield land? • Promote the use of land of agricultural land grade 3 or lower (including urban and non-agricultural land) in preference to grade 1 or 2 agricultural land?
SA 5	Improve the quantity and quality of publicly accessible natural green space and enhance the strategic green and blue infrastructure network and links to it.	• Focus development in areas which are either well served by publicly accessible open and natural green space or have the capacity to provide additional such space? • Ensure current strategic blue and green infrastructure networks are not compromised and future extensions or improvements are not prejudiced?	• Promote new development with opportunities to participate in leisure and recreation using publicly accessible open and natural green space? • Could development contribute towards enhancing or increasing the strategic green or blue infrastructure network or linkages to it?	• Support the provision, retention or enhancement of publicly accessible areas of open and natural green space? • Support the provision or enhancement of the strategic green or blue infrastructure network? • Encourage greater participation in healthy lifestyles through nature based or outdoor leisure activities? • Promote access to natural greenspace?

6   A4: Developing the SA framework

	SA Objective	Decision aiding questions for use in appraising options for		
		The Strategy and alternatives (inc. new settlement proposals)	Sites	Development Management policies
		Will the approach/ option help to:	Will allocation of the site:	Will the option/ proposed policy:
SA 6	Promote conservation, enhancement, recovery and connectivity of sites of biodiversity or geodiversity significance.	• Protect sites of designated biodiversity or geodiversity significance? • Promote opportunities for the recovery and enhanced connectivity of sites of biodiversity or geodiversity significance?	• Impact on a designated site of biodiversity or geodiversity significance?	• Support the protection, recovery or enhancement of sites of designated biodiversity or geodiversity significance? • Promote opportunities for enhanced connectivity of sites of biodiversity or geodiversity significance?
SA 7	Conserve and enhance the special qualities and integrity of our landscape and townscape character and the local distinctiveness of settlements.	• Promote opportunities to protect and enhance valued landscape and townscape characteristics? • Reinforce local distinctiveness and a sense of place?	• Make efficient use of land whilst also protecting the form and character of the local area?	• Protect or enhance landscape and/ or townscape character? • Promote local distinctiveness?
SA 8	Contribute to the minimisation and reduction of all forms of pollution.	• Promote actions to reduce contributions to air pollution? • Facilitate the minimisation of light, noise and odour pollution, in particular on the rural environment	• Be unlikely to cause or suffer from widespread light, noise, odour or visual pollution?	• Support proposals that contribute to the reduction of air pollution? • Support proposals that minimise or contribute to the reduction of light, noise, odour and visual pollution?
	Socio-economic			
SA 9	All people have access to high quality affordable homes that meet their needs across their lifetime.	• Facilitate the delivery of the district's housing needs in sustainable locations that meet the community's needs?	• Contribute to meeting a wide range of the types, sizes and tenures of housing needed across the district?	• Support provision of market and affordable homes to meet identified needs and support the district's economic growth aspirations?

A4: Developing the SA framework

	SA Objective	Decision aiding questions for use in appraising options for		
		The Strategy and alternatives (inc. new settlement proposals)	Sites	Development Management policies
		Will the approach/ option help to:	Will allocation of the site:	Will the option/ proposed policy:
			• Meet the needs of specific housing groups such as gypsies and travellers or older people? • Contribute to diversification of the housing supply by being no more than 1 ha in size?	• Support construction of accessible, adaptable homes with potential to meet the lifetime needs of occupiers? • Support provision of accommodation to meet specific needs?
SA 10	Enhance the quality, range and accessibility of social and community services and facilities to promote social inclusion particularly amongst those most at risk of experiencing discrimination, poverty and social exclusion.	• Support and enhance the more deprived areas of the district? • Maximise opportunities for access to existing or proposed social and community facilities and services?	• Promote integration with existing communities? • Minimise the distance people need to travel to access local shops, education, health, leisure and cultural facilities?	• Contribute towards promoting community cohesion? • Reduce the potential for social exclusion and isolation particularly among disadvantaged and protected groups? • Retain or enhance accessibility to retail, education, health, leisure or cultural facilities?
SA 11	Enhance the quality, range and accessibility of economic opportunities for all communities.	• Contribute to regeneration activities? • Enhance and diversify economic opportunities with the district?	• Facilitate access to a range of employment opportunities? • Be in a location with high quality digital infrastructure?	• Contribute towards economic opportunities for local residents? • Improve digital infrastructure provision?
SA 12	Reduce the need to travel by car and promote active travel and public transport infrastructure.	• Support development in locations with good active travel and public transport links and services or provide opportunities for significant improvements?	• Benefit from access to public transport infrastructure? • Benefit from access to active travel infrastructure for practical and social activities?	• Support the provision of infrastructure for public transport? • Support the provision of infrastructure for active travel?

6   A4: Developing the SA framework

	SA Objective	Decision aiding questions for use in appraising options for		
		The Strategy and alternatives (inc. new settlement proposals)	Sites	Development Management policies
		Will the approach/ option help to:	Will allocation of the site:	Will the option/ proposed policy:
SA 13	Strengthen, modernise and diversify the local economy and promote opportunities for growth of indigenous companies as well as encouraging sustainable inward investment.	• Attract new investment and provide opportunities to improve the resilience of the local economy? • Contribute to a balanced portfolio of employment land in sustainable locations throughout the district? • Support retention and growth of indigenous companies? • Encourage sustainable tourism?	• Provide opportunities for the creation of new businesses beyond supporting people working from home? • Facilitate retention or expansion of existing businesses? • Support provision of tourism facilities or services appropriate to the sustainability of its location?	• Support jobs in high knowledge or skill sectors? • Facilitate retention or expansion of existing businesses? • Retain or create rural or tourism employment opportunities? • Assist in increasing the viability of the agricultural economy?
SA 14	Support the successful response of town and local retail centres to changing shopping and social trends.	• Facilitate modernisation of existing town centres to meet current and anticipated needs?	• Reinforce the role of town and local centres in serving their communities? • Increase the potential customer base of town centre facilities?	• Promote enhancement of town centres? • Support the retention or creation of local scale retail facilities? • Support the retention or creation of local scale retail facilities?
SA 15	Promote high quality design and placemaking that enables attractive, safe and resilient communities.	• Strengthen a local sense of place? • Retain the character of existing settlements?	• Provide high quality development sensitive to the character of the local environment? • Promote sustainable design solutions? • Provide opportunities to incorporate crime reduction measures?	• Contribute to the construction of well designed and sustainably constructed buildings and places? • Promote innovation whilst respecting local character and context? • Facilitate enhancement of the public realm? • Minimise opportunities for crime and help reduce the fear of crime?

A4: Developing the SA framework

	SA Objective	Decision aiding questions for use in appraising options for		
		The Strategy and alternatives (inc. new settlement proposals)	Sites	Development Management policies
		Will the approach/ option help to:	Will allocation of the site:	Will the option/ proposed policy:
SA 16	Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting(s).	• Conserve and where possible enhance sites, features and area of archaeological value throughout the district?	• Impact on any heritage assets or their settings?	• Promote the conservation or enhancement of heritage assets and their settings?

6.7   Table 21 below illustrates how the SA objectives address the issues listed in Annex I of the SEA Directive.

Table 21 How SA objectives address the issues listed in annex I of the SEA Directive

Issue from Annex I of the SEA Directive	Responding SA objective(s)
Soil	4
Water	3
Biodiversity (incorporating flora and fauna)	5 and 6
Air	8
Landscape	7
Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage	16
Climatic factors	1 and 2
Human health	10 and 12
Population	9 and 11
Material assets	13 and 14

6   A4: Developing the SA framework

Scoring system/matrix

6.8   Each option will be assessed against the following classification of the potential effect as appropriate for each objective (see Table 22). The scoring matrix will be used to judge each item in the SA Framework to assess the relative performance of each option. This is refined to consider the level of significance of the impact either positively or negatively. A neutral category is included where there may no clear relationship, the outcome is uncertain or it may depend on details on delivery or implementation mechanisms unknown at the time of assessment.

6.9   The supporting commentary to each assessment will consider whether any identified impact is likely to be long or short term and permanent or temporary.

Table 22 Scoring matrix

Score	Effect of the approach
++	Contributes significantly to the achievement of the objective
+	Contributes to the achieve of the objective
N	No clear relationship to achieving the objective, the outcome is uncertain or the outcome may depend on delivery specific factors.
-	Detracts from achievement of the objective
--	Significantly detracts from achievement of the objective

6.10   The proposed scoring system/matrix consists of a mixture of qualitative and quantitative measures. The quantitative measures are shown in Table 23, these measurable criteria will assist with scoring various accessibility related decision aiding questions relating to the sustainability of individual sites. All distances will be measured from the centre point of the site and then by the most appropriate mode of travel to the destination or feature.

Table 23 Site decision aiding questions supporting criteria

Sustainability Objective number	Site appraisal decision aiding question Will allocation of the site:	Assessment indicators	Scoring matrix
SA 3	Use land in flood zone 1 including an allowance for climate change?	100% of the site in flood zone 1	++
		60-99% of the site in flood zone 1	+
		<50% of the site flood zone 1, mainly flood zone 2	-
		<50% of the site flood zone 1, mainly flood zone 3	--
SA 4	Prioritise development of previously developed land?	>60% of the site is previously developed land	++
		1-59% of the site is previously developed land	+
		The site is wholly greenfield land	-
	Prioritise development on land of agricultural land grade 3 or lower (including urban and non-agricultural land)?	The site is grades 4 and/or 5	++
		The site is predominantly grade 3	+
		The site is predominantly grade 2	-
		The site is predominantly grade 1	--
SA 5	Promote new development with opportunities to participate in leisure and recreation using publicly accessible natural green space? Could development contribute towards enhancing or increasing the strategic green or blue infrastructure network or linkages to it?	The site meets at least 3 of the following: • is within 1 km of a 10 ha area of natural green space • is within 300 m of a 2 ha natural green space • is within 200 m of a 0.5 ha area of greenspace • has direct opportunities to link to the strategic green or blue infrastructure network • the site has capacity for 200 or more new homes with natural green space included within the site	++
		The site meets 1 of the above criteria • is within 1 km of a 10 ha area of natural green space	+

6   A4: Developing the SA framework

Sustainability Objective number	Site appraisal decision aiding question Will allocation of the site:	Assessment indicators	Scoring matrix
		• is within 300 m of a 2 ha natural green space • is within 200 m of a 0.5 ha area of greenspace	
		The site meets none of the above criteria but has some capacity for linkages to the existing strategic green or blue infrastructure network	-
		The site meets none of the above criteria and has no/ very limited capacity for linkages to the existing strategic green or blue infrastructure network	--
SA 6	Impact on a designated site of biodiversity or geodiversity significance?	The site meets all of the following: • is more than 2 kms from a Ramsar, Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Area • is more than 1 km from a Site of Special Scientific Interest • is more than 200 m from a County Wildlife Site • is more than 200 m from a Local Geological Site	++
		The site meets at least 2 of the following: • is more than 2 kms from a Ramsar, Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Area • is more than 1 km from a Site of Special Scientific Interest • is more than 200 m from a County Wildlife Site • is more than 200 m from a Local Geological Site	+
		The site meets at least 3 of the following: • contains is within 2 kms of a Ramsar, Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Area • contains or is within 1 km from a Site of Special Scientific Interest • contains or is within 200 m from a County Wildlife Site • contains or is within 200 m from a Local Geological Site	--

A4: Developing the SA framework

Sustainability Objective number	Site appraisal decision aiding question Will allocation of the site:	Assessment indicators	Scoring matrix
SA 9	Contribute to meeting a wide range of the types, sizes and tenures of housing needed across the district? Meet the needs of specific housing groups such as gypsies and travellers or older people? Contribute to diversification of the housing supply by being no more than 1 ha in size?	The site is likely to support over 200 new homes which could include a wide range of types, sizes and tenures, or The site is suitable to meet specialist needs of identified groups	++
		The site is 1 ha or less and contributes to the government's aspiration to promote sites suitable for SME builders	+
		The site is for non-residential uses	N
SA 10	Promote integration with existing communities? Minimise the distance people need to travel to access town centres and local convenience shops?	The site is within 5 kms of a town centre	++
		The site is within 800 m of a local convenience shop or 2.5 kms of a freestanding supermarket	+
		The site is more than 800 m from a local convenience shop or 2.5 kms from a freestanding supermarket	-
	Minimise the distance people need to travel to education, health, leisure and cultural facilities?	The site meets at least 1 of the following: • is within 800 m of a town based primary school • is within 800 m of a village primary school • the site has capacity for at least 1,000 dwellings and will include a primary school	++
		The site does not meet the criteria above but is either within 1.5 kms of a town based primary school or is in a village containing a primary school	+
		The site is either for non-residential use or for residential accommodation specifically targeted at older people.	N

6   A4: Developing the SA framework

Sustainability Objective number	Site appraisal decision aiding question Will allocation of the site:	Assessment indicators	Scoring matrix
		The site is beyond 1.5 kms of a town based primary school, is in a village which does not have a primary school and is of insufficient capacity to provide a school on site.	--
SA 11	Facilitate access to a range of employment opportunities?	The site is within 1.5 kms of multiple concentrations of employment (eg town centre, industrial estate, secondary school) or the site itself will provide over 5 ha of employment land	++
		The site meets at least 1 of the following: • is within 5 kms of multiple concentrations of employment • is within 1.5 kms of a range of employment sources • will provide over 2 ha of employment	+
		The site meets at least 2 of the following: • is more than 5 kms from multiple concentrations of employment • is more than 1.5 kms from a range of employment sources • will not provide at least 2 ha of employment	-
		The site meets all of the following: • is more than 5 kms from multiple concentrations of employment • is more than 1.5 kms from a range of employment sources • will not provide at least 2 ha of employment	--
	Be in a location with high quality digital infrastructure?	Ultrafast broadband is available in the vicinity	++
		Superfast broadband is available in the vicinity	+
		Standard or no broadband is available in the vicinity	-

A4: Developing the SA framework

Sustainability Objective number	Site appraisal decision aiding question Will allocation of the site:	Assessment indicators	Scoring matrix
SA 12	Benefit from access to public transport infrastructure?	The site is within 5 kms of a railway station and 800 m of a bus service rated B- or higher on the Place Based Carbon Calculator (approximately every 20 minutes Mon-Sat)	++
		The site is within 800 m of a bus service rated D+ or higher on the Place Based Carbon Calculator (approximately hourly Mon-Sat)	+
		The site is within 800 m of a bus service rated F+ or higher on the Place Based Carbon Calculator (approximately 3 per day Mon-Fri)	-
		The site is within 800 m of a bus service rated F or lower on the Place Based Carbon Calculator (approximately 1 per day Mon-Fri) or is beyond 800 m of any bus service	--
	Benefit from access to active travel infrastructure for practical and social activities?	The site is within 500 m of a public right of way and/ or segregated cycleway	++
		The site is within 1 km of a public right of way and/ or segregated cycleway	+
		The site is between 1-2 kms of a public right of way and/ or segregated cycleway	-
		The site is more than 2 kms from a public right of way and/ or segregated cycleway	--

7 A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA

STAGE A	STAGE B	STAGE C	STAGE D	STAGE E

- A1: Identifying relevant policies, plans, programmes and objectives
- A2: Collecting baseline information
- A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems
- A4: Developing the SA framework
- **A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA**

7.1   The purpose of this task is to ensure that the SA covers the likely significant environmental effects of the plan and to ensure that the SA process is and will be robust and suitably comprehensive in order to support production of the plan.

7.2   Consultation is an important part of producing the Local Plan and the Council is committed to engaging during the process in ways that give people opportunities to get involved. Details of how the Council intends to engage during the production of the Local Plan can be found in the Statement of Community Involvement, which is available on the Council's website.

7.3   The council is required to consult on the scope of the SA with the following three bodies:

- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Natural England

7.4   Consultation with environmental bodies ran between 20 October and 30 November 2022.

7.5   Comments on a draft of the scoping report were received from all three environmental bodies. Their comments have been compiled into a table alongside the Council's response to them highlighting where amendments have been made to this report. This table can be found in Appendix 2: 'Comments from Environmental Bodies'.

7.6   Following this, the scoping report will be made available for anyone to make comments. This is so that the scoping report is as robust as possible and to promote participation in production of the new Huntingdonshire Local Plan. Any comments received from the wider public consultation will be used to amend this scoping report (feeding back into tasks A1 to A4).

7.7   Stage A will be completed with the publication of this final scoping report.

8 Next Steps

8.1 Following consultation and amendments to this scoping report, the methodology will be used to complete the SA/SEA process as part of the production of the Local Plan:

8.2 To be produced as part of drawing up the draft Local Plan:

- Testing the plan strategy against the SA framework (B1)
- Developing plan options (B2)
- Predicting the effects of the plan including alternatives (B3)
- Evaluating the effects of the plan including the alternatives (B4)
- Mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects (B5)
- Proposing measures to monitor the environmental effects of plan implementation (B6)
- Preparing the sustainability appraisal report (C1)
- Public consultation on the draft plan and the sustainability appraisal report (D1)

8.3 To be produced alongside the Proposed Submission Local Plan:

- Appraising significant changes (D2)
- Making decisions and providing information (initial coverage) (D3)
- Developing aims and methods for monitoring (E1)
- Responding to adverse effects (E2)

8.4 To be produced when the Local Plan is adopted:

- Assessing significant changes (if any are made through the submission and examination stages) (D2)
- Making decisions and providing information (additional coverage) (D3)
- Developing aims and methods for monitoring (if required following the submission and examination stages) (E1)
- Responding to adverse effects (if required following the submission and examination stages) (E2)

8.5 For more information about these stages see Table 3 ' Stages B to E in the SA/ SEA process'.

1   Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Appendix 1: Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

1.1   This appendix summarises the outcome of a review of international, national regional and sub-regional/county/local plans programmes and strategies. The following tables summarise the aims, objectives, targets and indicators of relevant plans, programmes and strategies which has informed the identification of the ways in which the Local Plan could help to fulfil them or be shaped by them.

1.2   While the review has been comprehensive, it is not an exhaustive list of all plan, programmes and strategies out there, but includes those that have the most direct bearing on the future planning of the district. The list does not provide a definitive account of their contents; however, it is considered that it provides a sufficient review of those relevant to the preparation of the Local Plan and identifies any environmental, economic and social implications that should be considered within the SA and plan-making process.

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

International level

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
United Nations: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015)	The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Global Goals are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030. The 17 goals are: 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development	These goals are set at a high level. The National Planning Policy Framework now references these goals, as such the principles and essence of these goals and their contribution to sustainable development must be embedded into the new Local Plan.	All
United Nations Climate Change Conference: Glasgow Climate Pact (UN, 2021)	The Glasgow Climate Pact is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. COP26 finalised the Paris 'rulebook', resolving the key outstanding political decisions needed for Parties to begin implementing the Paris Agreement. On 13 November 2021, COP26 concluded in Glasgow with all countries agreeing the Glasgow Climate Pact to keep 1.5C alive and finalise the outstanding elements of the Paris Agreement. Climate negotiators ended two weeks of talks with consensus on urgently accelerating climate action.	This is a high level agreement which the United Kingdom has signed up to in order to address the outstanding elements of the Paris Agreement. Huntingdonshire must play its part in	Climate Emissions and Targets

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
	• Mitigation - reducing emissions • Adaptation - helping those already impacted by climate change • Finance - enabling countries to deliver on their climate goals • Collaboration - working together to deliver even greater action	reducing carbon emissions and the impacts of climate change on people and the environment. The new Local Plan will play an important part in implementing policies that provide carbon neutral, green and climate resilient development.	
United Nations: Paris Agreement (UN, 2015)	The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris, on 12 December 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels. To achieve this long-term temperature goal, countries aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible to achieve a climate neutral world by mid-century reaching a level whereby greenhouse gas emissions from human activity are at the same levels that trees, soil and oceans can absorb naturally (net zero) between 2050 and 2100. Also, each country to set its own emission-reduction targets, reviewed every five years and rich countries are to help poorer nations by providing funding, known as climate finance, to adapt to climate change and switch to renewable energy.	Huntingdonshire must play its part in reducing carbon emissions and the impacts of climate change on people and the environment. The new Local Plan will play an important part in implementing policies that provide carbon neutral, green and climate resilient development.	Climate Emissions and Targets
Aarhus Convention 1998: The UN Economic Commission for Europe Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters	Establishes the right of everyone to receive environmental information that is held by the public sector. The right to participate from an early stage in environmental decision making. The right to challenge public decisions that have been made without respecting these rights. This led to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.	Evidence used to underpin the new Local Plan must be publicly available. Consultation throughout the development of the Local Plan will be undertaken in accordance with the legal framework.	Procedural
European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, signed by UK in 2006 and introduced March 2007)	Promotes landscape protection, management and planning and European co-operation on landscape issues. The Framework set out in the Convention is being implemented through Action Plans created by Natural England, English Heritage and DEFRA with input from other partners e.g. Forestry Commission and Local Authorities to review policies on Landscape.	Huntingdonshire's landscape is varied with urbanised towns and rural areas. There are several designated nature sites and the Fens important for wildlife and agricultural production.	Landscape Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Valletta Convention (European Convention on the protection of	Recognises importance of and clarifies definition of archaeological heritage. The emphasis is on protection of sites for future study, the reporting of chance finds the control of excavations and the use of metal detectors. Signatories (including the UK) promise to allow the input of expert archaeologists into the making of planning policies and planning decisions.	Huntingdonshire has a wealth of heritage including many scheduled monuments. There is potential that sites of archaeological significance are yet to be	Heritage

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Archaeological Heritage) 1992		discovered, therefore the new Local Plan will reinforce a positive strategy towards heritage and archaeology building on existing knowledge and evidence bases.	
European Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985) (Granada Convention)	The main purpose of the Convention is to reinforce and promote policies for the conservation and enhancement of Europe's heritage. It also affirms the need for European solidarity with regard to heritage conservation and is designed to foster practical co-operation among the Parties. It establishes the principles of "European co-ordination of conservation policies" including consultations regarding the thrust of the policies to be implemented.	Huntingdonshire has a wealth of heritage: many listed structures, conservation areas, scheduled monuments and registered parks and gardens. The new Local Plan will reinforce a positive strategy towards the conservation of landscapes, heritage and archaeology building on existing knowledge and evidence bases.	Heritage

1.3 European Directives that have been transposed into UK legislation:

- **European SEA Directive (2001/42/EEC)** > The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended)
- **European Directive 97/11/EC (amending Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment known as the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive)** > The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017
- **European Air Quality Framework Directive (2008/50/EEC)** > The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010
- **European Directive Nitrates (91/676/EEC)** > The Nitrate Pollution Prevention (Amendment) Regulations 2009 (Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations 2008)
- **European Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings 2002/91/EC** > Building Regulations 2010 (as amended); and The Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012
- **European Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC)** > Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- **Landfill of Waste (Landfill Directive) (99/31/EC)** > Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002 (as amended)
- **European Waste Framework Directive (2006/12/EC)** > Waste Minimisation Act 1998; and Household Waste Recycling Act 2003
- **Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)** > Water Act 2014; and Flood and Water Management Act 2010
- **European Floods Directive (2007/60/EC)** > The Flood Risk Regulations 2009
- **EC Council Directive on the Conservation of Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive, 1992)** > The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

1 | Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

- **Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) (Ramsar Convention)** > The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
- **Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds: Directive 2009/147/EC** > The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
- **European Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) (1979)** > Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended)

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

National level

Legislation

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Human Rights Act 1998	Primary legislation covering human rights which sets out basic civil and political rights of individuals. It includes the right to peaceful enjoyment of a dwelling, to privacy and protection of privacy by law and freedom of opinion and expression.	Legal requirement that human rights of individuals are not compromised within the plan making process.	All
Freedom of Information Act 2000	Establishes the right of everyone to receive environmental information that is held by the public sector. The right to participate from an early stage in environmental decision making. The right to challenge public decisions that have been made without respecting these rights	Evidence to support the new Local Plan will be made publicly available. Consultation throughout the development of the Local Plan will be undertaken in accordance with the legal framework.	Procedural
Environmental Information Regulations 2004	The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 is a UK Statutory Instrument that provides a statutory right of access to environmental information held by UK public authorities.	Evidence to support the new Local Plan will be made publicly available. Consultation throughout the development of the Local Plan will be undertaken in accordance with the legal framework.	Procedural
Equality Act 2010	The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.	Legal requirement that those with a protected characteristic are treated equally and are not compromised within the plan making process. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the preparations for the new Local Plan.	Procedural
The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended)	Requires assessment of the effect of projects on the environment.	The impacts of the new Local Plan on the environment be assessed and compiled into a Sustainability Appraisal.	Procedural
The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)	Requires assessment of the effect of projects on the environment (EIA). An Environmental Impact Assessment applies to development which is given planning permission under Part III of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.	The Local Plan will undertake a sustainability appraisal to assess the impacts of policies and proposals on the environment.	Procedural

| 1 | **Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed** |

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Regulations 2017 (as amended)			
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)	It is a central part of English planning law in that it concerns town and country planning in the United Kingdom and is now also complemented by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.	Legal framework for the planning system.	Procedural
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)	The Act updates elements of 1990 Town & Country Planning Act. In chapter 5, it introduces the system of development plan documents as part of the Local Development Framework. Introduces regional spatial strategies as replacements for structure plans and regional planning guidance. It also reforms to the development control and compulsory purchase and compensation systems and removes crown immunity form planning controls.	Legal framework for the planning system.	Procedural
Localism Act 2011	There are four key aspects of the Localism Act, it provided new freedoms and flexibilities for local government; new rights and powers for communities and individuals (including the introduction of neighbourhood plans); reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective; and reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally	The Local Plan will meet these requirements.	Procedural
The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)	Prescribe the general form and content of local plans and adopted policies maps and what additional matters local planning authorities must have regard to when drafting their local plans.	The Local Plan will meet these requirements.	Procedural
The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012	The Regulations set out the procedure for the designation of neighbourhood areas and neighbourhood forums and for the preparation of neighbourhood development plans and neighbourhood development orders (including community right to build orders).	Huntingdonshire has several made neighbourhood plans and some in production. More may follow. They have to be in conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan.	All
Planning Act 2008 (as amended)	Introduces the system for nationally significant infrastructure planning alongside further reforms to the Town and Country Planning System including the addition of a duty on councils to take action on climate change in their development plan documents and the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy. The Planning and Energy Act 2008 allows local planning authorities to set energy efficiency standards in their development plan policies that exceed the energy efficiency requirements of the building regulations.	Huntingdonshire has several major transport projects ongoing (A428, A141) and potentially others in East-West Rail. Huntingdonshire is a CIL charging authority. A transport study will be undertaken as part of the Local Plan's preparation. Additionally, the Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to	Travel and Transport Carbon Emissions and Targets

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
		reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change.	
Planning and Energy Act 2008	Builds on policies and provisions in Climate Change Programme. Allows local authorities to include policies and proposals that will secure energy efficiency improvements in excess of Part L Building Regulations including: A proportion of energy used in development in their area to be energy from renewable sources; A proportion of energy used in development in their area to be low carbon; and Development in their area to comply with energy efficiency standards that exceed the energy requirements of building requirements.	The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change.	Carbon Emissions and Targets
Environment Act 2021	This Act will set clear statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water and waste, and includes an important new target to reverse the decline in species abundance by the end of 2030. It sets in law new tools that Natural England and others can use to help meet those targets towards a Nature-positive 2030 such as biodiversity metrics and calculators to assess biodiversity net gain. DEFRA have released the Biodiversity Metric 3.0 (JP039) in 2021.	The Local Plan will be supported by appropriate assessments on the environment including a Habitats Regulation Assessment to assess the impact of policies and allocations on the environment, habitats an wildlife. Collaboration with partners on how biodiversity net gain can be achieved will also take place.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)	Sets targets for SSSIs and Regulation 48 requires screening of projects with respect to the need for Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).	The new Local Plan is required to undertake a Habitats Regulation Assessment to assess the impact of policies and allocations on internationally designated sites.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended)	The Convention aims to ensure conservation of wild flora and fauna species and their habitats and prevent loss of flora and fauna by making it illegal to intentionally damage wild plants and animals or their habitats. Special attention is given to endangered and vulnerable species, including endangered and vulnerable migratory species.	The Local Plan will be supported by appropriate assessments on the environment including a Habitats Regulation Assessment to assess the impact of policies and allocations on the environment, habitats an wildlife.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended)	Provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest.	The Local Plan should include a positive strategy towards heritage assets.	Heritage

1 | Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended)	Recognises importance of and clarifies definition of archaeological heritage. The emphasis is on protection of sites for future study, the reporting of chance finds the control of excavations and the use of metal detectors. Signatories (including the UK) promise to allow the input of expert archaeologists into the making of planning policies and planning decisions.	The Local should include a positive strategy towards heritage assets.	Heritage
Housing and Planning Act 2016	The Act introduced a number of measures: ● Extending the Right to Buy discounts to housing association tenants. Placing a duty on local planning authorities to promote the development of Starter Homes. ● Requiring local authorities to prepare, maintain and publish local registers of land. ● Supporting a doubling of the number of custom-built and self-built homes to 20,000 by 2020. ● Ensuring every area has a local plan. ● Reforming compulsory purchase. ● Simplifying and speeding up neighbourhood planning. ● Requiring social tenants on higher incomes to pay fairer rents. ● Placing a duty on local authorities to consider selling higher-value housing assets when they become vacant. ● Giving local authorities more powers to tackle rogue landlords. ● Improving local information on the private rented sector. ● Reducing regulatory controls for private registered providers of housing. ● Enabling lead enforcement authority for estate agents.	The Local Plan will seek opportunities to integrate self and custom build products. The Local Plan will also include policies on affordable housing provision and recommended tenure splits to meet need.	Housing
Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016)	Self-build and custom housebuilding covers a wide spectrum, from projects where individuals are involved in building or managing the construction of their home from beginning to end, to projects where individuals commission their home, making key design and layout decisions, but the home is built ready for occupation ('turnkey'). The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) provides a legal definition of self-build and custom housebuilding. The Act does not distinguish between self-build and custom housebuilding and provides that both are where an individual, an association of individuals, or persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals, build or complete houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals.	The Council is required to keep a Self and Custom build register and permit enough plots to meet the identified need within 3 years of the base period. The Local Plan will seek opportunities to integrate self and custom build products.	Housing
Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	It places duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also requires housing authorities to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who have 'priority need'. These include: (a) an enhanced prevention duty extending the period a household is threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days, meaning that housing authorities are required to work with people to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage; and (b) a new duty for those who are already homeless so that housing authorities will support households for 56 days to relieve their homelessness by helping them to secure accommodation.	The proposed growth within the Local Plan must meet identified needs. These will be integrated into policies and allocations and supported by appropriate evidence.	Housing

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010	Avoid, prevent or reduce concentrations of harmful air pollutants and limit values and/or alert thresholds set for ambient air pollution levels. Sets legally binding limits for concentrations in outdoor air of major air pollutants that impact public health such as particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide.	The Local Plan should ensure that through its policies and allocations that harmful effects on air quality are avoided.	Pollution
Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)	Sets out a hierarchy for the avoidance, prevention and reduction in adverse effects associated with environmental noise, including noise generated by road and rail vehicles, infrastructure, aircraft and outdoor, industrial and mobile machinery. It focuses on three action areas: the determination of exposure to environmental noise; ensuring that information on environmental noise and its effects is made available to the public; and preventing and reducing environmental noise where necessary and preserving environmental noise quality where it is good.	The impact of noise on residential amenity, public health and the environment from proposals in the Local Plan will be considered, particularly in respect of the location of development and the type of development proposed.	Pollution
The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2007	These Regulations introduce a new system of environmental permitting in England and Wales. They carry into effect in England and Wales Community legislation in the field of pollution prevention and control.	The Local Plan will undertake a sustainability appraisal to assess the impacts of policies and proposals on the environment.	Pollution
Nitrate Pollution Prevention (Amendment) Regulations 2016	Puts in place measures to reduce water pollution caused by nitrates. The Environment Agency identifies Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) and establishes and implements an action programme with this aim. NVZs are areas designated as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. They include about 55% of land in England. Defra reviews NVZs every 4 years to account for changes in nitrate concentrations. The last review was in December 2020.	The sustainability appraisal for the Local Plan should consider impacts of development upon any identified nitrate sensitive areas. Environmentally sensitive agricultural practice could also be considered as part of policies in combination with work underway in the Great Fen .	Land, Soils and Agriculture
Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended)	Long term binding framework to tackle climate change. Sets out a new approach to tackling climate change including: Setting ambitious, legally binding targets; Taking powers to help meet those targets; Strengthening the institutional framework; Enhancing the UK's ability to adapt to the impact of climate change; and Establishing clear and regular accountability to UK Parliament. Key aim of the Act is to improve carbon management helping the transition towards a low-carbon economy through the setting of carbon emission targets. In 2019 the Government amended the Climate Change Act to commit the UK to achieving net zero by 2050, compared to the previous target of an 80% reduction in emissions by 2050 from the 1990 baseline.	The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change.	Carbon Emissions and Targets
Building Regulations 2010 (as amended)	Building regulations are minimum standards for design, construction and alterations to virtually every building. The Building Regulations 2010 cover the construction and extension of buildings and these regulations are supported by Approved Documents. Baseline is set for the conservation of fuel and power in new and existing dwellings by Part L of Building Regulations with Part G addressing sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency. An uplift to parts L (Conservation of fuel and power) and F (Ventilation) came into effect on 15 June 2022 to improve the energy efficiency	The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to	Carbon Emissions and Targets Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

| 1 | **Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed** |

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
	of new builds. Part O addressing overheating and Part S addressing infrastructure for charging electric vehicles were also added to the approved documents on 15 June 2022.	the impacts of climate change. This may also include retrofitting of existing buildings.	
The Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012	The 2012 regulations aim to implement the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive and in doing so improve the energy efficiency of buildings, thus reducing CO2 emissions and lessening the impact of climate change. It does this through a number of measures which introduced structured assessment and reporting of aspects the buildings which have a bearing on their use of energy such as the construction style, the fabric used, insulation measures, the predicted performance of fixed building services for lighting, heating and cooling. Additionally, the reports contain recommendations which provide owners with optional actions and investments that they may make to increase the energy efficiency of their building.	The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change. This may also include retrofitting of existing buildings.	Carbon Emissions and Targets Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002 (as amended)	To provide for measures, procedures and guidance to prevent or reduce effects on the environment, in particular the pollution of surface water, ground water, soil and air, and on the global environment, including the greenhouse effect, as well as any resulting risk to human health, from landfilling of waste, during the whole life-cycle of the landfill.	The Local Plan should have a positive strategy towards waste minimisation for example through policies that support a circular economy.	Waste and Recycling
Waste Minimisation Act 1998	The prevention or reduction of waste production and its harmfulness by; the development of technologies more sparing in their use of resources: the use of products designed so as to make no or the smallest possible contribution, by the nature of their manufacture, use or disposal, to increase the amount or harmfulness of waste and pollution hazards; the development of appropriate techniques for the final disposal of dangerous substances contained in waste destined for recovery; and the recovery of waste by means of recycling, reuse or reclamation with a view to extracting raw materials; or the use of waste as a source of energy.	The Local Plan should have a positive strategy towards waste minimisation for example through policies that support a circular economy.	Waste and Recycling
Household Waste Recycling Act 2003	The prevention or reduction of waste production and its harmfulness by; the development of technologies more sparing in their use of resources: the use of products designed so as to make no or the smallest possible contribution, by the nature of their manufacture, use or disposal, to increase the amount or harmfulness of waste and pollution hazards; the development of appropriate techniques for the final disposal of dangerous substances contained in waste destined for recovery; and the recovery of waste by means of recycling, reuse or reclamation with a view to extracting raw materials; or the use of waste as a source of energy.	The Local Plan should have a positive strategy towards waste minimisation for example through policies that support a circular economy.	Waste and Recycling
Water Act 2014	This Act brings about a reform of legislation concerning the water industry and management and conservation of water resources and related environmental matters in the United Kingdom. The purpose of the Act is to: reform the water industry to make it more innovative and responsive to customers and to increase the resilience of water supplies to natural hazards such as drought and floods to bring forward measures to address the availability and affordability of insurance for those	The Local Plan will be supported by an updated Water Cycle Study and strategic flood risk assessment to shape policies and allocations.	Flooding and Water

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
	households at high flood risk and ensure a smooth transition to the free market over the longer term.		
Flood and Water Management Act 2010	The purpose of the Directive is to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater by preventing further deterioration and protects and enhances the status of aquatic ecosystems; promoting sustainable water use; enhancing protection and improvement of the aquatic environment; progressively reducing pollution of groundwater and prevents its further pollution; and contributing towards mitigating the effects of floods and droughts.	The Local Plan will be supported by an updated Water Cycle Study and strategic flood risk assessment to shape policies and allocations.	Flooding and Water
The Flood Risk Regulations 2009	A framework for the assessment and management of flood risk, aiming at the reduction of the adverse consequences for human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity. It requires an assessment of all water courses and coast lines are at risk from flooding, to map the flood extent and assets and humans at risk in these areas and to take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce this flood risk. The Directive also reinforces the rights of the public to access this information and to have a say in the planning process.	Three of Huntingdonshire's market towns are located within the Great Ouse valley (Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives) and Ramsey within the low lying Fen, therefore flooding is a significant issue for the District, anticipated to worsen with climate change. The Local Plan will need to provide proactive policies to mitigate against flood risk form all its forms and be supported by a strategic flood risk assessment.	Flooding and Water
The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	Its aim is to improve public access to the countryside and registered common land while recognising the legitimate interests of the owners or managers of the land concerned. It implements the 'right to roam' in certain areas of cultivated land and upland in England and Wales. The Act lists restrictions on the public when on this land, including not damaging hedges, fences, walls.	Assess the impact of policies and allocations on public rights of way.	Travel and Transport
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006	The act created Natural England and the Commission for Rural Communities and, amongst other measures, it extended the biodiversity duty set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act to public bodies and statutory undertakers to ensure due regard to the conservation of biodiversity. Its principal aims are to ensure that all communities, people and businesses have better access to support, advice and services; and to better protect the countryside and open space through a more coherent approach to managing and conserving the natural environment	Assess the impact of policies and allocations on public rights of way. Huntingdonshire has a large rural area, the Local Plan should work with partners to improve transport in these areas and connections to more urban areas.	Travel and Transport
Children and Families Act 2014	The Children and Families Act (2014) aims to ensure that all children, young people and their families are able to access the right support and provision to meet their needs. The Act outlines the Code of Practice for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).	This will be reflected in infrastructure studies and delivery plans.	Education

1   Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Childcare Act 2016	The Childcare Act (2016) extends the entitlement in the Childcare Act (2006) to 30 hours free childcare over 38 weeks of the year for three- and four-year-olds in families where all parents are working. The Act places a duty on local authorities to secure sufficient and suitable quality early education and childcare places to enable parents to work or to undertake education or training which could lead to employment.	This will be reflected in infrastructure studies and delivery plans.	Education
Education Act 1996 Education and Inspections Act 2006 Education and Skills Act 2008	Section 14 of The Education Act (1996) places LAs under a general duty to provide a school place for every child living in their area of responsibility who is of statutory school age and whose parents want their child educated in the state-funded sector. The Education and Inspections Act (2006) places additional duties on LAs to ensure fair access to educational opportunity, to promote choice for parents and to secure diversity in the provision of schools. In addition to this, the Act places an explicit duty on LAs for the first time to respond formally to parents seeking changes to the provision of schools in their area, including new schools. The Education and Skills Act (2008) increased the minimum age at which young people in England can leave learning.	Proposed development within Huntingdonshire will create increased demand for school places, new settlement and urban extensions may be of a scale to provide their own primary and secondary schools. The requirement to provide schools places inline with growth will be reflected in infrastructure studies and delivery plans.	Education
Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill (2022)	The Bill will make it easier to amend or remove outdated 'retained EU law' - legacy EU law kept on the statute book after Brexit as a bridging measure – and will accompany a major cross-government drive to reform, repeal and replace outdated EU law.	The Local Plan and supporting evidence will meet all legal requirements and follow best practice in their production.	All
Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill and Policy Paper (2022)	The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill was published in May 2022. It proposes fundamental changes to the planning system including local plan timetables. The details of the Bills are complex and wide ranging and set out in a Government Policy Paper with the Local Government Association publishing a summary of key changes.	The timetable and methods of bringing the proposals in the Bill forward may impact impact the process by which the Local Plan is prepared and its scale and scope.	All

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

National level policies and strategies

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (NPPF) (MHCLG/ DLUHC, 2021)	The revised National Planning Policy Framework sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It includes the following topic areas: ● Achieving sustainable development ● Plan-making ● Decision-making ● Delivering a sufficient supply of homes ● Building a strong, competitive economy ● Ensuring the vitality of town centres ● Promoting healthy and safe communities ● Promoting sustainable transport ● Supporting high quality communications ● Making effective use of land ● Achieving well-designed places ● Protecting Green Belt land ● Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change ● Conserving and enhancing the natural environment ● Conserving and enhancing the historic environment ● Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals	The NPPF provides the national policies for planning and how these should be applied in the plan-making process. The Local Plan will need to be in conformity with the NPPF. Chapter 3 sets out the framework and criteria that the Local Plan must fulfil to be found sound.	All
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (MHCLG/DLUHC)	To accompany the NPPF, a series of planning practice guidance have been produced to assist in the implementation and application of National policy. The guidance is updated fairly regularly.	The various topics covered within the NPPG provide additional detail on how national policy is to be applied including in plan-making which the Local Plan will reflect.	All
National Model Design Guide and Design Code (MHCLG/ DLUHC, 2021)	The National Design Guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. The National Model Design Code provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design.	Well designed places that create a sense of place is essential to sustainable and resilient communities and development. The Local Plan should set out policies towards design and placemaking so that future developments respond to their contexts using localised evidence such as Huntingdonshire's Design Guide and Landscape and Townscape SPD.	All

| 1 | **Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed** |

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Manual for Streets (DCLG/DfT 2007)	Sets out principles for good street design covering: streets in context; the design process - from policy to implementation; layout and connectivity; quality places; Street users needs; street geometry; Parking; traffic signs and markings; street furniture and street lighting; and materials, adoption and maintenance.	Well designed places are a key component to sustainable development. The Local Plan should set out policies towards design and placemaking so that future developments respond to their contexts using localised evidence such as Huntingdonshire's Design Guide and Landscape and Townscape SPD.	All
Waste Management Plan for England 2021 (Defra, 2021)	The Waste Management Plan for England is an analysis of the current waste management situation in England. The plan does not introduce new policies or change how waste is managed in England. Its aim is to bring current waste management policies together under one national plan.	Policies within the Minerals and Waste Local Plan apply to Huntingdonshire, any designations within the Minerals and Waste Local Plan will be taken into account when considering policies and locations for growth. The Local Plan should have a positive strategy towards waste minimisation for example through policies that support a circular economy.	Waste and Recycling
National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW) (MHCLG/ DLUHC, 2014)	This document sets out detailed waste planning policies. It should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework, the National Waste Management Plan for England and national policy statements for waste water and hazardous waste, or any successor documents. All local planning authorities should have regard to its policies when discharging their responsibilities to the extent that they are appropriate to waste management.	The Local Plan should have a positive strategy towards waste minimisation for example through policies that support a circular economy.	Waste and Recycling
Planning for the Future White Paper (MHCLG/ DLUHC, 2020)	On 6 August 2020 (then MHCLG) launched the Planning for the Future consultation which proposes for long-term fundamental structural changes to England's planning system. The Government's intention of such reforms is to streamline and modernise the planning process, bring a new focus to design and sustainability, improve the system of developer contributions to infrastructure, and ensure more land is available for development where it is needed.	May impact the process by which the Local Plan is prepared and its scale and scope.	All
Levelling up White Paper (DLUHC, February 2022)	The Levelling Up White Paper sets out how the Government proposes to spread opportunity more equally across the UK. It sets out 12 missions to level up by 2030 across a variety of focus areas: living standards, research & development, transport infrastructure, digital connectivity, educations, skills, health, wellbeing, pride in place, housing, crime and local leadership.	Inequalities within Huntingdonshire will be reviewed and where possible will shape policies within the Local Plan to address them.	Income and Deprivation
Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (Department for	This strategy sets out policies and proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy to meet the country's net zero target by 2050. It includes policies like by 2035 the UK will be powered entirely by clean electricity; by 2035 no new gas boilers will be sold; further funding for the Social	The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning	Carbon Emissions and Targets

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, October 2021)	Housing Decarbonisation Scheme and Home Upgrade Grants; and a greener, faster and more efficient transport network.	policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change. This may also include retrofitting of existing buildings.	Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
Energy white paper: Powering our net zero future (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, December 2020)	The energy white paper builds on the Ten point plan for a green industrial revolution. The white paper addresses the transformation of the UK energy system, promoting high-skilled jobs and clean, resilient economic growth to deliver net-zero emissions by 2050.	The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change. This may also include retrofitting of existing buildings.	Carbon Emissions and Targets

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency |
| British Energy Security Strategy (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, April 2022) | The 'British energy security strategy' builds on the 'Ten point plan for a green industrial revolution', and the 'Net zero strategy'.

The Government plans to reduce the UK's reliance on oil and gas by building up eight new nuclear reactors. The Government aims to reform planning laws to speed up approvals for new offshore wind farms. For onshore wind farms it wants to develop partnerships with "supportive communities" who want to host turbines in exchange for guaranteed cheaper energy bills. Targets for hydrogen production are being doubled to help provide cleaner energy for industry as well as for power, transport and potentially heating. The Government will consider reforming rules for installing solar panels on homes and commercial buildings to help increase the current solar capacity by up to five times by 2035. For oil and gas, there will be a new licensing round for North Sea projects is being launched in the summer on the basis that producing gas in the UK has a lower carbon footprint than doing so abroad. There will be a £30m "heat pump investment accelerator competition" to make British heat pumps which reduce demand for gas. | The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change. This may also include retrofitting of existing buildings. | Carbon Emissions and Targets

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency |
| Heat and Buildings Strategy (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, October 2021) | This strategy sets out how the UK will decarbonise homes, and commercial, industrial and public sector buildings, as part of setting a path to net zero by 2050. It works alongside the 'Ten point plan for a green industrial revolution', and the 'Net zero strategy'. | The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions, resilient to the | Carbon Emissions and Targets

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency |

1 | Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
		impacts of climate change and are carbon neutral. This may also include retrofitting of existing buildings.	
Future Buildings Standard - Government consultation response (MHCLG/ DLUHC, December 2020)	The Future Buildings Standard provides a pathway to highly efficient non-domestic buildings which are zero carbon ready, better for the environment and fit for the future by increasing the thresholds within Building Regulations. A full technical consultation on the Future Buildings Standard is expected in 2023 with implementation from 2025.	The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change. This may also include retrofitting of existing buildings.	Carbon Emissions and Targets Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
Nature Nearby, Accessible Greenspace Guidance (Natural England, 2010)	Details Natural England's standards for accessible natural greenspace (ANGSt), a set of benchmarks that should be used to ensure new and existing residential development has access to nature. Revised standards are being prepared.	A healthy and active population is a key component to sustainable development. The Local Plan will seek to integrate this into policies and allocations supported by appropriate infrastructure assessments.	Green Infrastructure and Open Space Population and Health
PHE Strategy 2020 to 2025 (Public Health England, 2019)	The PHE Strategy 2020 to 2025 sets out how Public Health England will work to protect and improve the public's health and reduce health inequalities over the next 5 years. It outlines PHE's role within the public health system, 10 priorities where PHE will focus particular effort and the areas where PHE will build capability within the organisation to support delivery of its strategic objectives and wider activities.	A healthy and active population is a key component to sustainable development. The Local Plan will seek to integrate this into policies and allocations supported by appropriate infrastructure assessments.	Green Infrastructure and Open Space Population and Health
Sports England Strategic outcomes planning and leisure delivery guidance (Sports England, May 2021)	The LSDG is a walkthrough of the different facility management options available to local authorities. It aims to help local authorities adopt a strategic approach to investment in sport to deliver desired local outcomes in a financially sustainable way.	A healthy and active population is a key component to sustainable development. The Local Plan will seek to integrate this into policies and allocations supported by appropriate infrastructure assessments.	Green Infrastructure and Open Space Population and Health
Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard (England) (Fields on Trust, November 2020)	The Fields in Trust policy framework seeks the protection, provision and improvement of outdoor spaces for sport and play as part of the provision of sustainable communities. It sets out guidance for provision of outdoor sports and play facilities and recommended threshold provision.	A healthy and active population is a key component to sustainable development. The Local Plan will seek to integrate this into policies and allocations supported by appropriate infrastructure assessments.	Green Infrastructure and Open Space Population and Health

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (Defra, 2018)	This 25 Year Environment Plan sets out government action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. It aims to deliver cleaner air and water in cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first. Alongside the plan, are 3 detailed technical annexes and the Outcome Indicator Framework for this plan, which is also available as an interactive dashboard. The first annual progress report in May 2019. The Plan sits alongside two other government strategies: our Industrial Strategy and our Clean Growth strategy.	The Local Plan will be supported by appropriate assessments on the environment including a Habitats Regulation Assessment to assess the impact of policies and allocations on the environment, habitats an wildlife. Collaboration with partners on how biodiversity net gain can be achieved will also take place.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Safeguarding our Soils – A Strategy for England (Defra, 2009)	The Strategy's vision is that by 2030, all England's soils will be managed sustainably and degradation threats tackled successfully. This will improve the quality of England's soils and safeguard their ability to provide essential services for future generations. Soil is a fundamental and essentially non-renewable natural resource, providing the essential link between the components that make up our environment. Soils vary hugely from region to region and even from field to field. They all perform a number of valuable functions or ecosystem services for society including: nutrient cycling, water regulation, carbon storage, support for biodiversity and wildlife, and providing a platform for food and fibre production and infrastructure.	Agriculture and farming places an important role to the local and national economy and to the conservation of habitats and carbon capture. An appropriate strategy towards protecting high quality soils should be included in the Local Plan.	Land, Soils and Agriculture Green Infrastructure
England Peat Action Plan (Defra, 2021)	The England Peat Action Plan sets out the government's long-term vision for the management, protection and restoration of peatlands, so that they provide a wide range of benefits to wildlife, people and the planet. To implement this vision, the plan includes: the announcement of the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme through the Nature for Climate Fund a commitment to end the use of peat in the amateur horticulture sector a new spatial map of England's peatlands The Plan commitments to restore 35,000 hectares of peatland by 2025. The action plan is part of a series of announcements on nature and climate and sits alongside the England Trees Action Plan. It also supports the 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment.	Agriculture and farming places an important role to the local and national economy and to the conservation of habitats and carbon capture. The Council is a partner in the Great Fen project. The ambitions of the project should be supported in the new Local Plan.	Land, Soils and Agriculture Green Infrastructure
The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (1994 and updates) and UK Biodiversity Action Plan	A detailed plan for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity resources. Seeks to increase public awareness of, and involvement in, conserving biodiversity and to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity on a European and global scale.	The Local Plan will be supported by appropriate assessments on the environment including a Habitats Regulation Assessment to assess the impact of policies and allocations on the environment, habitats an wildlife. Collaboration with partners on how biodiversity net gain can be achieved will also take place.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment

1	**Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed**

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
The Biodiversity Metric 3.0 (JP039) (Defra, 2021)	Biodiversity Metric 3.0 is a biodiversity accounting tool that can be used for the purposes of calculating biodiversity net gain. It includes GIS support to apply the metric and also a test version of a Small Sites Metric – a simplified version of the Biodiversity Metric 3.0 for use on small development sites.	The Local Plan will be supported by appropriate assessments on the environment including a Habitats Regulation Assessment to assess the impact of policies and allocations on the environment, habitats an wildlife. Collaboration with partners on how biodiversity net gain can be achieved will also take place.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (MHCLG, 2015)	This document sets out the Government's planning policy for traveller sites. It should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework. The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. It identifies that Local authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning.	The proposed growth within the Local Plan must meet the identified needs. These will be integrated into policies and allocations and supported by appropriate evidence.	Housing
Planning for Schools Development: Statement (2011)	The Government wants to enable new schools to open, good schools to expand and all schools to adapt and improve their facilities. This will allow for more provision and greater diversity in the state-funded school sector to meet both demographic needs and the drive for increased choice and higher standards. It is the Government's view that the creation and development of state-funded schools is strongly in the national interest and that planning decision-makers can and should support that objective, in a manner consistent with their statutory obligations. We expect all parties to work together proactively from an early stage to help plan for state-school development and to shape strong planning applications.	Proposed development within Huntingdonshire will create increased demand for school places, new settlement and urban extensions may be of a scale to provide their own primary and secondary schools.	Education
Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth (DfE, 2021)	The White Paper sets out reforms to post-16 technical education and training to support people to develop the skills needed to get good jobs and improve national productivity.	Proposed development within Huntingdonshire will create increased demand for skills training and post-16 further education demand. A population with skills and technical training supports the local economy and improve employment prospects.	Education
Decarbonising transport: a better, greener Britain (2021)	This plan sets out the government's commitments and the actions needed to decarbonise the entire transport system in the UK. It includes the: • pathway to net zero transport in the UK • wider benefits net zero transport can deliver • principles that underpin our approach to delivering net zero transport	Huntingdonshire has vast networks of strategic transport connections as well as local routes. The Local Plan should work with partners to help decarbonise the transport network, support a modal shift away from car usage, encourage	Travel and Transport Carbon Emissions and Targets

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
		sustainable modes of transport and increase the infrastructure of electric vehicle charging points.	
Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy (DfT, 2019)	The 'Future of mobility: urban strategy' outlines the government's approach to maximising the benefits from transport innovation in cities and towns. It sets out the principles that will guide government's response to emerging transport technologies and business models. The strategy also contains details of the next steps for the government's Future of mobility grand challenge. Alongside the strategy, the Department for Transport (DfT) has published the summary of responses to its Future of mobility call for evidence.	Huntingdonshire has a large rural area and some more urbanised areas, the Local Plan should work with partners to improve transport and mobility across the district.	Travel and Transport
Future of Transport: Rural Strategy – call for evidence responses (DfT, 2021)	This call for evidence seeks views and evidence from all those with an interest in rural transport. Following the Future of mobility: urban strategy published in March 2019, the Department for Transport (DfT), sought views and evidence on what could be incorporated into a Future of Transport: rural strategy. The consultation ran between 23 November 2020 and 16 February 2021) and includes: ● the context of the Future of Transport: rural strategy assessment of the mobility trends in rural areas, and the emerging opportunities for rural environments that we are witnessing in transport innovation ● consideration of the approach that the government could take to help shape these opportunities to benefit rural areas. The DfT anticipates a draft Rural Transport Strategy to be published by the end of 2022.	Huntingdonshire has a large rural area, the Local Plan should work with partners to improve transport in these areas and connections to more urban areas.	Travel and Transport
The Heritage Statement (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, 2017)	The Government's vision and strategy for Heritage and the historic environment including how the government will support the heritage sector and help it to protect and care for our heritage and historic environment in the coming years, in order to maximise the economic and social impact of heritage and to ensure that everyone can enjoy and benefit from it.	The Local should include a positive strategy towards heritage assets.	Heritage
Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future (HM Government, 2017)	This sets out a long-term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK. The strategy sets out how we are building a Britain fit for the future – how we will help businesses create better, higher-paying jobs with investment in the skills, industries and infrastructure of the future. It aims to boost productivity and earning power across the country by focusing on 5 foundations: ideas, people, infrastructure, business environment and places. In December 2018, progress made by the Industrial Strategy in Forging our Future: Industrial Strategy – the story so far was published.	A positive strategy towards economic activity and employment is essential in the Local Plan using appropriate evidence. Having a good understanding on the potential for a green economy and green jobs will need to be considered.	Employment and Business Carbon Emissions and Targets
The Clean Growth Strategy: Leading the way to a low carbon	This strategy sets out our proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy through the 2020s. It explains how the whole country can benefit from low carbon opportunities, while meeting national and international commitments to tackle climate change.	A positive strategy towards economic activity and employment is essential in the Local Plan using appropriate evidence. Having a good understanding on the potential for a green economy	Employment and Business Carbon Emissions and Targets

1   Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
future (HM Government, 2017)		and green jobs will need to be considered.	
The Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection (EA, 2017)	It contains position statements which provide information about the Environment Agency's approach to managing and protecting groundwater. They detail how the Environment Agency delivers government policy for groundwater and adopts a risk-based approach where legislation allows.	Policies that support the EA's goals and objectives on managing an protecting groundwater should be included in the Local Plan.	Flooding and Water
National Flood and Coastal Erosion Management Strategy for England (EA, 2021)	The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 places a statutory duty on the Environment Agency to develop a National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England. This strategy describes what needs to be done by all risk management authorities (RMAs) involved in flood and coastal erosion risk management for the benefit of people and places.	The Local Plan will need to provide proactive policies to mitigate against flood risk form all its forms and be supported by a strategic flood risk assessment.	Flooding and Water
Clean Air Strategy 2019 (HM Government)	This strategy sets out the actions required across all parts of government and society to improve air quality. The strategy sets out how the Government will: protect the nation's health; protect the environment; secure clean growth and innovation; and reduce emissions from transport, homes, farming and industry monitor our progress. It complements three other UK government strategies: the Industrial Strategy, the Clean Growth Strategy and the 25 Year Environment Plan.	The Local Plan should ensure that through its policies and allocations that harmful effects on air quality are avoided.	Pollution
Air quality plan for nitrogen dioxide (NO2) in UK (Defra, 2017)	Statutory air quality plan for nitrogen dioxide (NO2), setting out how the UK will be reducing roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations. These documents and zone plans set out our comprehensive approach to meeting the statutory limits for nitrogen dioxide, and the policy background. The technical report details the modelling techniques and assumptions used when developing the plan.	The Local Plan should ensure that through its policies and allocations that harmful effects on air quality are avoided.	Pollution

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Regional level

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
UKCP18 Climate Projections (UKCIP, 2018)	Comprehensive climate projections for the UK split into regions.	Huntingdonshire must play its part in reducing carbon emissions and the impacts of climate change on people and the environment. The new Local Plan will play an important part in implementing policies that provide carbon neutral, green and climate resilient development.	Carbon Emissions and Targets
Planning for sustainable growth in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc: spatial framework (MHCLG/DLUHC, 2021) and Local Natural Capital Plan	The Government has renewed its support for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, which Huntingdonshire is located within. In February 2021, a Spatial Framework for the Arc was published setting out the rationale and timelines to deliver the Spatial Framework. This is a long-term strategic plan to help coordinate the infrastructure, environment and new developments in the area. An indicative time for a draft Framework to be published is Autumn 2022. Once finalised, the Spatial Framework will sit alongside the NPPF as national policy. A consultation on creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc was launched in July 2021 alongside a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, the data used within it has been placed into an interactive map. The Local Natural Capital Plan for the Arc is a first step to ensure a natural capital baseline and framework is provided that helps to monitor environmental change and de-risk growth as part of the Ox-Cam Arc.	Huntingdonshire is located within the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. The Council has actively engaged with the Government on developing the Spatial Framework as stakeholders. To realise the potential of the Arc and if it is continued, the Local Plan should sustainably integrate infrastructure, growth and environmental priorities.	All
East of England Route Strategy (Highways England, March 2017)	This Route Strategy provides a statement on the current performance of, and perceived pressures on, the East of England route to inform the planning of future investment. The SRN supports national and local economic prosperity by: ● linking together major cities ● connecting with extensive local road network ● providing links to major ports, airports, and rail terminals ● enabling good access to regions and cross-border routes between the nations of the United Kingdom The East of England route is formed of the A11, A12, A47 and A120	Huntingdonshire and many of its settlements are well placed in relation to the strategic road network. Improvements to existing routes and the delivery of infrastructure, housing and jobs nearby will need to be appropriately assessed.	Travel and Transport
East-West Rail	East West Rail is a major infrastructure project which is proposed to deliver these much-needed connections. Linking people with job opportunities, new homes and major economic hubs both locally and across the UK. It is a key transport project within the Ox-Cam Arc. The section between Oxford and Bicester has been constructed with Bicester to Bletchley under construction. Later phases such as Bletchley to Bedford is in the detailed planning phase while the Bedford to Cambridge	A key project to support the delivery of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, an East West Rail route within Huntingdonshire and potentially a new station will have impact on the spatial distribution of new development. The delivery of	Travel and Transport

| 1 | Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed |

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
	section is in the early planning phase. There is likely to be a new railway station to the south of St Neots, it is not clear whether this will be nearer to St Neots or Tempsford at this stage.	infrastructure, housing and jobs within this corridor will need to be appropriately assessed.	
A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Road improvement scheme Development Consent Order	The proposal is to upgrade the A428 between A1/A421 Black Cat Junction and A428/A1198 Caxton Gibbet Junction to high quality dual carriageway. Construction will include 19km of new Dual Carriageway, and Grade separated junctions. The DCO was granted on 18 August 2022.	Huntingdonshire and many of its settlements are well placed in relation to the strategic road network. Improvements to existing routes and the delivery of infrastructure, housing and jobs nearby will need to be appropriately assessed.	Travel and Transport
A47 North Tuddenham to Easton improvement scheme Development Consent Order	Dualling of the single carriageway section of the A47 between Norwich and Dereham, linking together two existing sections of dual carriageway. The scheme will provide a new route to the south of Hockering and to the north of Honningham and include new junctions with locations yet to be determined. The DCO was granted on 12 August 2022.	Huntingdonshire and many of its settlements are well placed in relation to the strategic road network. Improvements to existing routes and the delivery of infrastructure, housing and jobs nearby will need to be appropriately assessed.	Travel and Transport
East Inshore and East Offshore Marine Plans (2014)	Published April 2014, the East Inshore and East Offshore Marine Plans provide guidance for sustainable development from Flamborough Head to Felixstowe. Marine plans address the key issues for the area, setting a vision and objectives. Detailed policies set out how these will be achieved and how issues will be managed or mitigated. The policies inform decision-making for any activity or development which is in or impacts on a marine area.	The River Great Ouse and River Nene flow through the district, they both drain into the North Sea.	Flooding and Water
Water for people and the environment: Water resources strategy Regional action plan for the Anglian Region (Environment Agency, 2009)	Sets out the EA's strategic approach to water management within the Anglian region. It considers local pressures and priorities, and reflects the measures n River Basin Management Plans and the EA's corporate strategy. The regional action plan and its strategy link to a number of other strategies and plans for England and Wales.	Huntingdonshire lies within the East of England, a region prone to water stress. The impact of future growth on water supply will need to be properly assessed.	Flooding and Water
Emerging Water Resources East Regional Plan (January 2022)	Consultation on the draft Water Resources East Regional Plan was undertaken between January and March 2022. The Plan is anticipated to be completed in 2023. The aim of our Regional Plan is to ensure sustainable and resilient water resources to 2050 and beyond.	Huntingdonshire lies within the East of England, a region prone to water stress. The impact of future growth on water supply will need to be properly assessed.	Flooding and Water

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Future Fens Integrated Adaptation manifesto (November 2021) and Future Fens Flood Risk Management Baseline Report (2020)	Sets out an approach for landscape scale adaptation to climate change. Aims are to protect and enhance the environment, maintain food security, develop new water resources, alleviate risks from drought and floods, to lock carbon into natural systems and enable investment. The Environment Agency's 'Flood Risk Management for the Fens' project considers what the future flood risk management choices for the Great Ouse Fens might look like.	The rivers Great Ouse and Nene are key to the catchment area feeding the Fens and cut through Huntingdonshire. The integrated approach connects changes to the water environment with agriculture and the impacts on peat soils which cover much of northern Huntingdonshire.	Flooding and Water

Land, Soils and Agriculture |
Catchment Abstraction Management Plans: Upper Ouse and Bedford Ouse abstraction licensing strategy (2017), Old Bedford including Middle Level abstraction licensing strategy (2017)	Details how the Environment Agency manages water resources and sets out the EA's approach to managing new and existing abstraction and impoundment within thein the Old Bedford catchment and the Upper Ouse and Bedford Ouse catchment.	Huntingdonshire lies within the East of England, a region prone to water stress. The impact of future growth on water supply will need to be assessed.	Flooding and Water
Anglian Water's Long Term Water Recycling Plan (WRLTP)	The plan considers risk from growth, climate change, severe drought, and customer behaviours. It promotes sustainable solutions for maintaining reliable and affordable levels of service, and facilitates working in partnership to mitigate flood risk. It complements the Anglian Water Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP).	Huntingdonshire lies within the East of England, a region prone to water stress. Huntingdonshire is home to England's third largest reservoir, Grafham Water. The impact of future growth on water supply will need to be assessed.	Flooding and Water
Anglian Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) 2020-2045	Sets out how Anglian Water will manage the water supplies in the region to meet current and future needs over a minimum of 25 years. The current Plan, published in 2019, covers the period from 2020-2045. The Plan identifies that the Anglian region faces four key challenges: climate change, environmental protection, population growth and the risk of drought. The Plan seeks to address as the area may move from a strong position of a surplus of 150 million litres of water daily to a deficit of 30 million litres daily by 2025. To tackle this, there is a focus on the demand side first and reduce the amount of water used by installing smart meters, reducing leakage and investing in water efficiency and also invest in the supply-side to increase the amount of water available.	Huntingdonshire lies within the East of England, a region prone to water stress. Huntingdonshire is home to England's third largest reservoir, Grafham Water. The impact of future growth on water supply will need to be assessed.	Flooding and Water
Anglian River Basin District River Basin Management Plan (2015)	This document sets out the current state of the water environment; pressures affecting the water environment; environmental objectives for protecting and improving the waters; programme of measures, actions needed to achieve the objectives; and progress since the 2009 plan. It also informs decisions on land-use planning because water and land resources are closely linked.	Huntingdonshire lies within the East of England, a region prone to water stress. Huntingdonshire is home to England's third largest reservoir, Grafham Water. The impact of future growth on water supply will need to be assessed with .	Flooding and Water

1   Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Cambridge Water Resource Management Plan 2020-2045	The plan covers a 25 year period to 2045. This plan sets out, in detail, how Cambridge Water will provide high-quality, sustainable and reliable water supplies over the next 25 years. It also takes into account things like climate change, population growth and the need to protect the environment. It describes how Cambridge Water will manage water resources and maintain the balance between the water available to supply to and the demand for that water.	Huntingdonshire lies within the East of England, a region prone to water stress. The impact of future growth on water supply will need to be assessed.	Flooding and Water

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Sub-regional, County and Local level

Sub-regional level documents

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Devolution Deal (HM Government, 2017)	This Devolution Deal marked the transfer of resources, powers and accountability from central Government to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. In return for this level of devolution and local control Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will establish a Combined Authority, with a directly elected Mayor in place from May 2017. The ambitions of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is to: ● double the size of the local economy ● accelerate house building rates to meet local and UK need ● deliver outstanding and much needed connectivity in terms of transport and digital links ● provide the UK's most technically skilled workforce ● transform public service delivery to be much more seamless and responsive to local need ● grow international recognition for our knowledge based economy improve the quality of life by tackling areas suffering from deprivation	Huntingdonshire is part of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area. Where possible, the Local Plan will work towards achieving the ambitions of the Combined Authority.	All
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Housing Strategy (CPCA, September, 2018)	The delivery of at least 100,000 more homes, and especially new affordable homes, is one of the key objectives of the CPCA. The CPCA's targets for housing delivery include at least 100,000 additional new homes (including at least 40% new affordable homes) by 2036; and short term delivery targets of at least 2,000 new affordable homes by 2022, region wide, using £100 million of government grant, plus 500 new Council homes in a government grant ring-fenced for Cambridge City Council.	Huntingdonshire is part of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area. Where possible, the Local Plan will work towards achieving the ambitions of the Combined Authority.	Housing
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER) (September, 2018)	This independent review highlights the importance of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area to the national economy and its industrial future. It makes 14 key recommendations and 13 subsidiary recommendations to sustain its own economy, and support the UK economy, while providing a better and more fulfilling way of life for the people who live and work in this area.	Huntingdonshire is part of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area. Where possible, the Local Plan will work towards achieving the ambitions of the Combined Authority.	Employment and Businesses Retail and Town Centres Tourism and Leisure
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Industrial Strategy (July 2019)	This Local Industrial Strategy sets out an industrial blueprint to deliver Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's vision of being a leading place in the world to live, learn, work, and do business. It supports the aims of the National Industrial Strategy by boosting productivity in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This strategy is one of a family of four linked strategies covering the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, with the other strategies covering Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and the South East Midlands. While responding to the wider economic context of the Arc, the specific objectives for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area are:	Huntingdonshire is part of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area. Where possible, the Local Plan will work towards achieving the ambitions of the Combined Authority.	Employment and Businesses

| 1 | Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed |

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
	• Working together collaboratively across all of the foundations of productivity to ensure that the implementation of the four Local Industrial Strategies maximises the economic potential of the wider Arc region. • Harnessing the collective strength of the Arc's research base – driving greater collaboration on science and research; developing a network of 'living labs' to trial and commercialise new technologies; and growing the role of the Arc as a global research and innovation hub. • Bringing employers and skills providers together to understand the current and future skills needs, and planning provision to meet them. • Maximising the economic benefits of new transport, energy and digital infrastructure within the Arc. • Developing an improved business support and finance programme for high growth companies, a shared approach to commercial premises and an Internationalisation Delivery Plan to encourage greater trade and inward investment in the Arc		
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Economic Recovery Strategy (LERS) (March, 2021)	The Combined Authority's goal is to make a leading contribution both to the UK's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and to its future global success. This strategy sets out how the CA will accelerate the recovery, rebound and renewal of its economy, helping people effected and achieving the ambition to double GVA by 2042 in a digitally enabled, greener, healthier and more inclusive way.	Huntingdonshire is part of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area. Where possible, the Local Plan will work towards achieving the ambitions of the Combined Authority.	Employment and Businesses Retail and Town Centres Tourism and Leisure
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate (CPICC) (October 2021)	The Commission's mission is to provide independent advice to local government, the broader public sector and business on setting and meeting carbon reduction targets for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and on preparing for climate change. It identifies that within the CPCA area, emissions are almost 25% higher per person than the UK average, excluding the emissions from peat. It identifies that in the CPCA area there are over 350,000 existing homes that will need to be converted to low carbon heating, and every new build must be net zero. All the cars in the region (more than 500,000 currently) will need to be zero emissions by 2050. In respect of green infrastructure, it is estimated a requirement of around £700m annually through the 2020s in the CPCA area will be needed to deliver the decarbonisation of electricity systems, industries, transport and homes.	Huntingdonshire is part of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area. Where possible, the Local Plan will work towards achieving the ambitions of the Combined Authority.	Carbon Emissions and Targets Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Transport Plan (CPCA, 2020)	This is the first transport plan for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough together and establishes a vision, goals, objectives and policies to respond to the Combined Authority's strategic approach to growth to 2050 and to address current challenges and opportunities. There are three goals: deliver economic growth and opportunity for all our communities; provide an accessible transport system to ensure everyone can thrive and be healthy; and preserve and enhance our built, natural and historic environment and implement measures to achieve net zero carbon.	Huntingdonshire is part of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area. Where possible, the Local Plan will work towards achieving the ambitions of the Combined Authority.	Travel and Transport

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Mapping natural capital and opportunities for habitat creation in Cambridgeshire (Natural Capital Solutions Ltd for Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Partnership, May, 2019)	This report has produced detailed habitat base maps for the whole of Cambridgeshire (including Peterborough), to examine habitat change over 80 years, and to identify opportunities to enhance biodiversity.	Report includes habitats within Huntingdonshire. The impact of local plan policies and any site allocations will be assessed for their impact on the environment via a habitats regulations assessment.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Natural Cambridgeshire's 'Doubling Nature – A Vision for the Natural Future of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in 2050'	The vision is to double nature, including land managed for nature, in Cambridgeshire by 2050. Within this, it aims to create living landscapes, promote good practice for local food and farming, create better places to live, create sustainable jobs, healthy communities and promote heritage, culture and leisure.	The natural environment and biodiversity net gain will be embedded in to the Local Plan as part of sustainable development objectives.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Combined Authority Doubling Nature Investment Plan (2020)	As part of the 'Doubling Nature – A Natural Vision', there is a

commitment to prepare a Cambridgeshire-wide natural capital investment plan, now termed the Doubling Nature Investment Plan (DNIP), to 'inform strategic and economic decision making in order to maximise opportunities for enhancing the area's natural environment. This scoping report explores mechanisms in which to deliver this. | The natural environment and biodiversity net gain will be embedded in to the Local Plan as part of sustainable development objectives. | Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment |
| Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Digital Connectivity Strategy 2021-2025 (Connecting Cambridgeshire, 2021) | It targets different aspects of digital connectivity from broadband, mobile, 'Smart' technology and public access Wi-Fi to ensure that the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area has the leading digital connectivity infrastructure required to ensure that:
● All businesses have access to the leading-edge digital connectivity needed to help them succeed and to deliver sustainable growth.
● Communities, particularly in rural areas, are digitally connected and able to access education, jobs, health, social care and other public services.
● Digital connectivity supports home working and remote training alongside other agile working practises, which can contribute to reduced commuting, less traffic congestion and more flexible and more inclusive job opportunities.
● 'Smart' technology, including 'Internet of Things' based connectivity helps to provide ready access to real-time transport information and environmental monitoring, leading to increased | Connecting Cambridgeshire includes Huntingdonshire. Where possible, the Local Plan will work towards improving digital infrastructure. | Digital Infrastructure and Communications |

1   Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
	use of sustainable transport solutions, reducing private car usage and contributing to a reduction in carbon emissions and meeting climate change targets. • As a key part of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, businesses, communities and public services in our area are able to harness digital connectivity and advanced technology to support sustainable growth, good quality of life and a strong local economy with no communities left behind.		
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (CCC, adopted July 2021)	The Minerals and Waste Local Plan sets the framework for all minerals and waste developments until 2036. It sets out policies to guide mineral and waste management development and will: ensure a steady supply of minerals (construction materials e.g. sand and gravel) to supply the growth that is planned for the area; and enable CCC to have new modern waste management facilities, to manage our waste in a much better way than landfill. The Local Plan makes strategic allocations for long-term mineral and waste management development at Block Fen/Langwood Fen near Mepal. Designations such as Mineral Safeguarding Areas are also made within the Local Plan and shown on the Policies Map. This will ensure, for example, that consultation takes place between the County Council as Mineral Planning Authority and district/city councils when development is proposed on mineral bearing land. The aim is to avoid the county's finite mineral resource being unknowingly or unnecessarily sterilised.	Policies within the Minerals and Waste Local Plan apply to Huntingdonshire, any designations within the Minerals and Waste Local Plan will be taken into account when considering policies and locations for growth.	Waste and Recycling
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2024 (CCC, 2020)	The health and wellbeing strategy has four priorities: 1. places that support health and wellbeing; 2. helping children achieve the best start in life; 3. staying healthy throughout life; and 4. quality health and social care.	Health and wellbeing should be embedded in the Local Plan as part of sustainable development objectives and to create and support resilient communities.	Population and Health

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

County level documents

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Cambridgeshire Renewables Infrastructure Framework (CRIF) – Final Report: Finance, Delivery and Engagement (Camco for Cambridgeshire Horizons, 2012)	Aims including; to serve as an evidence base for the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy by identifying the renewable energy Infrastructure needed to meet low-carbon development aims, allowing the collection of developer contributions as part of the funding solution for such projects; informing ongoing development of development plans alongside other evidence based work, with the aim of creating the policy platform for renewable energy infrastructure investment; informing the proposed Community Energy Fund (CEF), identifying opportunities for more flexible sources of low carbon infrastructure investment and to complement the Low Carbon Development Initiative (LCDI), which is bringing forward and reducing the risk of renewable energy projects to enable investment.	Huntingdonshire are preparing their own Environment and Climate Change Strategy. The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions where possible and is resilient to the impacts of climate change.	Carbon Emissions and Targets
Climate Change and Environment Strategy (2020-2025), Carbon Footprint for 2018/19 and our Action Plan (CCC, 2020)	Following Cambridgeshire County Council's declaration of a Climate and Environment Emergency, it has approved a Climate Change and Environment Strategy (2020-2025), Carbon Footprint for 2018/19 and our Action Plan. These set out plans to reduce the County Council's the County's carbon footprint, and to support others in their efforts. There are 15 priority areas split within three themes (mitigation, adaptation and natural capital). The vision is to deliver net-zero carbon emission for Cambridgeshire by 2050 whilst supporting our communities and Cambridgeshire's biodiversity and environmental assets to adapt and flourish as our climate changes.	Huntingdonshire are preparing their own Environment and Climate Change Strategy. The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change.	Carbon Emissions and Targets
Cambridgeshire Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2020	Mitigation and adaptation to climate change of CCC estate and elements they can influence. Conservation and enhancement of natural capital and priority areas for this in Cambridgeshire.	Huntingdonshire are preparing their own Environment and Climate Change Strategy. The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change.	Carbon Emissions and Targets
Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines (CCC, 1991)	Vision: a countryside which is diverse, reflecting local character and a sense of place, consciously thought about and managed and which acknowledges our affinity with nature and our need for recreation and visual enjoyment. Sets out the following objectives to achieve the vision: increase people's awareness of landscape quality; mobilise care and action amongst the main bodies who play the most active role in generating tomorrow's landscapes; improve overall visual quality and strengthen the contrasts between landscapes in the County; integrate wildlife conservation into	This guidance has been incorporated into the Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022), the new Local Plan will consider the impact of growth on the landscape.	Landscape

| 1 | Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed |

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
	landscape action at all scales; protect and enhance historic features; and conserve existing features and create landmarks and 'personality' in the landscape.		
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Action Plans (CCC, Various dates)	The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Group has reviewed our Local Priority Species (formerly Local Species Action Plans). Over 200 UK Priority Species are found in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.	By Cambridgeshire County Council which includes Huntingdonshire authority area	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2016)	This document provides an update to the Rights Of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) adopted in 2006 in line with the requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2002. This update summarises the progress made since the ROWIP was adopted in 2006 and sets out future challenges for rights of way and countryside access to 2031 in the form of updated Statements of Action.	By Cambridgeshire County Council which includes Huntingdonshire authority area	Travel and transport
Surface Water Management Plan for Cambridgeshire (CCC, 2014)	Tool to manage surface water flood risk on a local basis by improving and optimising coordination between relevant stakeholders. SWMPs build on 'Strategic Flood Risk Assessments' and provide the vehicle for local organisations to develop a shared understanding of local flood risk and establish an action plan, including setting out priorities for action, maintenance needs and links into development framework and emergency plans. Also to be used as evidence when formulating general planning policies relating to surface water flooding such as use of SuDS. Identifies St Neots, Huntingdon, St Ives, Sawtry and Godmanchester as wetspots and St Neots for additional modelling work. The objectives of the 2014 SWMP Countywide Update are to: ● Collate and review additional flood incident records from 2011 to 2014 made available by the SWMP stakeholders to identify that the initial wetspot list remains appropriate; ● Revise the MCA methodology to make use of the updated national surface water flood risk mapping available from the EA; and ● Produce a revised list of wetspot prioritisation to assist CCC and partners in taking action and allocating resources for future investigation.	Three of Huntingdonshire's market towns are located within the Great Ouse valley (Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives) and Ramsey within the low lying Fen, therefore flooding is a significant issue for the District, anticipated to worsen with climate change. The Local Plan will need to provide proactive policies to mitigate against flood risk form all its forms and be supported by a strategic flood risk assessment.	Flooding and Water
Draft Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for Cambridgeshire 2021-2027 (CCC, 2022)	The strategy has been developed together with the members of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Flood and Water Partnership alongside the Environment Agency's National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy. It encompasses the predicted and historical flooding issues in and around Cambridgeshire, focusing on how efficiencies and effectiveness of local solutions can be funded within communities to adapt and be more resilient to flood risk. Future adaptation will be key for the whole water environment as pressures are already being felt on water supply as well as flooding. Some work is already underway to provide greater support to communities as a part of the Community Flood Action Programme.	Three of Huntingdonshire's market towns are located within the Great Ouse valley (Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives) and Ramsey within the low lying Fen, therefore flooding is a significant issue for the District, anticipated to worsen with climate change. The Local Plan will need to provide proactive policies to mitigate against flood risk form all its forms and be supported by a strategic flood risk assessment.	Flooding and Water

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)	This SPD provides guidance that applies all Cambridgeshire authorities providing a consistent approach to flooding and drainage matters in determining planning applications. It also provides detailed guidance on undertaking the sequential test and incorporating sustainable drainage measures.	Three of Huntingdonshire's market towns are located within the Great Ouse valley (Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives) and Ramsey within the low lying Fen, therefore flooding is a significant issue for the District, anticipated to worsen with climate change. The Local Plan will need to provide proactive policies to mitigate against flood risk form all its forms and be supported by a strategic flood risk assessment.	Flooding and Water
Surface Water Planning Guidance (CCC, June 2021)	This guidance has been prepared to support developers and their consultants in the preparation of surface water documents to support planning applications. It has been prepared with input from an advice group made up of the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), house builders and consultants/engineers to ensure it is as relevant and up-to-date as possible. This document is 'live' and will therefore be reviewed annually and updated should new guidance or legislation be introduced.	The Local Plan will need to provide proactive policies to mitigate against flood risk form all its forms and be supported by a strategic flood risk assessment.	Flooding and Water
RECAP Waste Management Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (CCC, 2012)	The RECAP Waste Management Design Guide provides advice on the design and provision of waste management infrastructure as part of residential and commercial developments including the following: • internal/external storage capacity - the amount of space required within homes and for the storage of bins to serve residential and commercial developments • location of waste storage - issues to be considered in relation to the location of bins waste storage infrastructure - a minimum specification for the storage of waste in residential and commercial developments • highway design - ensuring that waste collection vehicles can serve new developments effectively additional waste management measures - complementary measures which can be introduced to support the effective management of waste • developer contributions - how developers will contribute to the provision of waste infrastructure including the provision of waste storage containers, Household Recycling Centres and Bring Sites • the RECAP Waste Management Guide also includes a toolkit to be used by developers to demonstrate how they have addressed the waste management infrastructure requirements set out above as part of their proposals	The Local Plan should set out policies and allocations towards design that incorporate appropriate waste management.	Waste and Recycling

1 | Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011)	The strategy is designed to assist in shaping and coordinating the delivery of green infrastructure in the county, to provide social, environmental and economic benefits now and in the future. Within the strategic green infrastructure network identified by the strategy it is important to ensure that development proposals contribute to the strategy's vision and objectives, particularly the opportunity to improve the network of green spaces where they are needed to achieve the objectives of: reversing the decline of biodiversity; mitigating and adapting to climate change; promoting sustainable growth and economic development; and supporting healthy living and wellbeing.	Growth within the Local Plan will need to be complemented with appropriate green infrastructure provision in accessible locations.	Green Infrastructure and Open Space
Cambridgeshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and data sets	The purpose of Cambridgeshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is to identify local needs and views to support local strategy development and service planning. In order to understand whether we are achieving good health and care outcomes locally, it is useful to benchmark outcomes in Cambridgeshire against the national average and look at trends over time. It highlights key findings based on the information and evidence collected and informs the local Health and Wellbeing Board as to the content of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.	Health and wellbeing should be embedded in the Local Plan as part of sustainable development objectives and to create and support resilient communities.	Population and Health
Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk: Housing Needs of Specific Groups (GL Hearn, October 2021)	This includes commentary on the local housing market and provides guidance at district level on affordable housing needs and the preferred housing mix for new developments enabling local authorities to think about the nature and influence of housing markets in their area; provide robust evidence to inform the policies aiming to get the right mix of housing across the whole housing market; and provide evidence to inform policies about the level and sizes of affordable housing	To ensure that the needs of various groups are met across Huntingdonshire, the outcomes and recommendations of this assessment will shape policies relating to housing in the Local Plan.	Housing
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2016)	The GTAA 2016 sought to understand the accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople across Cambridgeshire (excluding Fenland), West Suffolk, Peterborough and Kings Lynn and West Norfolk. It was shaped by the Planning Policy for Travellers (2015) and the revised definitions contained therein. A replacement study was commisioned to also include other caravan dwellers and boat dwellers but survey challenges arising from the pandemic led to its abandonment. An updated assessment will be required.	To ensure that the needs of Gypsy and Travellers are met, the outcomes of this assessment and the proposed replacement will shape policies relating to pitches in the Local Plan.	Housing
Cambridgeshire's 0-19 Education Organisation Plan 2021-2022 (CCC)	This sets out the duties of Cambridge County Council to the sufficiency, diversity and planning of places for early years, school-aged children (including special schools) and post-16 education and training provision. It identifies the provision across all Cambridgeshire authorities, the current pressures in each authority and requirements of growth.	Collaboration with Cambridgeshire County Council on education matters will be undertaken as part of the new Local Plan to understand need going forward and the impact of growth. This will be reflected in infrastructure studies and delivery plans.	Education
Transport Strategy for Huntingdonshire (CCC, 2022) and Active Travel Strategy (CCC, 2022)	In October 2022, Cambridgeshire County Council commenced consultation on a transport strategy for Fenland and Huntingdonshire. These will provide a strategy and an action plan of schemes to address the transport challenges facing those districts, whilst also looking at sustainable access to services and a safe and healthy environment. The County Council are also consulting on an Active Travel Strategy which aims to make active travel the 'go to' option for local journeys.	The Local Plan should have a positive strategy towards encouraging increased public and active travel modes to support	Travel and Transport

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
		a healthy population, reduce social exclusiveness and reduces greenhouse gases emissions arising from transport.	

Local level documents (Huntingdonshire)

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Huntingdonshire Council Corporate Plan and monitoring reports	The Corporate Plan provides direction for what the Council is doing and why. It sets out what HDC aims to achieve in addition to the provision of core statutory services and also provides the framework for evaluating the Council's performance. The Corporate Plan is reviewed annually to ensure that the key activities and measures are still relevant and that we are continuing to achieve the targets we set ourselves.	The Local Plan will where possible work towards achieving the ambitions of the Corporate Plan.	All
Community Transition Strategy 2021-2023 (HDC, 2021)	In response, to the uncertainties and changing way of working and integrating with one another, the Council have set out a Community Transition Strategy detailing how community teams will approach to work with its community, community organisations and other local partners to deliver positive outcomes for our residents. In the longer term this will help to develop a longer-term Community Strategy.	Consultation throughout the development of the Local Plan will be undertaken in accordance with the legal framework and seek to engage with residents, businesses in as many ways as possible.	Procedural
Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036(adopted 15 May 2019) and Annual Monitoring Reports	The Local Plan to 2036 sets out the planning policy for Huntingdonshire. It includes the strategy for spatial development of Huntingdonshire up to 2036; the Council's policies for managing development in the district; and sites for achieving the development requirements.	A review of the existing Local Plan policies and their performance will be undertaken as part of the preparations for the new Local Plan.	All
Developer Contributions SPD (2011) and Developer Contributions: Updated Costs 2019/20	The SPD sets out the council's policy for securing developer contributions from new developments that require planning permission. The SPD should be considered alongside the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule. The Council expects all eligible types and sizes of new development in Huntingdonshire to contribute to site related and broader infrastructure through a combination of the following mechanisms including: ● Planning conditions (development and project specific) ● Planning obligations e.g. Section 106 Agreements (development and project specific) ● Community Infrastructure Levy (District wide)	Sets out the Council's approach for securing developer contributions from new developments that require planning permission. It should be considered alongside the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.	Travel and Transport Community Services and Facilities Green Infrastructure and Open Space Education

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
			Flooding and Water Waste and Recycling
Huntingdonshire Community Infrastructure Levy: Charging Schedule	The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allows local planning authorities to raise funds from new development. HDC's charging schedule for CIL is based on the size and type of development. This should be read alongside the Council's Developer Contributions SPD (2011) and Developer Contributions: Updated Costs 2019/20.	The money raised is used to fund district-wide and local infrastructure projects that benefit local communities.	Community Services and Facilities
Huntingdonshire Environment Principles (adopted December 2021) and Huntingdonshire's Climate Change Strategy (emerging)	The environmental principles proposed for the District Council and its activities: ● To target net zero carbon at a district level by 2040 ● To protect, enhance and restore, existing nature areas (green space) and create new ones (where it is viable to do so). ● To pursue the ambitions of 'A green Future: Our 25 year Plan to Improve the Environment' and that new development should be designed with a view to minimising and mitigating the effects of Climate Change. ● Ensuring existing and new communities see real benefits in their well-being from living in Huntingdonshire. ● Using natural resources wisely.	Huntingdonshire are preparing their own Environment and Climate Change Strategy. The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change.	Carbon Emissions and Targets
Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy (emerging)	This is an emerging strategy that will shape a vision for the future of the district by incorporating People, Place, the Economy and Environment. Consultation and focus groups are underway.	Aspirations of the strategy may be ones that can be reflected in the new Local Plan.	All
Great Fen Master Plan 2010 and Fens for the Future Strategic Plan (2012)	The Master Plan contains detailed advice on preferred proposals within the area that balance tourism and nature conservation requirements. The primary aim of the Landscape and Visual Setting is to protect the tranquillity of the Great Fen itself, particularly from visual intrusion (including obtrusive light) and noise intrusion from major structures such as wind turbines, telecommunications masts and any other development located in the landscape and visual setting. Beyond this boundary major structures, although potentially visible from the Great Fen area, are less likely to impact on the setting of the Great Fen. The Great Fen is part of a wider Fens for the Future project; its vision is to promote connectivity in the Fens between sites, for example between the Great Fen and Wicken Fen along the Rothschild Way. The Fens for the Future Strategic Plan 2012 will help to deliver these aspirations.	This is a strategy green infrastructure project, the ambitions of the project should be supported in the new Local Plan.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment Green Infrastructure and Open Space
Open Space Strategy for Huntingdonshire 2020-2030 and 10 year action plan (HDC, 2020)	Provides an up to date overview of open space provision across Huntingdonshire. The Strategy aims to balance three key elements: the places (parks, open spaces, play areas), the people (those who use and enjoy these spaces), and management (how these parks are maintained and managed). The actions identified within the 10 year action plan include creating a network for different Friends	The Local Plan will where possible support the aims of this strategy through its policies and allocations.	Green Infrastructure and Open Space

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
	groups across the district to interact with one another, identifying different infrastructure investment programs, all with the aim of helping local people utilise their parks and open spaces to live healthier lives, improve mental health and wellbeing, contribute to the fight against climate change and address social isolation.		
Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy 2020-2025 (HDC 2020)	This Strategy has three overarching themes: 1. New homes to meet the needs of Huntingdonshire now and in the future 2. Homes to enable people in Huntingdonshire to live independent and healthy lives 3. Working in Partnership to achieve shared objectives	The Local Plan will where possible support the aims of this strategy through its policies and allocations.	Housing
Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2016-2021 (HDC 2016) (an updated strategy is underway)	The purpose of the Strategy is to provide an overview of sports facilities in the district, as well as establishing a clear framework for the prioritisation, provision and enhancement of sports facilities. The aims of strategy are to update audit of current formal sports and leisure facilities provision; provide a shared vision for the future of the district's sports facilities; promote the role of sports and leisure facilities in health improvement, active lifestyles and contribution to the local economy; make the case for funding opportunities; ensure sport is recognised within the planning context in particular in relation to new housing developments; seek to protect and improve locally important sports and leisure facilities; and increase public awareness of the district's sports and leisure facilities.	The Local Plan will where possible support the aims of this strategy through its policies and allocations.	Tourism and Leisure Green Infrastructure and Open Space
Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)	This revised and expanded landscape and townscape assessment of Huntingdonshire has two key aims: 1. guiding the preparation and consideration of planning applications to enhance the quality of new development within Huntingdonshire and 2. providing a methodology for neighbourhood planning groups to produce their own landscape and townscape assessments to support policies within neighbourhood plans. Provides understanding of character and composition of built and natural environment to guide development proposals.	The Local Plan should set out policies relating to landscape and design matters by using the information within the SPD.	Landscape Heritage
Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2017) and Compatibility Statement (2021)	Sets out key design principles and requirements to help improve the quality and sustainability of new development within Huntingdonshire. To ensure that the Huntingdonshire's Design Guide SPD 2017 meets the new criteria set out in the NPPF 2021, the Council undertook a compatibility check of the SPD against the requirements set out in the National Model Design Guide and National Model Design Code's, both of which incorporate 10 characteristics for a well-designed place.	The Local Plan should set out policies towards design and placemaking so that future developments respond to their contexts.	All
Huntingdonshire Conservation Area Character Statements and Assessments and Cambridgeshire Historic Environmental Record	These statements provide detailed assessment of the history, features and character of Huntingdonshire's conservation areas. Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) is the most comprehensive source of information on undesignated heritage assets, archaeological sites and finds in Cambridgeshire. It forms part of a network of Historic Environment Records across the UK.	The Local should include a positive strategy towards heritage assets.	Heritage

1	**Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed**

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Wind Energy Development in Huntingdonshire SPD (2014)	Part 1 of the guidance seeks to: ● provide information on the relative sensitivity and capacity of the district's landscapes in relation to wind turbines; indicate criteria that need to be taken into account when considering specific proposals of this type; ● and provide guidance on potential mitigation measures where appropriate. Part 2 of the guidance seeks to: ● evaluate the current cumulative landscape and visual impacts of wind turbine developments in the district ● provide guidance on criteria for the assessment of cumulative landscape and visual impacts of wind turbine developments	The Local Plan should set out policies relating to renewable energy opportunities to contribute towards the reducing carbon emissions.	Landscape Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy (2020-2030) and 10 year Action Plan	The Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020 – 2030 sets out our how HDC will manage and protect trees across the district to 2030. A 10-year Action Plan has been developed which sets out key projects and tasks to be completed between 2020 and 2030. These set out how we can meet the key aims of Tree Strategy and work towards its vision.	The Local Plan will where possible support the aims of this strategy through its policies.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Strategy and Economic Growth Plan 2020-2025	The Economic Growth Strategy sets out the council's economic priorities to 2025. The strategy document is accompanied by the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2020-2025 which contains further context and detail. The key themes and priorities are focused on: inward investment; conditions for growth; fuelling our economy; maximising our skills; vibrant town centres; and supporting our business sectors.	The Local Plan will support the aims of this strategy and provide policies that support Huntingdonshire's economy and provide businesses with the opportunity to adapt to changing economic contexts.	Employment and Businesses Retail and Town Centres Tourism and Leisure
Employment Land Study and appendices 1-6 (AECOM for HDC 2014)	Supports the Local Plan to 2036. The study provides an economic and employment land study for the district of Huntingdonshire. It involves an overall assessment of the employment and economic environment within Huntingdonshire, as well as an analysis of employment land and premises demand, supply and need across the district to 2036. The Study is primarily concerned with employment land uses included within the Planning Use Class B: B1 (business, offices / light industrial); B2 (general industrial); B8 (storage and distribution) and appropriate sui generis uses including recycling and the environmental industry.	A new study will likely be required to support the policies and any employment allocations within the new Local Plan.	Employment and Businesses
Huntingdonshire Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Assessment (Nexus	Supports the Local Plan to 2036. The assessment includes a review of the national planning policy position and an appraisal of economic, retail and leisure trends at a national and regional level; analysis of the four market towns (including their town centre, edge/ out of town retail and commercial leisure provision; calculation of anticipated residual expenditure availability for convenience retailing,	A new study will likely be required to support the policies within the new Local Plan.	Retail and Town Centres

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Planning for HDC, February 2017)	comparison retailing and commercial leisure activities at 2026, 2031 and 2036, reflecting anticipated growth in the Draft Local Plan to 2036; and a quantitative assessment of the potential change in floorspace requirements with recommendations on the nature and timing of the delivery of any future convenience retail, comparison retail and commercial leisure floorspace requirements and the appropriate future mix of uses within each market town centre to increase resilience.		
Huntingdonshire Market Town's Economic prospectuses and programmes for growth and draft masterplans for Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey	There are Prospectus for Growth documents for Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey. St Neots has pursued Future High Streets Funding for regenerating projects. These documents have been commissioned by HDC and funded by the CPCA. The 'Prospectus for Growth' documents establishes a vision, and will be instrumental in securing funding to deliver these initiatives, each of which are seen as crucial to the growth and prosperity of Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey as well its wider economy. Draft masterplans for these towns are now being consulted on and proposals being shaped.	The Local Plan will where possible support the aims of this work to support the continued vitality and vibrancy of Huntingdonshire's market towns.	Retail and Town Centres Tourism and Leisure Employment and Businesses
St Neots Future High Streets Fund	Funding has been secured for an ambitious £12.8 million investment in St Neots town centre. The investment will deliver six projects, transforming the market town for the benefit of local people, businesses, and visitors.	The Local Plan will where possible support the aims of this work to support the continued vitality and vibrancy of Huntingdonshire's market towns.	Retail and Town Centres Tourism and Leisure Employment and Businesses
Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and appendices A-G (JBA Consulting for HDC, June 2017)	The SFRA provides up to date information and guidance on flood risk for Huntingdonshire, taking into account the latest flood risk information and the current state of national planning policy. It also determines the variations in risk from all sources of flooding in Huntingdonshire, identifies the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessments, determines the acceptability of flood risk in relation to emergency planning capability and considers the opportunities to reduce flood risk to existing communities and development.	A new study will be required to support the policies and site allocations in the new Local Plan.	Flooding and Water
Stage 2; Detailed Water Cycle Study Update (URS for HDC, December 2014)	The evidence base document supports the Local Plan to 2036. Information has been used to determine how the water cycle constraints may relate to potential development sites within the settlements, if and how the constraints can be resolved and how they may impact on phasing of development over the plan period to 2036. It also provides a detailed suggested approach to the management and use of water which demonstrates ways to ensure that the sustainability of the water environment in the study area is not compromised by growth.	A new study will be required to support the policies within the new Local Plan.	Flooding and Water

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Strategic Transport Study Baseline Report (May 2017) and Huntingdonshire Strategic Transport Study - Development Scenario Comparative Assessment (May 2017) Huntingdonshire Strategic Transport Study - Development Scenario Addendum (December 2017)	Supports the Local Plan to 2036. The purpose of this Study is to provide an evidence base of the baseline transport conditions in the area which will: • Identify and test the transport implications of committed development and four potential • development scenarios • Recommend the most sustainable development scenario in transport terms for delivering the • 21,000+ homes required • Highlight where there are opportunities for increasing the usage of sustainable transport • modes • Identify and cost where amended or additional transport infrastructure is required to mitigate • the predicted impacts of each potential development scenario • Form the basis of a district-wide transport strategy that mitigates the transport implications of • the chosen development scenario	A new study will be required to support the policies within the new Local Plan.	Travel and Transport
CPCA A141 and St Ives transport improvement projects	A141 and St Ives transport infrastructure plans are ongoing with both projects now combined into one business case. Public consultation undertaken in 2021 on 6 options for each. January 2022 board progressed detailed assessment of several options.	These are key strategic transport projects within Huntingdonshire. The Local Plan will need to consider the timelines for their delivery and the impact this may have on potential allocations.	Travel and Transport
Infrastructure Delivery Plan (June 2017) and Infrastructure Delivery Plan - Infrastructure Schedule (June 2017) Infrastructure Delivery Plan - Addendum (December 2017).	The supports the Local Plan to 2036. The purpose of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan is to assess the suitability of existing infrastructure provision and identify the infrastructure investment required to support growth.	An update infrastructure delivery plan will be required to support the policies and delivery of allocations within the new Local Plan.	Travel and Transport Community Services and Infrastructure Green Infrastructure and Open Space Education Flooding and Water Waste and Recycling
Air Quality Annual Status Report for the year 2021	Monitors progress made on the objectives set to improve air quality particularly within Air Quality Management Areas. It concluded that there have been no recorded exceedances of objectives outside the AQMAs.	The Local Plan should ensure that through its policies and allocations that	Pollution

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
		harmful effects on air quality are avoided.	
Joint Air Quality Action Plan for the Cambridgeshire Growth Area (HDC, SCDC & Cambridge City Council, 2009)	Reviewed all of the existing air quality information across the region, identified the key causes in each management area and assessed the necessary actions needed to improve pollutant levels in those areas	The Local Plan should ensure that through its policies and allocations that harmful effects on air quality are avoided.	Pollution
Huntingdonshire's Litter Minimisation Strategy 2021-2025 and Litter Minimisation Action Plan (HDC, 2020)	Develops the framework for minimising waste within Huntingdonshire and developing a more circular economy.	The Local Plan will where possible support the aims of this strategy through its policies.	Waste and Recycling
Made Neighbourhood Plans within Huntingdonshire	The made neighbourhood plans set a localised vision for sustainable development. They typically identify local green spaces, settlement boundaries and address localised issues such as design, heritage, local services and infrastructure. While setting a localised focus, they are in conformity with the strategic polices of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.	By Parish and Town Councils. They become part of the development plan once made and have to be in conformity with the strategic policies of the local plan.	All

2   Comments from Environmental Bodies

Appendix 2: Comments from Environmental Bodies

2.1   Consultation with environmental bodies ran between 20 October and 30 November 2022.

2.2   Comments on a draft of the scoping report were received from all three environmental bodies. Their comments have been compiled into the following table alongside the Council's response to them highlighting where amendments have been made to this report.

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
Environment Agency	**Water Resources and Waste Water** We note that the report has combined 'Flooding and Water' into one scoping report topic. While we understand the need to limit the breadth of SA objectives, the challenges surrounding water resources and waste water have become a more significant issue for Huntingdonshire and should be addressed as a distinct sustainability issue. In the 'A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems' section of the report, the 'How this could shape the SA framework' column for 'Flooding and Water' identifies spatial locational objectives for flood risk but not for water resources or waste water. Specifically, one flooding objective is to 'locate development in areas that are not in an area at risk of flooding', whereas the issue of water resources is simply addressed by an objective to 'ensure there is sufficient water supply to service growth' and 'use water sustainably'. We do not consider this a strong enough stance given the significance of the issue, as Anglian Water will not necessarily have a sustainable means of supplying water in the short-medium term without a risk of deterioration to Water Framework Directive waterbodies. We will know more once the draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024 has been published for consultation (December 2022) and our national response to it has been issued (by April 2023) Local Planning Authorities have a duty to have regard to River Basin Management Plans in their plan-making and decision taking. The SA therefore needs to recognise that it may be necessary to phase or delay development in line with the arrival of new water resource infrastructure. It can no longer be assumed that water companies will be able to provide adequate and sustainable water resources until we know the outcomes from the WRMP process. The SA must consider the broader picture of whether water can be supplied across the neighbouring authorities within the Anglian Water network and take into account the cumulative impact of growth on water bodies in the area. Water supply (and waste water) are strategic matters for Local Plans and also a strategic cross-boundary issue. Locating development in areas of sufficient capacity for waste water may be essential (taking into account climate change and limits to avoid Water Framework Directive (WFD) deterioration) for waste water recycling centres and the associated network. The risk of not assessing cross-boundary impacts or identifying and implementing suitable mitigation in the form of locational objectives for waste water and water resources is that we would find the plan unsound.	To address these comments, some additional information have been added to the 'Flooding and Water' topic covering waste water. Also, an additional reflection how the key sustainability issues and problems identified for flooding and water may shape the SA framework has been added, this is: 'Locate development where there is waste water capacity or where it can be made available'. The SA and next Local Plan will be informed by the evidence in in the upcoming Huntingdonshire Integrated Water Management Studies as it progresses to ensure it has captured the key characteristics of flooding for Huntingdonshire, including climate change and that there is infrastructure capable of supporting development needs. We will continue to discuss water issues as a strategic cross boundary matter with neighbouring authorities.

Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
Environment Agency	**Water quality and the Water Framework Directive** We are pleased that the report identifies "Ensuring new development does not adversely impact on the ecological and biological status of water bodies" as a sustainability issue in A3. Paragraph 4.42 in the 'A2: Collecting baseline information' section also details the ecological and chemical status for surface and ground waters in the Anglian River Basin District. However, we would like to see this considered more widely across the SA. Many of the internationally and nationally designated sites listed in Tables 12 and 13 of the 'Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment' section of A2 are linked to waterbodies, meaning water quality is a key issue. It would therefore seem appropriate for rivers to also be included under the 'Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment' heading and for this section to consider the impact of water quality and the Water Framework Directive on local biodiversity and habitats. This should also include any chalk streams as these are internally recognised habitats. We also note that the 'Green Infrastructure and Open Space' section includes multiple references to blue infrastructure such as rivers and lakes, underlining the importance of water quality as a key issue. The 'Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment' section should also give some consideration to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), which is currently lacking. The SA may need to draw upon Local Nature Recovery Strategies, when these become available, even where in draft, for evidence towards BNG objectives.	Additional text has been added to the 'Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment' on rivers. There are no chalk streams within the district, there are several major rivers and tributaries, these are The River Great Ouse, Nene, Kym and Alconbury Brook. Biodiversity net gain has been mentioned in this section. The Council is aware of the Natural Capital mapping and is exploring with partners how biodiversity net gain and ecological enhancement can be brought forward.
Environment Agency	**Surface Water** Flooding While the SA 3 section of the SA framework (Table 20 in 'A4: Developing the SA framework') highlights the need to 'reduce the risk of all potential sources of flooding' as an SA objective, the table only asks whether site allocation will 'use land in flood zone 1'. As Environment Agency flood zones only refer to flood risk from rivers and the sea, it should be specified that site allocation must also take surface water flooding into account. As stated in Paragraph 161 of the 2021 update of the National Planning Policy Framework, "All plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development – taking into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change – so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property." The interaction between surface water and fluvial flooding is an important consideration and will be addressed in the upcoming Huntingdonshire Integrated Water Management Studies. The SA will need to be informed by the evidence in this study as it progresses to ensure it has captured the key characteristics of flooding for Huntingdonshire, including climate change, and has robust SA objectives to test the plan.	To address the Environment Agency's point about additional information on waste water, objective SA 3 has been amended to include surface water flooding into consideration so that the second decision aiding questions for sites now reads 'Use land in flood zone 1 taking into account the impact from surface water flood risk and an allowance for climate change?' The SA and next Local Plan will be informed by the evidence in in the upcoming Huntingdonshire Integrated Water Management Studies as it progresses to ensure it has captured the key characteristics of flooding for Huntingdonshire, including climate change and that there is infrastructure capable of supporting development needs.

| 2 | Comments from Environmental Bodies |

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
Environment Agency	**Groundwater** We note that the 'Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed' section highlights the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 as a relevant document that could shape the new Local Plan in the aim of "progressively reducing pollution of groundwater and prevents its further pollution". This will be achieved as "The Local Plan will be supported by an updated Water Cycle Study and strategic flood risk assessment to shape policies and allocations". However, the SA should also consider the risks of contamination to groundwater from polluting past land uses of development sites. This is particularly pertinent due to the plan's stated key aim to "Prioritise the reuse of previously developed land (brownfield land) over greenfield land." This could also draw upon guidance in the Environment Agency's Groundwater Protection Position Statements .	Have added a reference to the Groundwater Protection Position Statements to the 'Flooding and Water' section.
Environment Agency	**Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed** We acknowledge that the Local Plan will be supported by an updated Water Cycle Study and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in the form of an Integrated Water Management Strategy. The SA will also need to consider draft outputs from the Environment Agency's Ox-Cam Arc Integrated Water Management Framework – a high level study looking at how water can be managed in an integrated way across the Arc. We note that the Future Fens Flood Risk Management Baseline Report 2020 is referenced in paragraph 4.33 but that the report is not listed in 'Appendix 1: Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed'. We recommend adding this report to the list of relevant plans. We also recommend the Great Ouse Strategic Flood Risk Interventions Study as a resource for considering how strategic interventions could manage existing and future flood risk. Currently in phase 2, a high level screening phase, it's a partnership project between the Environment Agency as lead partner and Lead Local Flood Authorities, Local Planning Authorities, Internal Drainage Boards, Anglian Water Services, Mineral Products Association, Natural England, Nature After Minerals, National Farming Union, River Trusts, Wildlife Trusts, RSPB and Water Resources East. As previously mentioned, the upcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategy should also be considered as part of the Sustainability Appraisal.	The following document has been added to the list of plans and programmes in Appendix 1 and Table 4: ● Future Fens Flood Risk Management Baseline Report 2020 The other recommended inclusions are not yet published and will be reviewed upon their completion. At this time they have not been added to the list of plans and programmes in the scoping report: ● Environment Agency's Ox-Cam Arc Integrated Water Management Framework ● Local Nature Recovery Strategy ● the Great Ouse Strategic Flood Risk Interventions Study
Historic England	**Key Plans and Programmes**	Noted with thanks. As there are no UNESCO World Heritage sites within the district or within 15km of the district boundary, this Convention has not been included within the relevant plans and programmes list as it will not directly relate to the objectives and policies of the Local Plan.

Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	Para 3.17, page 24, Table 4 and Appendix 1 We welcome the inclusion of many of the Plans and programmes that we would expect to see in the review. When considering key plans and programmes, we recommend that you also include the following: **International/European** ● UNESCO World Heritage Convention **Local** ● Historic Environment Record ● Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans ● Listed building Heritage Partnership Agreements	The plans and programmes section includes Conservation Area Statements/Appraisals, alongside this entry reference to the Cambridgeshire Historic Environmental Record has been added to this entry in Appendix 1 and Table 4. The Council does not have any listed building heritage partnership agreements currently in place.
Historic England	**Baseline** All **designated heritage assets** (Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens) within the area should be identified.	The number of each designated heritage asset found across the district are provided within the scoping report, however they are not all individually named due to how many there are. A full list can be found on Historic England's website.
Historic England	**Baseline** We welcome paragraphs 4.209 – 4.217. We recommend that you also include mapping of these assets to provide a greater indication of their distribution and highlights sensitive areas. However, we would stress that assessing the potential impact of development on the significance of heritage assets requires more than a simple mapping of the location of those assets and identification of those assets on or in proximity to potential sites. Our Historic England Advice Note 3 sets out a sequential approach to assessing the impact on significance.	It is noted that a map would help to spatially show the distribution of heritage assets across the district, however it is difficult to produce a map at a good enough quality to properly show these. A map of listed buildings and conservation areas across the district is available on the District Council's website as well as on the Council's policies map. A link to these maps have been provided within the scoping report so that readers can cross refer to these visual aids. Reference to Historic England Advice Note 3 has been added to the heritage topic.
Historic England	**Baseline** We also would expect **non-designated heritage assets** to be identified. These include, but are not confined to, locally listed buildings. We welcome the reference to the HER and local listing project in paragraph 4.218.	Noted with thanks. The local listing project is underway, once the project outputs are more advanced it may be possible to include further information on the distribution of non-designated heritage assets.

2   Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	In addition to the above, we would expect reference to currently **unknown heritage assets**, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest. The unidentified heritage assets of the area should be acknowledged and outlined in this section.	Within the 'Key sustainability issues and problems' section, the potential for significant archaeology yet to be found has been highlighted.
Historic England	**Baseline** We also suggest that you use the word **setting** in relation to heritage assets.	Harm to heritage assets and to their setting are referenced within the 'Key Sustainability Issues' section.
Historic England	**Baseline** We welcome the reference to Heritage at Risk. Identification and mapping of designated and non-designated **heritage assets at risk** can provide an indication of clusters and themes. For Heritage at Risk, Historic England's National Heritage at Risk Register includes Grade II listed places of worship provided that they are used six or more times a year for worship.	A list is contained on Historic England's website alongside a map showing their location, a link is available within the scoping report to this resource.
Historic England	**Baseline** Historic England's Good Practice Advice Note 1 contains advice on other relevant sources of evidence. These include Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, Local Lists, Historic Characterisation assessments and any other in-house and local knowledge. We recommend that these other sources of evidence are considered as part of the SA process.	Reference to Historic England's Good Practice Advice Note 1 has been added to the heritage topic.
Historic England	**Baseline** We welcome the reference to **Landscape Character Assessment** on page 49.	Noted with thanks.
Historic England	**Baseline** We suggest that you also refer to **Historic Landscape Characterisation** data in your assessment. We refer you to our website which includes some helpful guidance in this regard and sets out some of the differences between this and Landscape Character Areas. https://historicengland.org.uk/research/methods/characterisation/historic-landscape-characterisation/ It is our view that Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) provides exactly the sort of landscape-scale information which should assist an SEA; giving perspective on the relative character of the wider area into which alterations to the character of any particular part might be weighed.	Historic Landscape Characterisation is an interesting and potentially useful exercise. However, for this stage, it is a level of detail not necessary to undertake. As part of the Local Plan evidence base it may be worth exploring this idea further in consultation with the Council's Conservation Team. In the meantime Huntingdonshire's Landscape and Townscape SPD provides some historic landscape assessment.

Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	HLC is an inherently comprehensive and generalising approach, all about providing context to the understanding of the particular and about the management of change everywhere. We consider that the HLC approach is applicable and highly relevant to informing SEA. In fact, all of the commissioned County-level HLCs were designed to inform strategic level planning. (It should also be noted that HLC can be undertaken at any scale, including coarser or finer grained work - HLC is also a principled approach which can be, and is being, undertaken at a range of scales).	
Historic England	**SEA Framework** **Key Sustainability Issues** We note the key sustainability issues for landscape and the historic environment on page 52 and page 109, 112 and 117. We would suggest that the following Key Sustainability Issues for the Historic Environment should also be included: ● Conserving and enhancing designated and non-designated heritage assets and the contribution made to their significance by their settings ● Heritage assets at risk from neglect, decay, or development pressures; ● Areas where there is likely to be further significant loss or erosion of landscape/seascape/townscape character or quality, or where development has had or is likely to have significant impact (direct and or indirect) upon the historic environment and/or people's enjoyment of it ● Traffic congestion, air quality, noise pollution and other problems affecting the historic environment	Thank you for providing additional suggestions for additional key sustainability issues for our consideration on the historic environment. Upon comparing these with those within the scoping report, it is considered that the additional issues are all in essence already reflected within the scoping report.
Historic England	**SEA Objectives** The objectives and questions identified on page 121 (SA7) and 124 (SA16) provide a useful starting point for the historic environment. Whilst recognising that the number of objectives needs to be manageable, we recommend the objectives below: Environmental Objectives ● Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of landscapes/seascapes/townscapes, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place ● Protect, manage and improve local environmental quality ● Achieve high quality sustainable design for buildings, spaces and the public realm Social Objectives ● Improve and broaden access to the local historic environment ● Provide better opportunities for people to understand local heritage and participate in cultural and leisure activities	Noted with thanks. Thank you for providing additional objectives for our consideration. We have tried to keep the number of objectives manageable, to add nine on just the historic environment to the proposed sixteen would distort the balance of the objectives across the three strands of sustainability. Upon comparing these with those within the scoping report, it is considered that the additional objectives are all in essence already reflected within the proposed sustainability appraisal framework.

2   Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	Economic Objectives ● Foster heritage-led regeneration and address heritage at risk ● Optimise the use of previously developed land, buildings and existing infrastructure ● Promote heritage–led sustainable tourism ● Support the sustainable use of historic farmsteads	
Historic England	**Decision making criteria/Questions** Table 23 on page 126 sets out site decision aiding questions supporting criteria. However, there do not appear to be any questions for SA7 and SA16. Is there a particular reason for this? With regard to decision making criteria/questions, we would recommend the following examples of appropriate criteria: Environmental: will the policy or proposal ● Conserve and/or enhance heritage assets, their setting and the wider historic environment? ● Contribute to the better management of heritage assets and tackle heritage at risk? ● Improve the quality and condition of the historic environment? ● Respect, maintain and strengthen local character and distinctiveness? ● Promote high quality design? ● Integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into the historic environment sensitively? ● Alter the hydrological conditions of water-dependent heritage assets, including organic remains? Social: will the policy or proposal ● Increase the social benefit (e.g. education, participation, citizenship, health and well-being) derived from the historic environment? ● Improve the satisfaction of people with their neighbourhoods as places to live? ● Engage communities in identifying culturally important features and areas? ● Provide for increased access to and enjoyment of the historic environment? ● Provide for increased understanding and interpretation of the historic environment? ● Provide new leisure, recreational, or cultural activities? ● Support and widen community uses through shared facilities? Economic: will the policy or proposal ● Increase the economic benefit derived from the historic environment? ● Promote heritage-led regeneration? ● Lead to the repair and adaptive re-use of a heritage asset and encourage high quality design?	Table 23 of the sustainability scoping report provides measurable criteria for several of the sustainability appraisal objectives. Objectives that are not covered within Table 23 do not have quantifiable criteria so are not included. It is intended that a qualitative assessment will be made for these objectives. Additional text to the scoring system/matrix section on page 125 has been provided to make this clearer. Thank you for providing additional decision-making criteria/questions for our consideration. Upon comparing these with those within the scoping report, it is considered that the additional criteria are very detailed and in essence already reflected within the proposed sustainability appraisal framework.

Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	• Make the best use of existing buildings and physical infrastructure? • Promote heritage based sustainable tourism? • Ensure that repair and maintenance is sympathetic to local character? • Help to reduce the number of vacant buildings through adaptive re-use?	
Historic England	**Assessment Criteria** In developing assessment criteria, we would advise against a purely distance based approach. The impact of proposals on the significance of heritage assets should be taken into consideration at an early stage. In terms of projects, this should be based on more than just measuring the proximity of a potential allocation to heritage assets. Impacts on significance are not just based on distance or visual impacts, and assessment requires a careful judgment based on site visits and the available evidence base. This is preferred to the application of a standard proximity test (e.g. is the site within a set distance of a heritage asset) as it avoids misleading results (Our Historic England Advice Note 3 sets out a sequential approach to	The proposed scoring system/matrix consists of a mixture of qualitative and quantitative measures. The quantitative measures are shown in Table 23. The SA Objectives related to heritage and landscape consist of a qualitative measure reflecting the fact that the assessment of impacts on heritage assets and to their settings vary greatly depending on the assets themself, their context and the proposal. This qualitative assessment will also include site visits where necessary as part of the assessment of site's promoted to the Council and specialist input from Conservation colleagues will be sought for sites with particular heritage constraints. For clarification a distance based approach is not proposed. We consider this is an appropriate response and in line with the sentiments of Historic England here.
Historic England	**Consideration of Opportunities** We would expect to see consideration of opportunities. It is considered that the historic environment can make a significant contribution to the success of development and there may be opportunities for the enhancement of the historic environment which comes from sustainable development proposals. It is considered that the IIA should highlight these opportunities. Example opportunities for the historic environment to include within the IIA can be found in our guidance notes in the links above.	The decision-making criteria/questions for SA7 and SA16 seek the conservation and where possible the enhancement of areas and heritage assets. Thus, recognising there may be opportunities relating to the historic environment. As part of the site identification and site assessment process, opportunities for particular heritage regeneration or opportunities may also be identified which could shape future planning policy.
Historic England	**Method for Generation of Alternatives** The historic environment should be a factor when considering a method for the generation of alternative proposals.	Heritage forms part of the SA framework and there are decision-making criteria/questions for assessing the strategy, sites and development management policy options and their alternatives.
Historic England	**Archaeology** Scoping and evaluation of archaeological and landscape impacts needs to be an iterative process where existing sources (HER's cartographic etc. and research frameworks e.g.	As part of the site identification process and methodology for assessing sites for their suitability for potential development, constraints relating to heritage will be used. This will be used alongside a sustainability appraisal of the site using the SA objectives and decision-making criteria/questions provided within the scoping report.

2	**Comments from Environmental Bodies**

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/researchframeworks/eastmidlands/wiki/) are consulted, work is done to explore those questions and new questions asked (including lidar, aerial survey, geophysical survey, field walking, deposit modelling see our new guidance https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/deposit-modelling-and-archaeology/heag272-deposit-modelling-and-archaeology/ , trial trenching). These techniques should be used to model risk and build a robust approach to understanding that through any project so the greater heritage and project delivery risks are targeted first so they can inform minimisation and timely mitigation)	
Historic England	**Other Assessment methodologies** Finally, we would add that whilst this assessment process is a vital part of the assessment, more detailed assessment of particular aspects may be necessary going forward for particular sites/schemes. For example, Historic England would expect to see the completion of a **Heritage Impact Assessment** as part of the evidence base for certain sites/proposals likely to have an impact on the significance of heritage assets (including development within the setting of the heritage assets). We would be happy to provide further advice in this regard if and where this may be necessary as part of the evidence base for transport proposals.	See response above. Additional assessments and information may be required for particular sites where there are heritage constraints which can be overcome as part of a potential development. Specialists input from Conservation colleagues will be sought if this is the case.
Historic England	**Conclusion** We would remind you that the National Planning Policy Framework (para 32) is very clear that, in terms of sustainable development, harm to the historic environment should be avoided in the first instance and wherever possible alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued. *NPPF Para 32: Local plans and spatial development strategies should be informed throughout their preparation by a sustainability appraisal that meets the relevant legal requirements. This should demonstrate how the plan has addressed relevant economic, social and environmental objectives (including opportunities for net gains). **Significant adverse impacts on these objectives should be avoided and, wherever possible, alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued.** Where significant adverse impacts are unavoidable, suitable mitigation measures should be proposed (or, where this is not possible, compensatory measures should be considered).* Historic England strongly advises that the local authority conservation teams and archaeological advisors are closely involved throughout the preparation of the assessment of this evidence. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER-formerly Sites and Monuments Record); how the proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.	Noted with thanks. Huntingdonshire's Conservation Team will be involved in the development of heritage and conservation policies and any supporting evidence relating to heritage for the next Local Plan.

Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
Natural England	Natural England has undertaken a brief review of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report 2022. We are satisfied that the SA, including sustainability objectives, framework and assessment methodology, is being progressed in general accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations. The proposed approach to the SA is seeking to assess the effects of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan on key aspects of the natural environment including designated sites, biodiversity, landscape, green infrastructure, best and most versatile land, water and air quality and climate change. We welcome that a separate Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is being prepared, the findings and recommendations of which should inform the SA.	Noted with thanks.
Natural England	Natural England has not reviewed the relevant plans, programmes and strategies listed; however, we advise that the following types of plans relating to the natural environment should be considered where applicable to your plan area: ● Cambridgeshire Green infrastructure Strategy (Cambridge Horizons, 2011) - relevant objectives and projects ● Biodiversity plans ● Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan. ● River basin management plans ● Relevant landscape plans and strategies ● Natural England's Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) available through Magic; ● The Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Partnership's Mapping Natural Capital and Opportunities for Habitat Creation in Cambridgeshire [36]; ● Combined Authority Doubling Nature Investment Plan; ● Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Non-Statutory Strategic Spatial Framework; ● Natural England's Cambridgeshire Analysis of Accessible Natural Greenspace 2010.	Several of these are already listed in the relevant plans and programmes, there are some that are not, ones that have been added to Appendix 1 and Table 4 are: ● Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan ● Combined Authority Doubling Nature Investment Plan The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Non-Statutory Strategic Spatial Framework has only ever been published in draft form for a consultation, so this has not been added to the list of plans and programmes. Natural England's Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) is available through Magic Map, a link has been provided to this resource into the 'Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment' topic as it is not a plan or programme.
Natural England	Our advice is that the Local Plan should be underpinned by ecological network mapping, based on the Mapping Natural Capital and Opportunities for Habitat Creation in Cambridgeshire report, referenced above, to develop a framework of environmental enhancement opportunities, for delivery through Plan policies.	The Council is aware of the Natural Capital mapping and is exploring with partners how biodiversity net gain and ecological enhancement can be brought forward.
Natural England	We support SA Objectives (Table 20) SA4, SA5, SA6 and SA7 and have no further comment to make. In terms of the Assessment indicators for these objectives (Table 23) we have the following suggestions: SA4 – 'Prioritise development of previously developed land **where this is not of high biodiversity value**'	Noted with thanks.

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36   Mapping Natural Capital and Opportunities for Habitat Creation in Cambridgeshire (Natural Capital Solutions Ltd., May 2019), prepared for the Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Partnership.

| 2 | Comments from Environmental Bodies |

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	SA4 – 'Prioritise development on land of Grade 3**b**or lower etc.' and split indicators into 'Predominantly grade 3**a**' and 'Predominantly grade 2 **and 3b**' to be in line with BMV categorisations. (sic) SA5 – the indicators should align with green infrastructure standards set out in Natural England's emerging Green Infrastructure Framework: Standards and Principles, due for publication January 2023. SA6 – Natural England's Impact Risk Zones (IRZs), available to view at https://magic.defra.gov.uk/, should be used to determine potential effects on designated biodiversity / geodiversity sites, rather than a standard distance. SA7 – assessment indicators need to be provided.	SA 4 – have amended the objective as per suggestion as this complies with paragraph 119 and footnote 47 of the NPPF. SA 4 – detailed mapping of 3a and 3b suitable for use at a site specific level is not currently available. For larger scale sites, we will endeavour to explore agricultural land classification with the site promoters. SA 5 – we will review the emerging green infrastructure standards and principles prior to finalisation of SA 5. SA 6 – the assessment indicators for this objective require a site meets all of the described distances for a variety of designated sites. As part of the assessment of sites promoted to the Council assessment utilising qualitative and site visit information on the impact of proposed development to identified constraints such as nature designations will also be made. This will be in addition to the assessment contained within the sustainability appraisal. SA 7 – quantitative scoring has not been provided for SA7, instead it is intended that a qualitative assessment will be undertaken to assess the strategy, sites and development management policy options and alternatives against this objective. HDC consider this to provide a more appropriate way to score this objective.
Natural England	**Annex A – Natural England further advice** **Designated Sites**	Thank you for providing this further advice and these resources. The Council is aware of the active biodiversity agenda at the moment and will continue to work with

Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	Natural England welcomes consideration of the hierarchy of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites within the report, and objectives to protect, recover and enhance Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) alongside non-designated sites and habitat of local nature conservation value. We welcome proposed consideration of potential issues for designated sites including development, recreational pressure and climate change. Natural England would welcome a more strategic approach to addressing the effects of recreational pressure on the many sensitive designated sites including SSSIs and local wildlife sites through the Local Plan. As a minimum we would expect robust policy requirements for relevant allocations to contribute to the delivery of suitable alternative natural greenspace (SANGS), identified through the Local Plan ecological opportunity mapping evidence. Consideration should be given to land that may be 'functionally linked'[37] to the internationally designated Ouse Washes and Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar sites. Suitable foraging habitat beyond the designated sites' boundaries may be important for maintaining the sites' qualifying bird populations, particularly swans. The potential for development to adversely affect the internationally designated sites, through loss of functionally linked land and/or disturbance and displacement of qualifying bird species, will need to be appropriately considered. **Green Infrastructure and Open Space** The NPPF defines Green Infrastructure as "a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities". A cohesive Sustainability Appraisal should outline the relevant environmental objectives of a Local Plan in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (NPPF) which specifically refers to the promotion, protection and creation of accessible open space and green infrastructure. We welcome that relevant guidance has been followed to ensure future environmental impact and monitoring has been identified to demonstrate the policies within the Local Plan are supported by the most up to date evidence at the time of publication, including reference to important frameworks as the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011), the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022) and Natural Cambridgeshire's 'Doubling Nature – A Vision for the Natural Future of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in 2050'. Natural England is pleased that priority areas including the West Cambridgeshire Hundreds, Great Fen, Nene and the Great Ouse Valleys have been identified within the Plan as strategic Green Infrastructure areas. These areas are important habitat corridors for an array of species and have many multifunctional benefits, which would assist in the delivery of a range of SA topic areas, e.g. biodiversity, landscape, health and wellbeing and climate change. Consideration should be given to Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework: Standards and Principles, due to be published in January 2023.	partners to establish baseline information and develop future ambitions. The HRA will be used to explore and inform policy and site proposals which may impact on internationally designated sites. We will review the emerging green infrastructure standards and principles prior to finalisation of the sustainability appraisal framework. Detailed mapping of 3a and 3b suitable for use at a site specific level is not currently available. For larger scale sites, we will endeavour to explore agricultural land classification with the site promoters.

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37   Natural England's Goose and Swan Functional Land Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) is available to view via https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx

2 | Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	Wider Biodiversity and Biodiversity Net Gain In addition to designated sites, discussed above, we welcome that consideration has been given to the conservation of existing tree cover and additional tree planting as outlined in the objectives of The Environment Act (2021) which aims to increase tree cover significantly by 2050. Biodiversity net gain is a key tool to help nature's recovery. Biodiversity is also fundamental to health and wellbeing as well as creating attractive and sustainable places to live and work in. The NPPF highlights the role of 'policies and decision making to minimise impacts and secure measurable net gains for biodiversity' (para 170). Natural England welcomes a proposed commitment for Local Plan policies and proposals to deliver a minimum 10% BNG. We suggest that this is listed as an objective in **A3: Identifying Sustainability Issues and Problems**. We feel it should be incorporated as it represents an important part of decision-making within the context of the Local Plan in accordance with NPPF paragraphs 174d, 179b and 180d. **Nature Recovery** The Nature Recovery Network is a major commitment in the government's 25 Year Environment Plan. The NRN is an expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife-rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. It includes the existing network of protected sites and other wildlife rich habitats as well as and landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats. Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) will become a mandatory requirement under the Environment Act and will inform future Local Plans therefore consideration should be given during the development of the Local Plan as LNRS will most certainly shape local planning policy and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) delivery. Further reference can be made to the Natural Environment Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment The Sustainability Appraisal should aim to ensure that the Local Plan is underpinned by ecological opportunity mapping to help deliver mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain and Nature Recovery Network requirements of the Environment Act (2021). National Habitats Network mapping is available to view at https://magic.defra.gov.uk/ . Existing information is available to inform this including Mapping Natural Capital and Opportunities for Habitat Creation in Cambridgeshire (Natural Capital Solutions Ltd., May 2019) prepared for the Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Partnership. **Landscape**	

Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	We welcome that the Local Plan identifies key landscape issues through its objectives to protect, enhance and maintain the various landscapes and their key characteristics, promote landscape protection, management and planning. It coherently identifies that landscapes are vulnerable to change through the impacts of climate change and that it will be paramount to the Local Plan's success that it is able to mitigate the impacts of climate change on the natural environment and minimise human impact. **Soils** The conservation and sustainable management of soils is reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly in paragraph 174. The Local Plan should give appropriate weight to the roles performed by the area's soils. These should be valued as a finite multi-functional resource which underpin our wellbeing and prosperity. Decisions about development should take full account of the impact on soils, their intrinsic character and the sustainability of the many ecosystem services they deliver. Particular care over planned changes to the most potentially productive soil is needed, for the ecosystem services it supports including its role in agriculture and food production. Plan policies should therefore take account of the impact on land and soil resources and the wide range of vital functions (ecosystem services) they provide in line with paragraph 174 of the NPPF. The objectives within the Soils section highlight important issues such as the need to conserve the Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land, support sustainable agricultural practices, prioritise the re-use of previously developed land (brownfield land) over greenfield land, and enhance biodiversity, natural habitats and wild fauna and flora. As part of the avoidance of BMV development as well as utilising brownfield sites, it would be useful to make clear that development is not appropriate if the brownfield land is of high environmental value. Some brownfield sites are important for wildlife, particularly invertebrate diversity. Reference can be made to Open Mosaic Habitat Inventory as starting point for assessing environmental value: Open Mosaic Habitat (Draft) - data.gov.uk. We welcome that conservation and restoration of peatland has been identified as an objective. The SA and Local Plan policies should reflect the importance of the district's peat soils as a significant carbon store, in helping to improve air quality and mitigate against climate change. The policy should seek to protect this and ensure relevant development contributes towards enhancement of degraded peat to deliver a wide range of environmental services including biodiversity, open space, flood risk and drainage benefits, in addition to helping to mitigate climate change. To assist in understanding agricultural land quality within the plan area and to safeguard BMV agricultural land in line with the NPPF, strategic scale ALC Maps are available. Natural England also has an archive of more detailed ALC surveys for selected locations. Both these types of data can be supplied digitally free of charge by contacting Natural England. Some of this data is also available on the magic website. The planning authority should ensure that sufficient site specific ALC survey data is available to inform decision making. For example, where no reliable or sufficiently detailed information is available, it would be reasonable to expect developers to commission a new ALC survey, for any sites they wish to put forward for consideration in the Local Plan.	

2 Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	General mapped information on soil types is available as 'Soilscapes' on the magic website. Additional information regarding obtaining soil data can be found on the LandIS.	

Glossary

Accessibility

The ability of people to move around an area and reach places and facilities, including older and disabled people, those with young children and those carrying luggage or shopping.

Affordable housing

Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)

Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines.

Amenity

A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the inter-relationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquillity.

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).

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)

Document produced each year to report on progress on housing supply and performance against the indicators of the Local Plan.

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.

Architecture

The style in which a building is designed and constructed particularly with reference to specific time period or place.

Best and most versatile agricultural land

Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

Biodiversity

Glossary

All aspects of biological diversity.

Brownfield

See Previously Developed Land (PDL).

Climate change adaptation

Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Climate change mitigation

Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

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.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.

Conservation (for heritage)

The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

Conservation Area

An area "of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance"

Decentralised energy

Local renewable and local low carbon energy sources.

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.

Density

The amount of development on a given piece of land.

Design code

A set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area. The graphic and written components of the code should build upon a design vision, such as a masterplan or other design and development framework for a site or area.

Design Guide

A document providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with good design practice, often produced by a local authority.

Development Plan

Is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and includes adopted local plans, neighbourhood plans that have been made and published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that remain in force. Neighbourhood plans that have been approved at referendum are also part of the development plan, unless the local planning authority decides that the neighbourhood plan should not be made.

Economic development

Development, including those within the B Use Classes, public and community uses and main town centre uses (but excluding housing development).

Environmental Impact Assessment

A procedure to be followed for certain types of project to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment.

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.

Glossary

Examination

Independent inquiry into the soundness of a draft development plan document, chaired by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

Geodiversity

The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

Green corridor

Uninterrupted network of natural features within an urban area that acts as a linkage for wildlife, and potentially for people.

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.

Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment (GTNA)

This assesses the need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches in any local authority area.

Habitat

The natural home or environment of a plant or animal.

Habitat site

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 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.

Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

This is a single measure of deprivation and contains seven individual indices. The indices are used widely to analyse patterns of deprivation, identify areas that would benefit from special initiatives or programmes and as a tool to determine eligibility for specific funding streams. The indices relate to income, employment, health and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime.

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 use

The broad functions land is used for such as industrial, residential or commercial.

Landmarks

Glossary

Significant buildings or physical features usually including churches, memorials, squares and individual buildings of particular architectural or historic importance.

Landscape

The character and appearance of land including its shape, form, natural features, biodiversity and colours and the way these components are combined.

Landscape Character Assessment

An assessment to identify different landscape areas which have a distinct character based on a recognisable pattern of elements, including combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.

One that is registered on the statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.

Local housing need

The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance (or, in the context of preparing strategic policies only, this may be calculated using a justified alternative approach as provided for in paragraph 61 of this Framework).

Local Nature Partnership

A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, established for the purpose of protecting and improving the natural environment in an area and the benefits derived from it.

Local planning authority

The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority include the district council, London borough council, county council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority, the Mayor of London and a development corporation, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

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.

Materials

The texture, colour, pattern and durability of materials and how they are used.

Memorable areas

Areas of well defined character and a clear sense of place often including historic centres, market squares, parks and river landscapes.

Mitigation measures

These are measures requested/ carried out in order to limit the damage by a particular development/ activity.

Mix

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.

Nodes

Distinct points within the structure of a settlement usually forming a junction or crossing point for paths, roads and/ or rivers or places of particular physical importance.

Obtrusive light

Light pollution that includes the brightening of the night sky (sky glow), uncomfortably bright light (glare) and light spilled beyond the area being lit (light intrusion).

Older people

People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

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.

Glossary

People with disabilities

People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These persons include, but are not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and mental health needs.

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.

Primary routes

The main roads and railway lines running through and around the town or village.

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.

Registered Social Landlords

These are independent housing organisations registered with the Housing Corporation under the Housing Act 1996. Most are housing associations, but

there are also trusts, co-operatives and companies.

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

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].

Secondary routes

The network of minor roads, streets and lanes running through and around the town or village.

Setting

The context in which something sits.

Glossary

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.

Spatial planning

Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning. It brings together and integrates policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function. This will include policies which can impact on land use, for example, by influencing the demands on or needs for development, but which are not capable of being delivered solely or mainly through the granting of planning permission and may be delivered through other means.

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 Environmental Assessment

A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment

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.

Submission

Point at which a draft Development Plan is sent to the Secretary of State for examination.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

Sustainable development

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

Glossary

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.

Urban green space

An area of open land within the settlement usually used as a park, cemetery, playing field or amenity land.

Use Classes Order

Planning regulations outlining a schedule of uses to which a given premises or building can be put. Some changes of use require planning permission.

Vernacular

The typical way in which buildings or structures are made in a particular place, making use of local styles, techniques and materials.

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.

Wildlife corridor

Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.

Zero carbon building

A building with net carbon emissions of zero over a typical year.

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Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Great   Gransden   Neighbourhood   Plan Examination   Outcome   and   Progression   to Referendum

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) – 4 January 2023

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Planning

Report by: Chief Planning Officer

Ward(s) affected: Great Paxton Ward

RECOMMENDATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan and agree to act upon the Examiners report to accept the modifications and progress the Neighbourhood Plan to Referendum from the Cabinet report attached at Appendix A.

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Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan examination outcome and progression to referendum

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) – 4 January 2023
Cabinet – 24 January 2023

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Planning

Report by: Chief Planning Officer

Ward(s) affected: Great Paxton Ward

Executive Summary:

Following the examination of the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan this report proposes acting upon the Examiner's report to accept the modifications proposed and progress to referendum.

Recommendation(s):

That Cabinet:

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

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

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

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

2.3 Great Gransden Parish Council produced a submission version of their Neighbourhood Plan which was available for comment between 25 August and 14 October 2022. The Examiner's Report on the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan was received on 30 November 2022. The Examiner recommended that with appropriate modifications the neighbourhood plan would meet the basic conditions against which it is required to be tested and so should progress to referendum.

2.4 The Examiner proposed a number of modifications to the submitted neighbourhood plan. These have been discussed and agreed with representatives of Great Gransden Parish Council.

2.5 The modified version of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Examiner's report and draft Decision Statement setting out the modifications considered by the Examiner as necessary to enable the submission neighbourhood plan

to meet the required basic conditions are all included as Appendices to this report.

2.6 Having regard to the options set out in paragraph 2.2:

- It is considered that the modifications will enable the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan to meet the basic conditions required; and
- There is no new evidence or a different view taken by the local planning authority about a particular fact to indicate that option 'b)' in paragraph 2.2 should be followed.

3. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN / TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Following approval by Cabinet, preparations will be made for a referendum to be held on the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Regulations.

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

3.3 There is a statutory requirement through The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 (as amended) for 28 workings days' notice to be given before the referendum is held. There is also a requirement that the referendum is held within 56 working days of the decision that the neighbourhood plan should proceed to referendum, unless there is an existing planned polling opportunity that the referendum could be combined with which the qualifying body (Great Gransden Parish Council) have agreed. A potential date for the referendum has been discussed with Democratic Services. Holding the referendum on 9 March is proposed, which would meet both time requirements. This provisional date has been discussed with representatives of Great Gransden Parish Council, and they have indicated that they support this date.

3.4 At the referendum residents will be able to vote on the question: 'Do you want Huntingdonshire District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Great Gransden to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'

3.5 If a majority of votes cast by residents are 'yes', Full Council will be asked to 'make' the neighbourhood plan at its next available meeting, which, assuming that the referendum is held on 9 March, would be on 29 March. The plan will then become part of the statutory development plan for Huntingdonshire.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

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

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

5.1 Progressing the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan through to referendum links to the objective within the Corporate Plan (2022-2023) Strengthening our Communities: 'We will… Enable communities to develop and maintain Neighbourhood Plans that reflect the needs and aspirations of those living there' and the proposed key action 'Support community planning by providing advice to Towns and Parish Councils seeking to develop or update Neighbourhood Plans'.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 A Neighbourhood Plan must meet the basic conditions set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The Examiner's report has confirmed that Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan, as proposed to be modified, meets all the basic conditions. Officers are satisfied that there are no conflicts with the basic conditions and legislative requirements.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 As in previous years an Extra Burdens Grant of £20,000 can be claimed following the referendum, intended to meet the costs of the referendum and other resources involved in supporting the production of the neighbourhood plan.

8. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

8.1 The recommended decision is necessary to enable the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to referendum.

9. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan (as modified)
Appendix 2 – The Examiners Report of Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan
Appendix 3 - The draft Decision Statement setting out the modifications considered by the Examiner as necessary to enable the submission neighbourhood plan to meet the required basic conditions.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Localism Act 2011

The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

National Planning Practice Guidance (Neighbourhood Planning)

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Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan

2021 to 2036

Referendum version

Dated 29/11/22

Contents

List of Supporting Documents

1. Character Assessment

2. Built-Up Area Boundary Rationale

3. Rationale for Local Green Spaces and Other Valued Green Spaces

4. Consultation Statement

5. Housing Needs Survey

6. List of Societies and Clubs

7. Basic Conditions Statement

Photos courtesy of Anne Constantine, Phillip George, Andrew Pearce.

The Parish Council would like to thank the people involved with the steering group or who provided advice: Elaine Boyd, Stephanie Beaumont, Jonathan Bonnett, James Catmur, Anne Constantine, Ann Cosgrave, Fiona Coulson, Martin Davies, Nigel Day, Rachel Greaves, Phil Hemmans, Peter King, Tim Martindale, Debi Pearce, Andrew Pett, David Prest, Dean Sibley, The late Angela Steele, Rachel Hogger on behalf of Cambridgeshire ACRE, Natalie Elworthy & Jeremy Miller at HDC.

1 Introduction

The Neighbourhood Plan

1.1 This document is the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan (GGNP) for the designated Great Gransden Plan Area (Figure 1, page 11) for the period 2021 to 2036. The purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan is to set a framework for future development in the Plan Area, for which the Local Planning Authority is Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC). Once approved by a referendum, the GGNP will carry the same legal weight as the Local Plan drawn up by HDC. The GGNP will sit alongside the adopted HDC Local Plan (last revised 2019) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, last revised 2021) and together they will provide the statutory development plan for the parish of Great Gransden. The Local Planning Authority must follow what is in the GGNP when making decisions about planning applications in the area, subject to other material considerations.

1.2 The work on the GGNP has been led by a Steering Group which was set up by the Great Gransden Parish Council (GGPC), comprising a mixture of local residents and Parish Councillors. Work on the plan started in March 2018. In September 2021 management of the plan was taken over by a working group of Great Gransden Parish Councillors, henceforth referred to as "The Working Group". The Steering Group remains active to assist the Working Group and GGPC on request.

1.3 Public engagement has used a range of approaches to identify major themes of the Plan, including:

- Display materials and presence at village events, e.g. church and school fetes, Lighthouse Cafe

- Leafleting every house in the village

- Engagement with village societies

- Dedicated Web site (for the initial public engagement phase)

- Dedicated Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/GreatGransdenNDP/)

- Letters to local businesses, seeking their input

- Updates at the monthly PC meeting by a member of the Great Gransden Steering Group

- Updates in the monthly village newsletter, "Roundabout"

- Steering Group meetings open to the public, including an open forum session

- Specific projects to engage young people including the school and Brownies

- Dedicated village events, including a walking treasure hunt, a quiz, a networking event for homeworkers and a Societies Fair

- An independent Housing Needs Survey by Cambridgeshire ACRE

| Consultation Event | Reading Room Quiz | Societies Fair |

Consultation

1.4 The GGNP Steering Group have consulted parishioners and other stakeholders and have drafted the GGNP, which covers the entirety of the parish.

1.5 Following a six-week period of formal consultation ("Reg. 14 Consultation") on this plan with residents, community stakeholders and statutory consultees, the GGNP Working Group will amend this plan in light of comments received and submit it to HDC, who will then undertake a further period of consultation ("the publication stage") before appointing an independent examiner. Subject to a successful examination, this plan will then proceed to a parish-wide referendum.

1.6 The original intention was to complete the GGNP and take to referendum in 2020. Restrictions due to Covid 19 caused significant delay, with the GGNP being complete in 2022.

Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans

1.7 There are certain requirements, referred to as basic conditions which all Neighbourhood Plans are tested against at examination. The planning policies in the plan will need to:

- be in broad conformity with the strategic policies of the HDC 2019 Local Plan

- contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development

- be appropriate having regard to national policy and guidance (e.g. the National Planning Policy Framework 2021)

- be in accordance with environmental and human rights legislation.

1.8 This GGNP is believed to be in compliance with these requirements.

A Small Settlement

1.9 The Local Plan currently in force in Huntingdonshire is the Local Plan to 2036, adopted by HDC in May 2019. In this plan, Great Gransden has been designated a Small Settlement. This means the settlement is relatively low in the district-wide settlement strategy and, compared to other settlements in the district, will receive relatively low housing growth.

1.10 HDC's policy for Small Settlements requires any housing proposal to demonstrate sustainability in relation to both the level of service and infrastructure provision within the settlement, and opportunities for users of the proposed development to access everyday services and facilities by sustainable modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport.

1.11   As a Small Settlement, the village of Great Gransden has no formal allocation for new housing in the Local Plan. The village will however be expected to contribute sustainable housing to the Local Plan requirements for unallocated sites. HDC advised the GGNP Steering Group in October 2021 that the housing requirement figure for the designated Great Gransden Plan area – the whole parish of Great Gransden – is 64 new dwellings during the period 2011 to 2036.

2 Summary of Policies, Glossary and List of Figures

2.1 The Policies are in Section 7 (Planning policies), with the linked GGPC commitments replicated to Section 9 (Community Action Plans) for ease of reference.

2.2 To provide context when reading the Plan documents, the subjects of the Policies are:

Glossary of Abbreviations

CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
GGNP	Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan
GGPC	Great Gransden Parish Council
HDC	Huntingdonshire District Council
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework 2021
PROW	Public Right of Way
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

List of Figures

Larger versions of these maps are available on the GGNP corner of the parish council's web site: https://greatgransdenpc.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan/

3 The Plan Area

Location

3.1   The parish of Great Gransden is located at the southern edge of Huntingdonshire, one of the districts making up Cambridgeshire, and has a total area of 1374 hectares. The only major settlement is Great Gransden village, at the south of the parish. Adjacent and to the south of Great Gransden village is the village of Little Gransden. The parish of Little Gransden is located in a different district, South Cambridgeshire District.

3.2   The village is located approximately 9 miles south east of St Neots, 15 miles south of Huntingdon and 15 miles west of Cambridge. Great Gransden is surrounded by a cluster of villages including Little Gransden, Waresley, Abbotsley, Eltisley, Caxton, Bourn and Longstowe. The growing town of Cambourne is about five miles to the North-east.

3.3   Most villagers regard themselves as inhabitants of "The Gransdens" (a name given to the two settlements of Great and Little Gransden), but Little Gransden does not fall within the NP area boundary. The Great Gransden NP area consists of the whole parish of Great Gransden as shown in Figure 1 below, and Figure 2 shows the Great Gransden community within the wider regional context.

3.4   The name 'Great Gransden' refers both to the village settlement and to the whole parish, with the NP area covering the latter. For clarity, in the rest of this document settlement and village are used interchangeably to refer to the main built-up area of the parish and its immediate environment within the parish. This is to align with the HDC Local Plan, which characterises Great Gransden (village) as a Small Settlement.
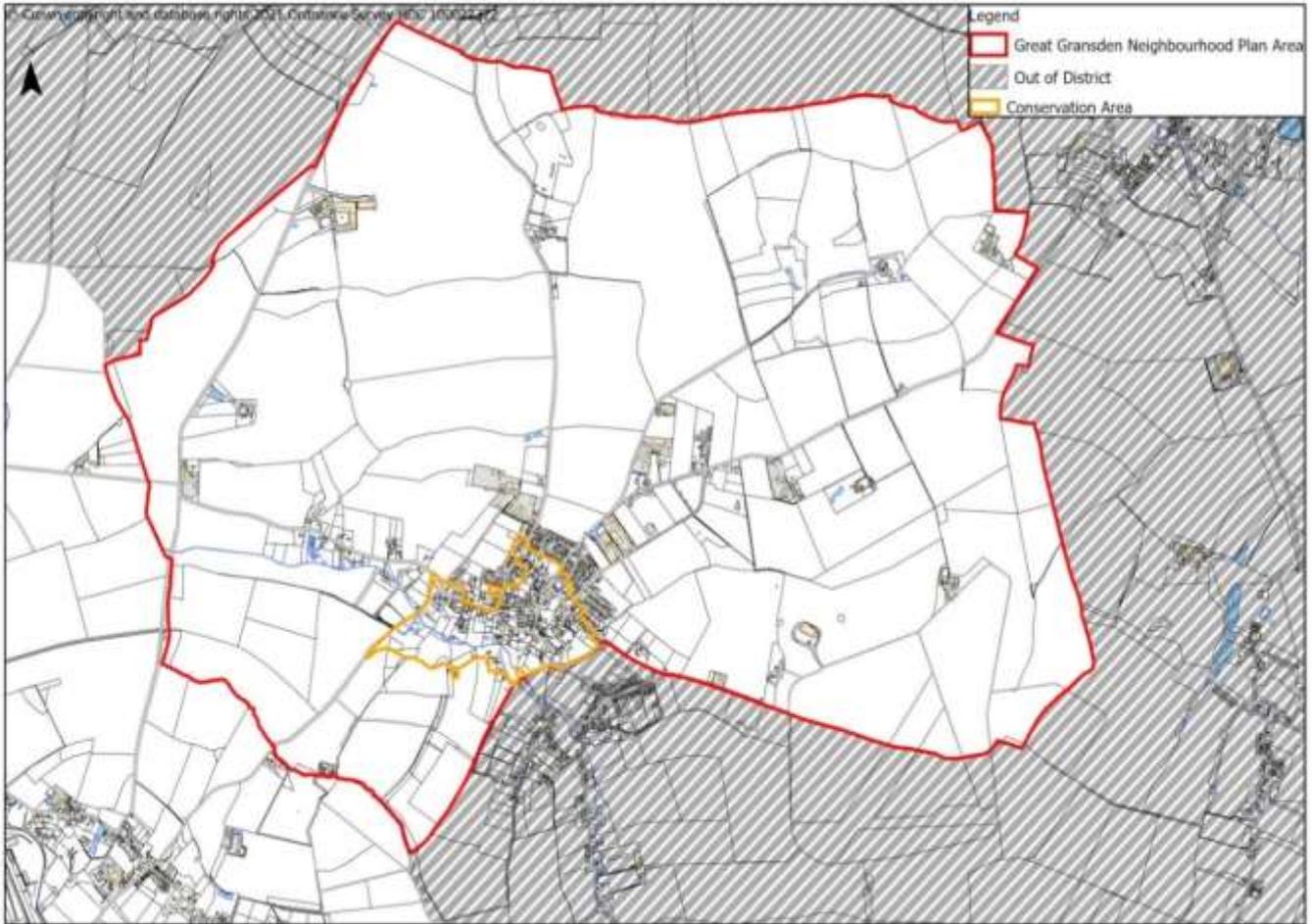
Figure 1 Great Gransden Plan Area, consisting of the parish of Great Gransden
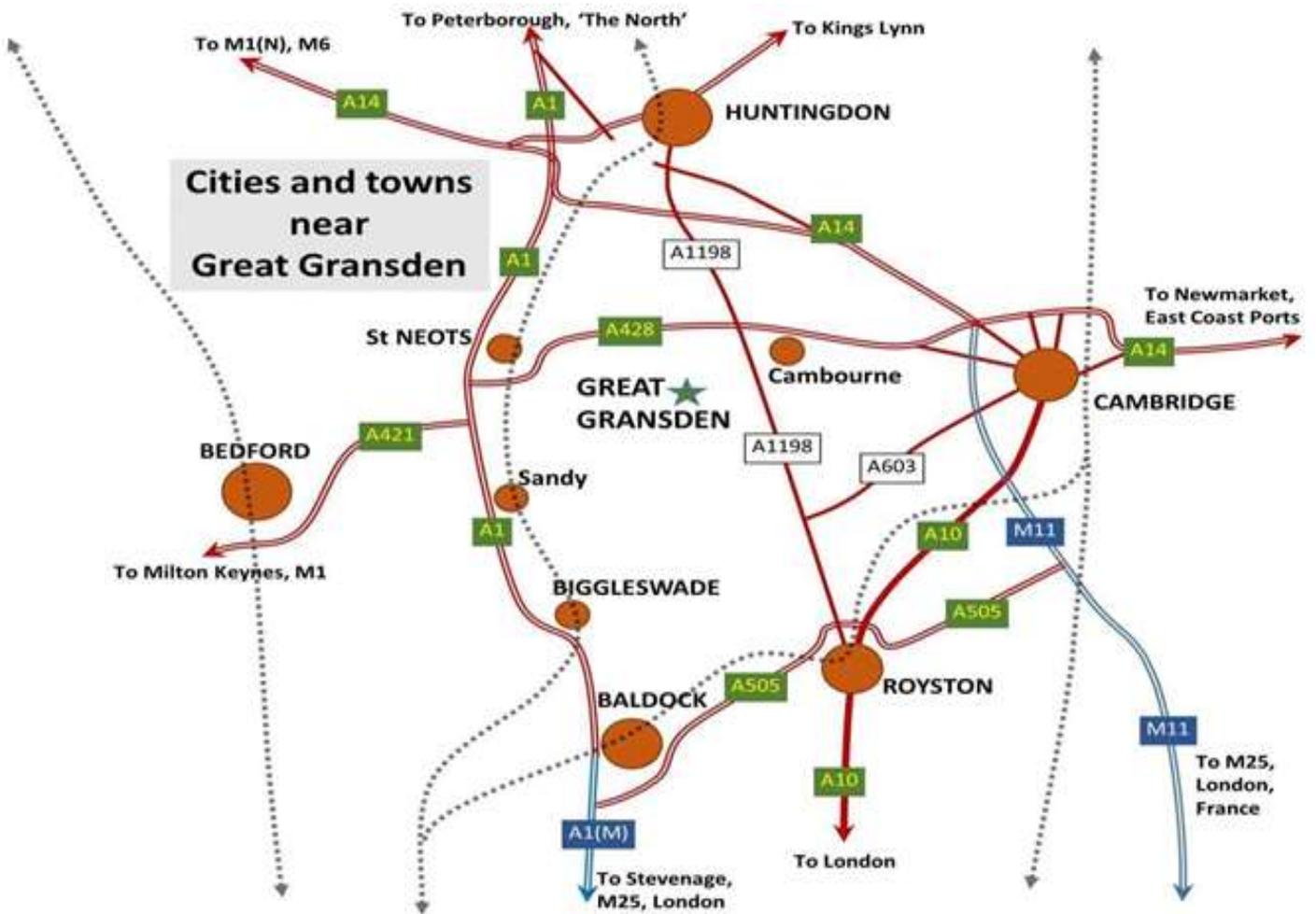
Figure 2: Great Gransden NP area within the wider regional context

Population

3.5   The latest Great Gransden population estimate from ONS in mid-year 2020 was 957 as at 2020 with the age profile shown in Figure 3:
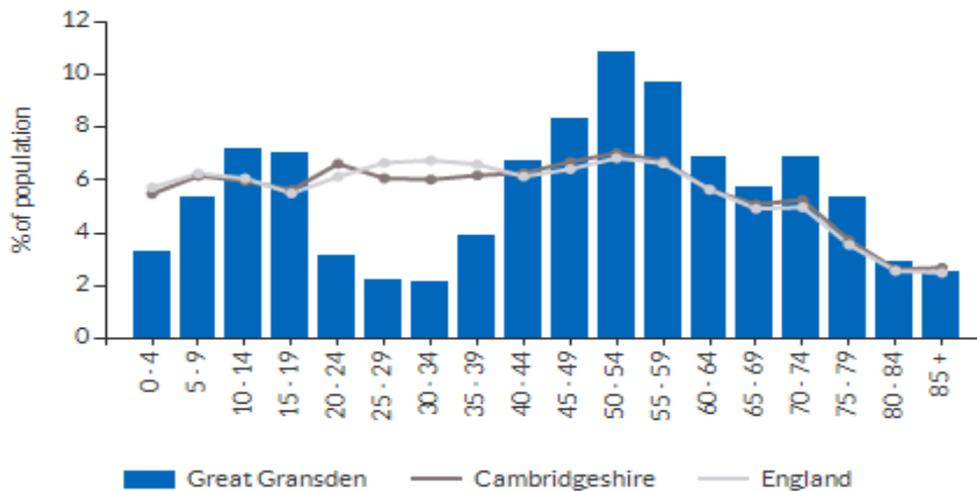
Date: 2020   Source: ONS

Figure 3: Great Gransden residents age profile

Household Characteristics

3.6   There are currently about 400 dwellings in the parish. Owner occupation is the dominant tenure in Great Gransden accounting for 84 per cent of all households (at the time of the 2011 Census of Population). Social and private rented accommodation each account for about seven per cent of all households.

3.7   There are twenty rented dwellings managed by housing associations, and two shared ownership properties in the parish. On completion of the development of Dutton Gardens, off Sand Road, there will be an additional 16 affordable dwellings, of which 11 will be affordable rented properties and 5 shared ownership properties.

3.8   Fifty six per cent of all dwellings in Great Gransden have four or more bedrooms. Smaller properties are relatively scarce; dwellings with two or fewer bedrooms account for only 15 per cent of stock (at the time of the 2011 Census of Population).

3.9   The village is not provided with mains gas. Most dwellings are heated by oil, though increasing numbers have air or ground source heat pumps installed.

Built Environment Character

3.10   Great Gransden is an ancient rural parish, mentioned in 973 when its land was endowed to Thorney Abbey by Aethelwold, Bishop of Winchester. The main settlement in the parish ('the village') lies on the southern edge of the parish.

3.11   The village has a spacious feel with many dwellings set in plots with gardens both front and rear. The village layout incorporates open green spaces at road junctions, often with large trees. There are many mature trees, hedges and grassy verges around the village, reflecting its rural nature and providing the link to the countryside.

3.12 At its heart is a picturesque conservation area (see Figure 4, below) with many well-preserved historic buildings and several large distinctive houses, including Gransden Hall, Rippington Manor, Audley House, Old Vicarage, Rectory Farm, The Old Barn, Manor House, and Brinkley House. There are 60 listed buildings in the parish, almost all within the conservation area.

Gransden Hall

Rippington Manor

Audley House

Old Vicarage

Rectory Farm

The Old Barn,
Manor House
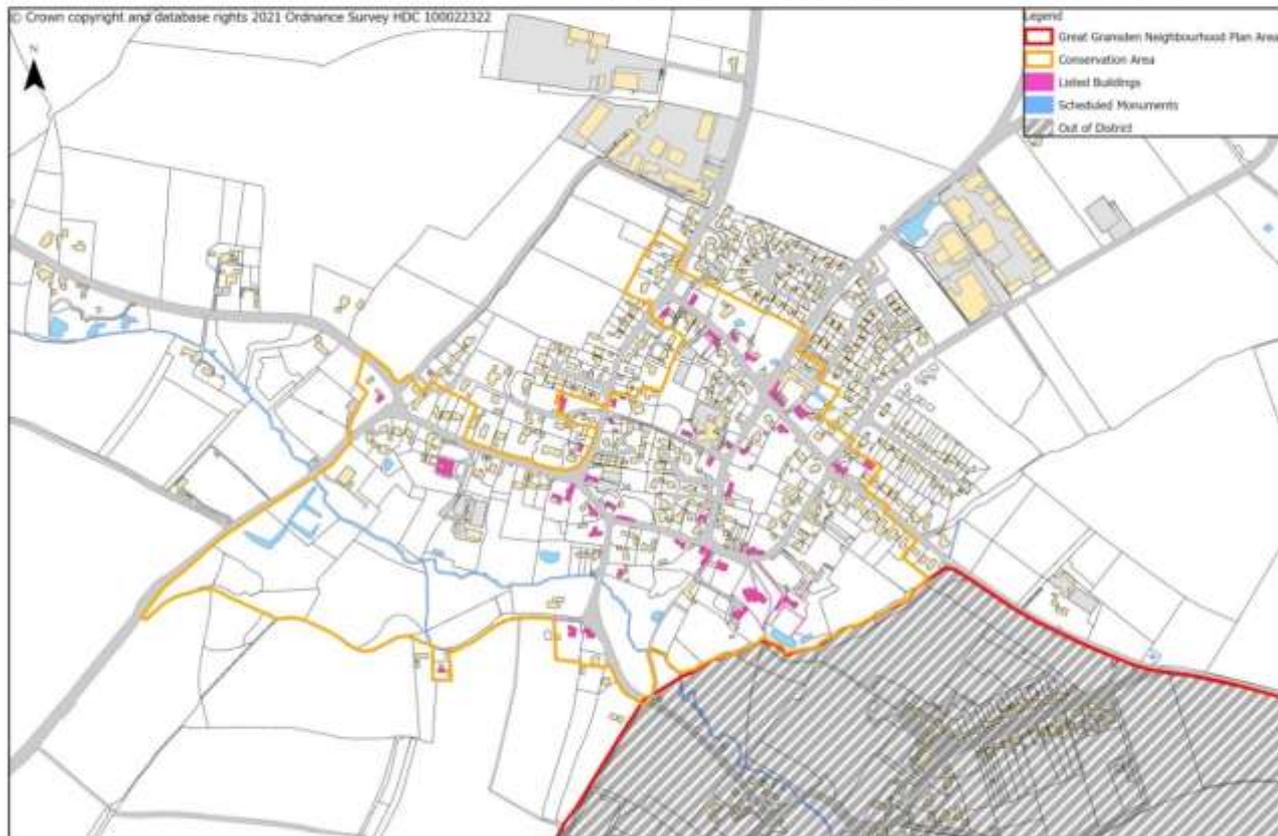
Figure 4: conservation area boundary, with listed buildings marked in purple

3.13 There is limited street lighting, so the village enjoys dark skies. Refer to CPRE's light pollution and dark skies map from 2015: https://nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/

3.14 The village is surrounded by agricultural land with extensive views to the open countryside, and with traditional buildings such as barns. However, there is limited access for recreation.

Landscape Character

3.15 The parish of Great Gransden lies within the South Eastern Claylands Landscape character area, one of nine landscape character areas in the district as described in the Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document (L&T SPD) 2022 which was adopted on 17 March 2022. This character area is situated in the south eastern corner of Huntingdonshire. It stretches from the district boundary in the east and south (where Great Gransden is located), to the Ouse valley in the north and west. The following description of the Claylands landscape contained in the L&T SPD 2022 reflects well the landscape character in Great Gransden:

"The South East Claylands include large areas of high quality landscape with a varied and typically gently undulating landform, established hedgerows and woodland and the historic settlement patterns which are reflected through the route of the Roman Ermine Street"

"The relative lack of settlement in the area combined with the mature vegetation creates an intimate and tranquil feel to the landscape.
"

Towards Great Gransden from
Little Gransden Lane

3.16   The landscape character around the village of Great Gransden comprises gently undulating arable farmland with mostly large fields and hedgerows. Great Gransden Postmill, St Bartholomew's Church and Gransden Woods are key landmarks within this gently rolling landscape. The village of Great Gransden itself has an undulating topography which contributes greatly to the setting of the village as a whole, the conservation area and the individual listed buildings.

Natural Environment

3.17   The natural environment in Great Gransden is much treasured by the people who live here. Key features are the attractive countryside, a strong sense of tranquillity, dark skies and the rich diversity of wildlife. Areas rich in wildlife assets that are enjoyed by

Towards the village on
Sand Rd

local people include the Waresley and Gransden Woods Nature Reserve, the community orchard and a wildflower meadow both located on the Allotments site, rural gardens and the wider agricultural landscape including hedgerows, ponds, meadows

and copses. Some of the areas of importance for wildlife are accessible or viewable from the established public footpaths and roads but others are not.

3.18   Much of the area of the parish is given over to arable farmland which is managed fairly intensively to grow crops mainly of winter-sown cereals (mostly wheat), oil-seed rape and beans. The wildlife of most of the parish is typical of many such areas of lowland farmland in Southern and Eastern England but within Great Gransden these areas still support populations of yellowhammers and smaller numbers of corn bunting and skylarks, species which have declined greatly elsewhere.

3.19   Gransden Wood is an ancient woodland and is by far the most important site for wildlife within the parish. It supports a number of ancient woodland indicator plant species, including an important population of Oxlips, and a spectacular show of Bluebells carpets the woodland floor in Spring. Together with Waresley Wood (with which it forms a single woodland block) it is notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Two-thirds of the area of Gransden Wood lies within the Waresley and Gransden Woods Nature Reserve which is owned and managed by the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust. The northern third is in private ownership. There are various other small copses of deciduous broadleaved woodland (some of which are also ancient woodland remnants) elsewhere in and around the parish.

Bluebells in Gransden Wood

3.20   The relatively small areas of permanent grassland remaining within the parish are mostly horse-grazed or cut for hay. Apart from the fields between West Street and Park Riddy and the Gransden Showground field, most of the other small parcels of land within the parish that have survived as areas of grassland are well away from the village itself, at Crimpledean, Leycourt and Hardwicke. These meadows are mainly on the poorly draining calcareous boulder clay and often with ridge and furrow topography. Cowslips are common and a few of these neutral meadows remain unimproved and still support scarcer plants such as Adder's Tongue Fern and Sulphur Clover.

3.21   Connectivity of wildlife habitats greatly enhances their value. On the southern flank of the village, a contiguous series of surviving grassland fields and adjacent rural gardens provide a high degree of wildlife habitat connectivity, supporting biodiversity. Wherever

possible, this should be maintained and opportunities sought to further improve the network of connected habitats across the parish. These areas currently provide connectivity between the village itself and existing important wildlife areas such as Gransden Wood SSSI. Collectively they form a valuable green corridor along the valley of the Home Dole Brook and Gransden Brook, stretching from Gransden Windmill down Mill Road, across to Little Gransden Lane and to Waresley Road and parts of Meadow Road including Gransden Park. This connected green arc also includes parts of the Mandean Brook, Crimpledean Brook and Park Riddy, which are tributaries of the Gransden Brook. This green arc-shaped corridor (Figure 5, below) is identified as a priority area to maintain such connectivity and encourage wildlife protection and habitat enhancements through Community Actions.
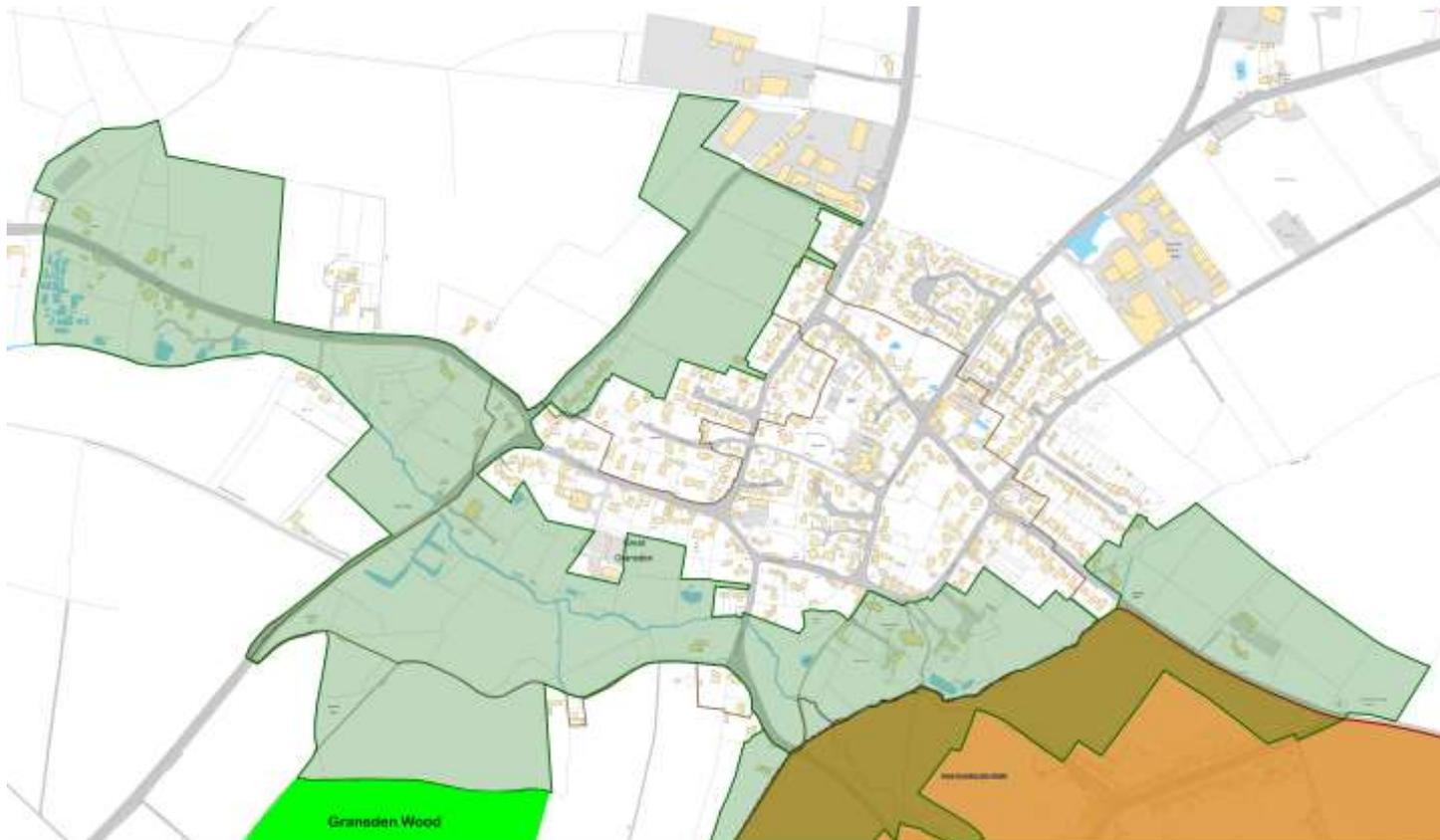
Figure 5: The Gransden Brook Corridor

The orange-shaded area in the right-hand corner of the map is part of the neighbouring parish of Little Gransden, which lies outside the Plan area of the GGNDP. However, it should be noted that the green arc identified within Great Gransden Parish is complemented by contiguous areas of grassland (shown in olive green) along the Home Dole Brook and Gransden Brook in Little Gransden, reinforcing the wildlife connectivity of these areas in the landscape.

Great Gransden Community

3.22   Great Gransden benefits from a strong sense of community. In GGNP consultations, community spirit was identified as the most important aspect of village life.

3.23   The village has many clubs, societies and organisations covering sport, music, the arts, education and general social activities. These serve all age groups, from playgroup and nursery for pre-school children to the Evergreens for older residents. The drama group

"The Revellers" stages several performances each year. A list of clubs and societies is provided in Supporting Document 6.

3.24 There are five main social hubs within the village: the Crown and Cushion public house, the Reading Room (which acts as the village hall), the Lighthouse café, the school hall and St Bartholomew's Church. The village shop and Post Office is also a highly valued village facility. The village shop and Post Office and the Crown and Cushion village pub are designated as Assets of Community Value. The PC made a statement about this https://greatgransdenpc.org.uk/2021/statement-regarding-the-crown-and-cushion-public-house/. It will be important to continue support for these assets and to strive to ensure that they retain ACV status.

Crown & Cushion Pub	The Reading Room (Village Hall)	Lighthouse café
Baptist Church	Great Gransden Church from the Lychgate	Village Shop & Post Office

The residents of Great Gransden have access to a range of sports and leisure facilities, supporting health and wellbeing. Centrally situated within the village is the Playing Field, with the Bowls Club, a recently opened Multi-Use Games Area and a children's playground. There is a second playground situated in Mandene Gardens but it is currently unsafe and cannot be used. It is due to be revamped when the two developments in that area are complete. The Sportsfield, on the outskirts of the village is managed through the Gransden Sports and Recreation Association, a trust established by the GGPC. It is used by Gransden Football and Gransdens Tennis Clubs.

Sportsfield from the tennis courts	Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)	Playing Field

The pavilion is used by the local nursery. There is also a car park which has space for circa 25 cars. The car park is also used during the day by the pre-school playgroup.

3.25   The Great Gransden allotments are situated about one mile from the village centre. There are 29 full size plots and a children's area of smaller plots plus a community orchard, pond and wildflower meadow.

3.26   There are regular charitable events, contributing to both local and national charities, including: Blues and Soul music festival; "Later with" music event; charity tennis tournaments; the Summer Ball; Gransden Muddy Run; Traidcraft Big Brew and the Gransden Agricultural Show.

Gransden Agricultural Show

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Transport

Road Links

3.27 The village of Great Gransden is not on any A road, the nearest being the A428 (2.5 miles to the North). Nearby is the A1 (6 miles West) and the A1198 (3 miles East), and within easy reach via these roads are the M11, the A14 and the A505, all about 12 miles away (see Figure 2, page 12 above). The B1040 runs along the western boundary of the parish, and the B1046 runs roughly E-W through the village,

3.28 Overall, the connectivity by car is quite good, with access to the local employment and shopping centres and local rail stations (see Figure 6 below). However, this does result in a high level of traffic through the village at peak hours, especially if there are problems on the A14 and/or the A428.

3.29 There is a proposal to put a new, limited-access dual carriageway between the Caxton Gibbet roundabout (the A428/A1198 junction) and the Black Cat roundabout (the A421/A1 junction), with the existing A428 section between the Caxton Gibbet and the A1 being downgraded. (See https://highwaysengland.co.uk/a428-black-cat-to-caxton-gibbet-home/.) Work is due to start on this in 2022, with the route running close to St Neots and then north of the existing A428, as sketched on Figure 6   .
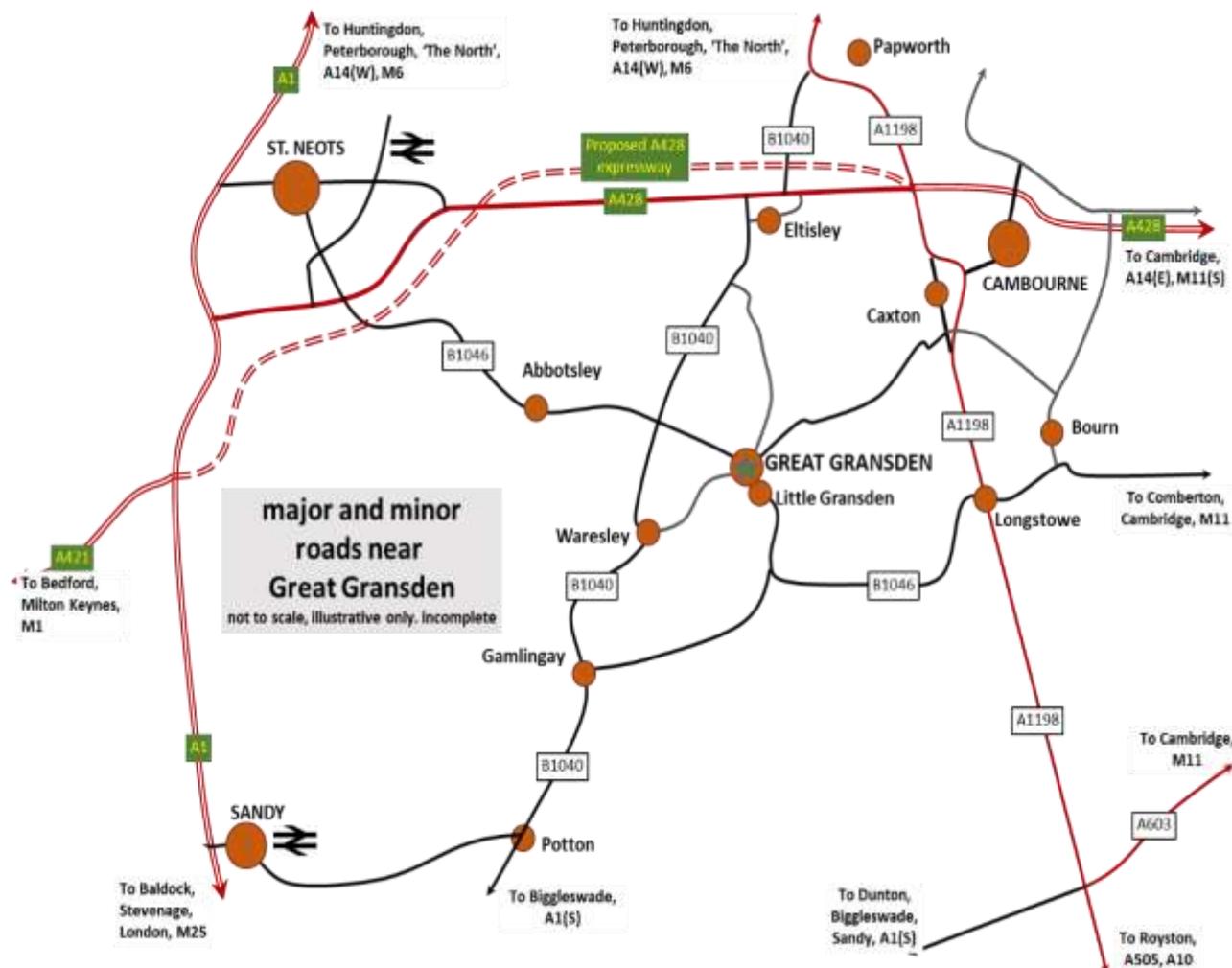
Figure 6: Roads and communities around Great Gransden

Public Transport

3.30   The nearest railway stations are at Sandy and St Neots, both on the East Coast Main Line; St Neots has fast services to Huntingdon and Peterborough in one direction, and London, Gatwick airport and Horsham in the other. Other nearby stations include Royston (on the Cambridge Line), Huntingdon itself (East Coast Main Line) and Cambridge.

3.31   Public consultation is underway to identify the preferred route of the planned east – west rail link. Some route options would run through the parish, while others would be to the north or south. (eastwestrail.co.uk). The current preferred routes are the northerly ones and would include a new station between Caxton and Cambourne, around four miles from the village of Great Gransden. The implications for the Parish of the route and the new station are unclear at this stage. The new station could provide a useful rail option, but there are concerns on the potential impact on the surrounding countryside of some route options.

3.32   There is a very limited bus service, with one service each weekday morning to Cambridge from Great Gransden, and two return services.

3.33   There is a dial-a-bus and dial-a-car service called HACT serving Huntingdonshire, for people who cannot access local bus routes. The dial-a-bus service has a different destination each day of the week.

Road Safety

3.34   Except for the village environment, all roads have national speed limit. The approaches to the village have 40mph limits, and the village itself 30mph. Middle Street by the primary school has a speed limit of 20mph. There is a Mobile Speed Indicator managed by GGPC but no other traffic calming measures. Village volunteers operate a Speedwatch scheme.

3.35   There is limited provision of pavements, no designated cycle paths, nor any dual-use foot/cycle paths in or around the village. This poses a significant hazard for pedestrians, especially with the speed of traffic, the narrowness of roads, and limited street lighting. The roads around the centre of the village are generally narrow. There is extensive on-road parking that further narrows the roads and causes congestion, especially at peak times.

3.36   A number of the road junctions have limited visibility for vehicles and pedestrians. Some properties have driveways that emerge on or close to blind corners or blind humps.

Employment

3.37   Great Gransden is well placed for access to employment opportunities across the region being located close to major roads (A1/A14/A428) and having St Neots train station within a 15 minute drive. The initial commute from the village is almost entirely by private transport.

3.38   Home based working has become more common, particularly with recent restrictions due to COVID-19. Many residents work from home full-time, and many more split their time between home and office, reducing the number of cars on the roads and increasing the sustainability of local village services.

In the HDC Local Plan Great Gransden has two Established Employment Areas: the Sand Road Industrial Estate and the Hardwick Road Industrial Estate. Together

these house around 25 Small Medium Enterprises (SME)s. Kingspan is a significant local employer, however they are planning to relocate and develop their site for housing. There are agricultural employers such as Collings Brothers and farms surrounding the village. Within the village the school is a significant employer; the village shop, nursery and playgroup each employ a small number of people

| Sand Road Industrial Estate | Hardwick Road Industrial Estate |

These employers provide an estimated 400 jobs, however only a minority of the workforce live in Great Gransden, the majority commute to work into the village, mainly by car. In addition, there are a significant number of people who work from home.

Communication infrastructure

3.39   Great Gransden is provided with a number of mobile and fixed line broadband services. All broadband services are provided via British Telecommunications plc (BT) and its subsidiaries, whilst mobile services are provided via the big four mobile companies, Vodafone, O2, EE and Three. Ultrafast services are available within some developments in Great Gransden area, but are currently of very limited availability. County Broadband have now hit their required order target and the build phase has commenced in the village. Mobile service providers all provide only partial – and differing – coverage of the parish.

3.40   As well as standard services, facilities exist within the local area, to utilise mobile internet services (data) via mobile operators, or to use satellite-based data networks.

Education

3.41   Easy access to a good school is essential for families with children under 16. Great Gransden is fortunate to have its own primary school; so many children can travel on foot. There is much family-sized housing in the village already and this generates a good number of school-aged children in each age group 5-18.

Primary Education and Early Years

3.42   Barnabas Oley Primary School, located in the very centre of Great Gransden, is one of the prized facilities of the village. It is a C. of E. Foundation School, rated as Outstanding by Ofsted and Excellent by SIAMS (the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools). It enrolled 141 pupils in 2019/20 and has a pupil admission

number (PAN) of 147. It serves the catchment area of Great and Little Gransden, Waresley and Abbotsley and admits some children from outside the catchment area when there are available places.

3.43   Of additional importance to families with younger children is access to pre-school and after-school provision. There is currently excellent provision in the village of a playgroup, a nursery, both rated Outstanding by OFSTED, and an after-school/school holiday club. All these are managed as businesses or not-for-profit enterprises.

Secondary Education

3.44   The village is in the catchment area of two secondary schools – Longsands Academy in St Neots and Comberton Village College. Most secondary-age children attend Comberton Village College but some attend church or private schools in Cambridge, Bedford and Kimbolton. Post-16 education is provided in school sixth forms, two sixth form colleges in Cambridge and Cambridge Regional College (FE) in Cambridge.

Adult Learning

3.45   Of value to all residents are the opportunities for adult learning in the village. This is provided through specialist clubs and societies and through Carry on Learning. The Reading Room is a valuable venue for these activities.

Health Services

3.46   There are GP services in Bourn and Gamlingay. Bourn Surgery had provided a weekly clinic service in the village for many years, but this was withdrawn from September 2019. There are NHS hospitals in Cambridge (Addenbrooke's General Hospital, Royal Papworth Hospital - a Specialist Heart and Lung Hospital - and the Rosie Maternity Hospital), Huntingdon (Hinchingbrooke General Hospital) and specialist NHS clinics in Cambridge and Buckden. There are also private hospitals in Cambridge.

4 The Key Issues

4.1   This section sets out the issues that have been identified through community engagement. The initial questions posed were:

- What do you like about Great Gransden?

- What don't you like, or what concerns do you have about Great Gransden?

- What changes would you like to see in Great Gransden?

4.2   Analysis of the responses identified recurring themes, which were then investigated further in future engagements, and these have been used to develop the Vision, Objectives and Policies in the Plan.

4.3   Some of these issues are planning related and can be addressed through a Neighbourhood Plan planning policy. The GGNP planning policies are set out in Section 7 (Planning policies) of this plan. Some of the issues fall wholly or partly outside of the scope of planning policy. Where possible, GGPC will seek to support community-led action to address such issues through **Community Action Plans (CAP).** These are set out in Section 9 (Community Action Plans) of this plan.

Key Issue 1 – Sustainable development and growth of the housing stock in Great Gransden.

4.4   The need for further growth and development in the parish is understood, however this must not undermine the essential character of what is a small, rural community.

4.5   Sustainable growth must help support and maintain village infrastructure, not threaten it. The phasing and scale of new development is an important factor.

4.6   New development should improve the affordability and diversity of housing stock to meet parish needs, as identified in the Housing Needs Survey (supporting document 5, and subsequent revisions).

4.7   New development should be of minor scale (this means for residential development, up to 9 houses and a site no larger than 0.5 hectares; for non-residential less than 1,000 square metres floorspace on a site less than 1 hectare), with a focus on brownfield sites and infill.

Key Issue 2 – Protection and enhancement of the rural character

4.8   New developments must have a rural rather than urban character, consistent with this small rural parish.

4.9   New developments must enhance and not compromise the street views, adding to the interest and attractiveness of the street scene. The design and density of housing in new developments should be similar to that already existing in the village. The layout should have a spacious feel, with use of hedges and tree planting to mirror the rural environment.

4.10   Particular care should be taken with proposed developments that impact the conservation area. Views to and from the conservation area must be protected.

Key Issue 3 - Access to open space and enjoyment of the countryside

4.11 The countryside character and setting of the parish is valued highly, but public access is relatively limited. An estimated 95% of the open countryside in the parish is in private ownership, the majority of which is used for arable farming and equestrian and/or hay.

4.12 Existing public open green space today is very limited, confined to a few small areas that are owned by GGPC, including the Sportsfield, the Playing Field, Mill Weir and the Allotments, The Sportsfield lies outside the built-up area and lends itself mostly for organised recreational and sporting uses and the small parking area at Mill Weir gives access only for limited local coarse fishing. None of these areas is suitable for walking or attractive for other informal countryside uses.

4.13 Under local byelaw, none of these existing public open green spaces allow dog walking - a major daily activity for many village residents around the streets and public footpath network. Consequently, dog walking is a significant and important activity amongst visitors to the Wildlife Trust Waresley and Gransden Wood Reserve (including Browne's Piece), putting pressure on the conservation goals of this Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

4.14 Large parts of the parish are not accessible through or even viewable from the limited public right of way (PROW) network. Virtually the only accessible area of semi-natural wildlife habitat is the Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve at Gransden Wood, with access to the wood by the permissive path network established by the Trust. One third of Gransden Wood is in private ownership and this area is not open to the public at all. None of the other woodland copses in the parish have any established public access.

4.15 Circular walking routes from the village are very limited; those few that do exist depend on use of public roads (without pavements) for at least part of the walking route or on use of permissive paths though Waresley and Gransden Woods, which the Wildlife Trust have sometimes closed off in recent winters.

4.16 A number of other walking routes depend on individual private agreement with the landowners. Misunderstandings on access rights can sometimes cause local tensions.

4.17 The rich wildlife assets around the parish must be sustained and enhanced, consistent with the requirement for net biodiversity increase in the Local Plan (Policy LP30) and NPPF (Para 179), and supportive of the West Cambridgeshire Hundreds strategic project. https://www.wildlifebcn.org/westcambshundreds

Key Issue 4 – Road safety and traffic

4.18 At peak times there is a high level of through traffic, both passenger cars and commercial vehicles, causing congestion and road safety problems, especially during the morning rush hour which coincides with the time younger children in the village need to get to the village primary school.

4.19 The absence of pavements on some of the key roads in the village, the narrowness of some of the pavements, and parking on pavements results in pedestrians having to share the road with vehicles, including HGVs and agricultural vehicles. Even where they exist, there are gaps in the pavement network, and in many locations, poor visibility.

4.20 A number of the road junctions have limited visibility for vehicles emerging from side roads or for pedestrians trying to cross the junction. A number of properties have driveways that emerge on or close to blind corners or blind humps.

4.21 Vehicles exceed the speed limits in the village, including the 20mph stretch adjacent the school

4.22 There are no designated cycle paths in or around the village. Many of the roads connecting the village to other villages and the local towns have blind spots requiring cyclists or horse riders to be particularly wary of other road users, and in some places the hedges and ditches block escape routes. The importance of walking and cycling routes is outlined in <u>Working Together to Promote Active Travel</u> by Public Health England

Key Issue 5 - Education and Health Services

4.23 Housing development in the village may have an impact on the resourcing and character of Barnabas Oley Primary School. The school can accommodate around 150 pupils in its current buildings and configuration of classrooms. Revenue funding for schools is pupil-related, so growth in pupil numbers is financially beneficial and a fall in numbers would have a negative financial impact. Demographic projections suggest modest growth in primary-age pupil numbers over the next eight years (less than 10%)[1] but the completed and committed housing developments in the plan period, of some 87 additional dwellings could take this growth over the 150 mark. If pupil numbers were to expand beyond 180 a full capital appraisal would be necessary in order to determine the best solution for the school.[2]

4.24 Great Gransden falls within the catchment areas of both Longsands Academy and Comberton Village College, so children of secondary age may attend either school by choice. However, free transport is only provided by the County Council to Longsands School. As most secondary-age children in Great Gransden attend Comberton Village College, parents have to organise and pay for bus transport themselves.

4.25 The Reading Room will need ongoing investment to ensure that it is fit for purpose for learning and other related activities.

4.26 The withdrawal of the weekly Bourn Surgery Clinic in the village is a significant loss of a valued service, particularly as there is no bus service to either of the local surgeries. This has increased the number of car journeys between The Gransdens and Bourn.

Key Issue 6 – Community Facilities, Leisure and Infrastructure

4.27 On the Playing Field there is a small playground which, though safe to use, is in a poor state and in need of refurbishment and improvements to offer a more challenging, safe play environment. The playground at Mandene Gardens is unsafe and cannot be used at present; it is due to be resited and refurbished as part of the conditions on the planning permission for 2 new dwellings nearby.

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[1] According to the ONS National population projections: 2020-based interim.

[2] Joint meeting of Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group (NDP) and Barnabas Oley Primary School (BOPS) with Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC)

27 February 2019 at Barnabas Oley Primary School

4.28   The Sportsfield is home to the Gransden Youth Football Club (GYFC). For the 2021/22
        season GYFC comprises:

        - 120 playing members

        - 7 formal year group teams and Fox Cubs (aged 4 to 6 year olds)

        - 4 matches are played each weekend from mid August to mid May

        - 7 training sessions during BST (Apr-Oct)

        The pavilion on the Sportsfield has shared use by the Nursery and GYFC, but for
        GYFC it is limited to WC facilities on Saturday morning. All the club kit is stored in a
        container. The large car-park, which is shared by the Nursery and the Preschool
        Playgroup, requires resurfacing.

4.29   The Tennis Club, which is situated to one side of the Sportsfield, has three floodlit
        courts for use by members. It has a small clubhouse which requires updating with
        toilet/washing facilities to improve hygiene and safeguarding, especially as children use
        the club.

Key Issue 7 – Uncertainties of major infrastructure decisions

4.30   The planned east-west road link (new A428) will pass to the north of the parish. The
        implications for commuter and traffic levels are not yet clear.

4.31   The implications for the Parish of the route and the new station of the planned east –
        west rail link are unclear. The new station could provide a useful rail option, but there
        are concerns on the potential impact on the surrounding countryside of some route
        options.

4.32   GGPC will continue to monitor the proposals for these infrastructure projects and
        assess the implications for Great Gransden. It is important that local infrastructure
        projects are monitored, and that opportunities are taken to ensure the views and needs
        of the parish are represented

Additional Key Issue - Post Consultation another issue became apparent; this is addressed below.

Key Issue 8 - Flood risk and development

4.33   Flood risk in the parish arises from fluvial (rivers and tidal) flooding and surface water
        flooding. The areas of the parish at risk of fluvial flooding follow the Gransden Brook
        Corridor and is limited to the areas outside the Built-up Area Boundary, to the south
        and west of the village. The areas at risk of surface water flooding are more extensive,
        covering the corridors of the Mandeen Brook, the Gransden Brook, the Riddy Public
        Right of Way and Crumple Dean Brook. The Huntingdonshire District Council's 2017
        Strategic Flood Risk Assessment includes maps of all sources of flood risk in the
        district. An extract focusing on surface water flood risk only and for Great Gransden
        village is shown below.

SFRA 2017 map

Please refer to the SFRA report 2017 [PDF, size unavailable] for explanations of the information shown on this map.

Map Legend

☐	Flood Zones	▦ Flood Zone 2	▦ Flood Zone 3a	▦ Flood Zone 3b	
☐	Climate Change Flood Risk	▦ Central	▦ Higher Central	▦ Upper End	
☑	Updated Flood Map for Surface Water	▦ 30 year extent	▦ 100 year extent	▦ 1,000 year extent	
☐	Areas Susceptible to Ground Water Flooding	▦ â‰¥ 75%	▦ â‰¥ 50% < 75%	▦ â‰¥ 25% < 50%	▦ < 25%
☐	Flood Warning Coverage	☐ Flood warning area			

https://huntingdonshire.gov.uk/environmental-issues/flooding/strategic-flood-risk-assessment#map
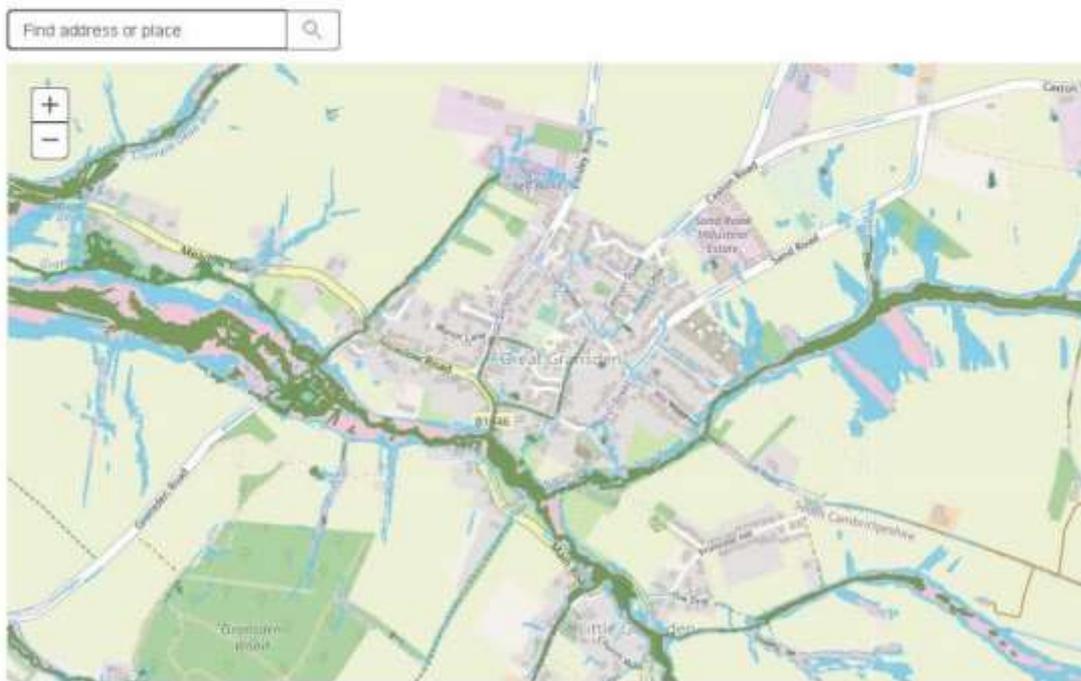
4.34 For all areas of land, regardless of whether they are identified in an area of flood risk, it is essential that where development takes place it is designed so that surface water run-off is accommodated within the site. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) is the best method for managing surface water run-off, whilst also benefitting biodiversity.

4.35 Policy LP 5 in the Local Plan states that proposals will only be supported where all forms of flood risk have been addressed, as detailed in national planning practice guidance and with reference to the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document 2017. This policy also set out the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessments.

4.36 Local Plan Policy LP 15 states that proposals will only be supported where surface water has been considered from the outset as an integral part of the design process and includes criteria a) to g) which must be met. Criteria a) requires that proposals incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) in accordance with the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document or successor documents and advice from Cambridgeshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority.

4.37 Existing policy and guidance on managing flood risk and surface water will apply to planning applications in Great Gransden parish. This includes:

- The NPPF 2021

- National planning practice guidance

  https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change

- HDC Local Plan up to 2036 (see Policies LP 5 and LP 15)

- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document. https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/2609/cambridgeshire-flood-and-water-spd.pdf

There are no additional planning policies relating to surface water or flood risk in the neighbourhood plan.

5 A Vision for Great Gransden Plan area

The vision for Great Gransden in 2036 expressed in this Neighbourhood Plan is derived from the Key Issues, which in turn were derived from the comments, consultation and engagement of the residents and other stakeholders. It is consistent with the statutory requirements of the HDC Local Plan and the NPPF.

The Vision

Great Gransden will continue to thrive as a vibrant rural village, with a diverse population and a highly engaged community. The village will develop in a sustainable, evolutionary manner, such that the parish's rural nature and character are maintained and enhanced.

This will be achieved through the following objectives and policies:

Objective	Policy reference and description
Spatial Strategy	
Objective 1 - The Great Gransden NP will include policies which facilitate the delivery of the housing requirement figure provided to it by the district **Objective 2 -** New growth will be focussed on providing deliverable and sustainable developments in the parish, supported by necessary infrastructure	**Policy G1 – A Built-Up Area Boundary Strategy for Great Gransden.** This policy defines a Built-Up Area boundary within which the principle of development is accepted (subject to other constraints) and outside of which development is resisted. The policy requires all schemes to maintain residential amenity and for essential infrastructure to be in place. **Policy G2 – Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites**. One of the exceptions allowed for under Policy G1 is the delivery of rural exception sites (affordable housing for people with a connection to Great Gransden) on the edge of the Built-Up Area Boundary. Policy G2 sets out criteria for such proposals.
A Rural and Historic Village	
Objective 3 - New development must be of a high quality and sensitive to the key characteristics of Great Gransden taking cues from existing designs.	**Policy G3 – Local Character and Design.** This policy seeks to ensure that all new development contributes in a positive way to the existing built environment and is sensitive to the rural setting of the village. The policy is informed by the Great Gransden Design Guide which is set out in Section 6 of the full draft plan.

Objective 4 - New developments will protect and enhance the landscape character and important views **Objective 5 -** The Conservation Area and its essential character will be conserved or enhanced.	**Policy G4 – Development, Landscape Character and Valued Views.** This policy requires all proposals to protect or enhance existing landscape character. The policy also requires valued views of significant buildings and valued landscapes to be protected. **Policy G5 – Conserving and enhancing Great Gransden's Conservation Area**. A policy which applies specifically to development proposals which would impact the historic core of the village.

Natural Environment	
Objective 6 - Existing areas of important semi-natural habitats within the parish and the biodiversity that they support will be effectively protected. **Objective 7 -** The biodiversity value of existing areas of semi-natural habitats should be enhanced and lost habitats restored where possible. **Objective 8 -** Protection and habitat enhancement will be targeted to areas which increase their connectivity across the landscape and thus their viability and long-term sustainability.	**Policy G6 – Protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the parish including at Gransden Woods.** This policy requires proposals to protect and enhance the biodiversity assets in the parish including Gransden Woods. It also signposts the reader as to how development proposals can deliver biodiversity net gain in our parish. See also Community Action Plan

Open Space	
Objective 9 - Maintain and protect key areas of green space within the village and elsewhere in the parish where these are valued by the community for their amenity and recreational value and/or rural landscape value. **Objective 10 -** Increase the quality and quantity of accessible open space within the parish, to enable local people to experience a wider enjoyment of the Gransden countryside and the associated recreational and health benefits. **Objective 11 -** Improve access to the countryside whilst fully respecting the rights of private landowners and legitimate uses of the land.	**Policy G7 Local Green Spaces and Other Valued Green Spaces.** This policy gives strong protection to four open spaces in the plan area. **Policy G8 – Development and Open Space Requirements.** This policy sets out the priorities for open space improvements and provision in the parish. See also Community Action Plan **Policy G9 – Public Rights of Way Network**. The policy draws attention to the existing network of public rights of way, protects the network, and requires future proposals to either link with the network or look at creating new links. See also Community Action Plan

Transport and Road Safety Improvements	
Objective 12 - A prioritised programme of improvements will be implemented, to enhance	Community Action Plan See also:

road safety for all road users, particularly pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians **Objective 13 -** Cycleways, footpaths, and pavements on key routes around the village, and to and from the village will be established and upgraded. **Objective 14 -** New development will allow for safe movement of vehicles and non-motorised users in and around the village.	**Policy G10 – A walkable village and reducing village car use.** This policy requires all development proposals to be provided with adequate infrastructure to enable occupants to walk and cycle along safe and direct routes into the village centre. **Policy G11 – Roads and new development.** A policy setting standards when new roads are proposed in the parish.
Community Facilities, Leisure and Infrastructure	
Objective 15 - New development will be supported by improvements in village infrastructure **Objective 16 -** CIL spending by GGPC will reflect local priorities as expressed through the GGNP and through ongoing liaison with the community following adoption of the plan. **Objective 17 -** Community-led projects will be identified to move towards net zero carbon.	**Policy G12 – Great Gransden Infrastructure Priorities.** This policy highlights the priorities for financial contributions to direct new and improved infrastructure, where it can be locally determined See also Community Action Plans **Community led project** **Community Action Plan**
Primary Schooling, Education and Health	
Objective 18 - The village primary school will maintain it's very high standards of education and its strong community ethos through any period of housing growth. It will be well-resourced and financially secure. **Objective 19 -** Residents in the village will have easy access to good educational opportunities for all age groups – pre-school through to adult learning. **Objective 20 -** Health provision in the village will be restored and expanded	**Policy G13 – Barnabas Oley Primary School and parish pre-school provision.** This policy supports development proposals which will help to sustain or enhance pre-school or primary school infrastructure in the parish. The policy supports in principle development needed to expand school facilities provided there are no adverse impacts on road safety, congestion or the appearance of the conservation area. See also the Community Action Plan

6   Design Guide for Great Gransden

6.1   This Design Guide is derived from the Character Assessment of Great Gransden (supporting document 1). Most of the housing growth in Great Gransden dates from the 1950s onwards, but much of its earlier architectural heritage has been preserved, either in its original form and use or as careful conversions from former use, such as public houses or shops, into private residences. As a consequence, an extensive part of the village was designated a Conservation Area in 1972. There have been a few decades when the village has seen a high level of house building, for example the 1970s and 1980s. However, these developments have largely been sensitive to the aesthetics of existing buildings. Ribbon development, which has marred the character of many villages and created suburban anomalies in the countryside, has been well-contained, and a visitor or passer-by is quickly captivated by the very visible green character of Great Gransden (mature trees, shrubbery, meadows and paddocks), the historic architecture, and the evidence of its agricultural economy in the barns and other former farm buildings. Most residents are now commuters or home-workers, but this has not broken the village's evident link to the times when it was a purely agricultural and largely self-contained community. This is why Great Gransden is referred to in this plan as having a 'rural character'. This should be preserved, and any development of the village must respect the existing character and be designed in harmony or complementarity with it. This Design Guide covers overarching principles for future development and detailed guidelines for new buildings.

6.2   Overarching principles:

- Proposed schemes should be in harmony with the character of those in the local proximity.

- The landscaping of any new developments on the edge of the village should be congruent with the adjacent countryside.

- Boundary treatments should be harmonious with the immediate surroundings including retention of existing trees and hedgerows where these are native or of local historic interest. New boundaries should incorporate native hedgerow species.

- New developments should not intrude above existing skylines and should protect existing views.

- Developments should be within the Built-Up Area Boundary of the village, prioritising brownfield sites or infill, and designed to integrate with the existing settlement with units arranged to maximise pedestrian permeability, promote activity and surveillance of existing and proposed streets. Ribbon or greenfield development will not be supported.

- Building materials for walls and roofs should echo those found already in the village.

- There should be variation of house design within any development of more than two houses.

- House design and construction should aim for the lowest carbon footprint and highest standard of sustainability in materials (source, lifetime and recyclability) and energy (insulation, heat source).

- The HDC Local Plan up to 2036 includes Policy LP 5 Flood Risk and Policy LP 15 Surface Water. These policies, along with the NPPF 2021 and national guidance will apply to proposals coming forward in Great Gransden Parish.

Specific guidelines:

Height

6.3 The vast majority of existing dwellings are single-storey or two-storey. A small number of houses have a third storey but most of these are loft-style with rooflights; a few have dormer windows set into the roof.

6.4 Exterior walls are, therefore, no more than two storeys high with the occasional exception of the apex of a gable end. Other height options will not be acceptable.

Layout and overall design

6.5 There is much consistency of design in the village, but this is very different from uniformity. On small and medium-sized developments within the village, houses have been positioned asymmetrically (Winchfield) and some have alternated gable end and main façade for the street frontage (Poplar Close). Some house styles are replicated but there is sufficient variation in house design throughout each development to avoid visual uniformity.

6.6 Street layout should be used to create pleasing lines within the development and also enable valued views to be preserved. House designs should complement rather than be exact copies of others in the development.

Roofs and rooflines

6.7 Roofs in the village are mainly variations of gable or hip. Many roofs are steep and long, reducing the impact of first-floor windows through the incorporation of dormer/chalet windows or rooflights. Traditional roof coverings in the conservation area are clay plain tiles or pantiles. A common traditional tile is the Norfolk pantile which has a distinctive form and is also available today as a Fenland pantile. This has been used on some newer buildings in clay or concrete – Lavender Barns, West Street and on barn conversions. Other pantile forms have been used on modern houses in clay or concrete – e.g. the Anglia or Lincoln tile and the Double Roman or Wessex tile. The plain clay tile has been copied to newer builds – Eltisley Road, Bowling Green House and others - albeit in plain colour rather than the attractive mix of colours on the old roofs of The Old Barn, Manor House, Audley House, Home Farm and others. There are some slate roofs in the village.

6.8 There are many thatched roofs in the village, but no new ones have appeared for well over 100 years. However, one house currently under construction will be partly thatched.

6.9 Chimneys are predominantly brick, some with styling detail to the form of the chimney as on older houses.

6.10 Roof coverings on future developments should be predominantly plain tiles or pantiles in clay or concrete. Tile form and colour should complement the adjacent buildings. Timber shingles, slate, thatch and zinc would be acceptable alternatives. Green roofs and solar panels are encouraged, although under current planning requirements solar panels cannot be installed in the Conservation Area on roofs that face the road.

6.11 Rooflines should be designed to lessen the impact of any obtrusive windows, for example through the use of recessed dormers or rooflights.

Build materials

6.12 Traditional building was often timber frame with plaster infill and many newer homes incorporate smaller examples of this on their facades. Traditional Potton Homes are modern versions of timber frame and plaster houses. Feather-edged boarding, a traditional barn material, has been retained in barn conversions but also incorporated as a decorative feature to the second storey in many modern houses – Bakers Court, Eltisley Road, Audley Close, Meadow Road, Baldwins Manor and others.

6.13 Glass began to appear as an architectural feature from the 1980s with double-height glass windows – West Street, Meadow Road - or glass box/link extensions - Fox Street and Middle Street.

6.14 The predominant build material is brick even for centuries-old houses like Rippington Manor, Gransden Hall, Old Barn Farm. The most common brick is soft red or orange-red reflecting the original Gransden bricks used to build the older houses in the village (the brick pits were on Meadow Road). Pale yellow or buff brick (traditionally Cambridge gault) is the second most common brick used. Many red-brick houses use a buff brick decoration around windows or as cornerstones; this is seen in the Victorian terrace on Eltisley Road, the Reading Room and Vincent Cottage, and has been carried though to modern houses in Audley Close and Bowling Green House. The colours are reversed in the Victorian terrace and adjacent semi-detached houses on the corner of Middle Street and the Georgian terrace on Church Street, and modern houses built of buff brick with red brick detailing are found on Meadow Road and Williams Close.

6.15 Pale yellow or buff brick without red detail has been used as the main material in some developments e.g. Winchfield and some bungalows, but this has lower visibility in the village because few of these houses front the main roads. Some bungalows and the houses in Webbs Meadow are built of mixed-colour bricks.

6.16 In some parts of the village, plain rendered frontages can be found – Mandene Gardens, Crow Tree Street, Middle Street and some bungalows. In the case of Crow Tree Street, the newer houses reflect the old, thatched houses at either end. The white painted brick of Old Porch House and Chapel House has been carried through to some of the houses in Poplar Close, but this is not necessarily a permanent design feature.

6.17 Stone or reconstituted stone is not a house building material in Great Gransden.

6.18 In summary, a soft-red brick is the predominant building material but with buff bricks being used as a decorative element; these colours are sometimes reversed. Subject to the first of the overarching principles set out above, these are the recommended build materials together with timber frame and plaster infill, feather-edged boarding or glass as further decorative options. Plain rendered fronts could be supported in certain sympathetic locations.

Gardens

6.19 Great Gransden has managed to more than double the number of its dwellings since the war *and* retain its rural character whilst impinging little on surrounding countryside. This has been achieved through densification within the village boundary – the building of dwellings on land between existing houses, mainly farmers' fields. These have been developed as Closes/No Through Roads. They have been planned and built with

gardens often extending along all four sides of the plot. Mature trees have been retained and front planting has added to the very green aspect of the whole village.

6.20   Anti-pollutant, carbon dioxide-reducing and with a health and aesthetic benefit, substantial green space and planting needs to be incorporated into plans for all new house building of whatever size. Native species of hedgerow plants should be used. Existing ponds should be retained, and new ponds encouraged.

Parking

6.21   All developments need to incorporate adequate off-street dedicated parking for the anticipated number and size of households and their visitors.   Safe access for emergency vehicles and delivery vans must be ensured. External parking spaces should include permeable surfaces to reduce run-off and the risk of flooding/drain overload.

Lighting

6.22   Views of the night sky are highly appreciated by Great Gransden residents. This is possible because of sparse street lighting.

6.23   Any new development should only incorporate low impact external lighting that is essential for the reasonable safety of residents.

7 Planning policies

Spatial Strategy

Core Objectives:

- **Objective 1 The Great Gransden NP will include policies which facilitate the delivery of the housing requirement figure provided to it by the district**

- **Objective 2 New growth will be focussed on providing deliverable and sustainable developments in the parish, supported by necessary infrastructure**

Policies G1and G2 – A spatial strategy for Great Gransden

Policy context and rationale:

7.1.1 HDC advised the GGNP Steering Group in October 2021 that the housing requirement figure for the designated Great Gransden Plan area – the whole parish of Great Gransden – is 64 new dwellings during the period 2011 to 2036. The GGNP must include a strategy and policies that allows for sustainable development[3] to come forward and that allows for the housing requirement figure to be delivered. The GGNP is not allowed to place a cap on numbers.

7.1.2 Since April 2011 (the start date for the current Local Plan) to March 2021 there have been net twenty nine new dwellings completed in the parish. In addition, there are other sites for which planning permission has been granted for sixty four new dwellings, not yet completed at the time of this report:

Location and HDC Planning Reference	Number of dwellings remaining to be built	Type of development
Rippington Manor Barn 18/01909/FUL	1	Infill.
Adjacent to 37 Meadow Road 18/02645/FUL	1	Edge of village.
Leycourt Farm barn 18/02269/FUL	1	Rural site.
End of Mandene Gardens 17/00979/FUL	2	Infill.
Rear of 6 West Street 0900906FUL	4	Brownfield infill site
Dutton Gardens 17/01375/OUT	17 (was 40 , but 23 now completed)	Edge of village, Sand Road.
Eltisley Road – Potton Timber site 18/00958/FUL	38	Not started. Outline permission for self-build dwellings.

7.1.3 The Potton Timber site also has permission for five show houses, but the planning permission does not allow occupancy of these. The current total for new build and commitments in the Local Plan period is therefore ninety three. The housing

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[3] Paragraph 8 of the NPPF stipulates what sustainable development means for the planning system.

requirement figure provided at district level will therefore be exceeded in the designated Great Gransden Plan area.

Great Gransden Built-up area

7.1.4   A spatial strategy for growth in Great Gransden is provided by Policy LP 9 'Small Settlements' of the HDC Local Plan 2019. This policy, which applies to all settlements defined as Small Settlements in the district, allows, in principle, for new development within the built-up area of Great Gransden. The policy also states that development outside the built-up area but well related to the built-up area may also be supported *"where it accords with the specific opportunities allowed for through other policies in the plan".* Supporting paragraph 4.107 of the Local Plan clarifies that the exceptional development allowed must be linked to Local Plan policies LP10 'The Countryside', LP19 'Rural Economy', LP22 'Local Services and Community Facilities', LP23 'Tourism and Recreation', LP28 'Rural Exceptions Housing', LP33 'Rural Buildings' and Policy LP38 'Water Related Development'.

7.1.5   The approach in the Local Plan is therefore to focus new development in the parish within the existing built up environment of Great Gransden village, where existing facilities such as the primary school, the village shop, the church, the bus stop, the pub and community meeting spaces are located. The GGNP supports this approach but considers it important to clarify further through the designation of a Built-Up Area Boundary around the built-up area.

7.1.6   Paragraphs 4.80 to 4.85 of the HDC Local Plan includes a definition of built-up areas and ten principles, with implementation guidance, which can assist in understanding whether specific locations fall within a built-up area or not. The Local Plan explains that a built-up area is a distinct group of buildings that includes thirty or more dwellings. Land which relates more to the group of buildings rather than to the surrounding countryside is also considered to form part of the built-up area. In the parish of Great Gransden, the only distinct group of buildings including 30 or more dwellings is the village itself. The rest of the Parish consists of more isolated agricultural buildings, and some dwellings built adjacent to the principal roads serving the village.

7.1.7   The GGNP proposes to designate a Built-Up Area Boundary around the built-up area of the village of Great Gransden. The methodology used to define the boundary is consistent with the ten principles and guidance provided in paragraphs 4.80 to 4.85 of the Local Plan to identify the built-up area. The Built-Up Area Boundary is shown in Figure 7, below, and the methodology for defining it is available to view alongside this plan.
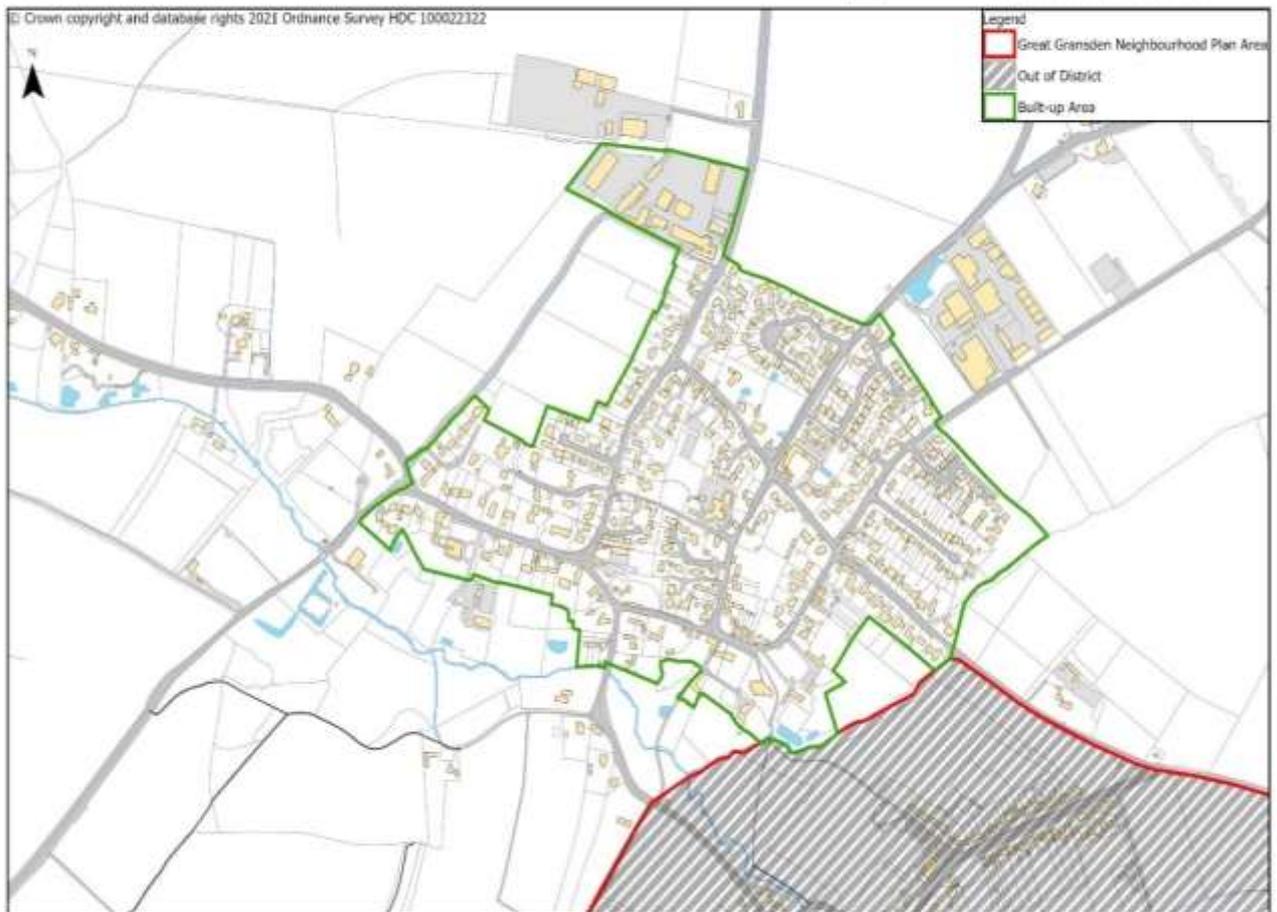
Figure 7: Great Gransden Built-Up Area

7.1.8 Together with other proposed policies in this GGNP, the Built-Up Area Boundary provides clarity on the geographic extent of permissible development in the Parish. In particular it enables the Parish to achieve its contribution to the development needs of the HDC Local Plan, while providing additional protection to greenfield sites and agricultural land surrounding the village, which are excluded from development unless in exceptional circumstances, consistent with HDC Local Plan Policies detailed below.

Preference for brownfield sites over greenfield sites

7.1.9 Consultation has identified a clear preference for development to come forward on brownfield land over development on greenfield land.

7.1.10 The HDC Local Plan allows for specific types of development in countryside locations i.e. development outside existing built up areas. This includes:

- Policy LP 19 Rural Economy allows for business proposals in specific circumstances

- Policy LP 20 Homes for Rural Workers allows for rural dwellings in the countryside in specific circumstances and in keeping with NPPF policy on rural housing

- Policy LP22 Local Services and Community Facilities

- Policy LP23 Tourism and Recreation

- Policy LP28 Rural Exceptions Housing allows for proposals outside built up areas where the scheme is well related to a built up area as an exception to the requirements of other policies on the proviso that the affordable housing will be allocated to people with a local connection.

- Policy LP38 Water Related Development

Affordability and Range of Housing Stock in Great Gransden

7.1.11 The Housing Needs Survey (undertaken in 2018) (supporting document 5) commissioned by the GGNP Steering Group asked if residents would be in favour of a small development of affordable dwellings for local people within the parish. Fifty four per cent of respondents supported the principle of such a development and 42 per cent were opposed (page 15 of the Housing Needs Survey). Support for affordable housing tended to focus particularly on the needs of young people. Some respondents were concerned about ensuring any affordable housing was secured for local people in perpetuity.

7.1.12 A common concern of people opposed to a small affordable housing development in principle was the potential impact on the character and scale of Great Gransden,

7.1.13 The Housing Register maintained by HDC was searched for households in need of affordable housing who either live in Great Gransden or stated they have a local connection to the Parish. There were two households on the Register that met these criteria. Neither currently live in the parish so presumably qualify through family, work or previous residence.

7.1.14 The Housing Needs Survey, together with the local Housing Register, identified five households identified in need of affordable housing who either live in or have a local connection to Great Gransden. Three of these five households would be eligible for a bungalow which is indicative of the age cohorts of those households identified.

1 bed		2 bed		3 bed		4 bed		5+ bed		Total
F/H	B	F/H	B	F/H	B	F/H	B	F/H	B	
	1	1	2	1						5

7.1.15 The development on Sand Road (Dutton Gardens) will provide sixteen affordable dwellings (although not tied to local people) and some smaller sized properties. These will contribute to the stock of affordable housing for the district but would not necessarily meet the needs of those with a link to Great Gransden. For this reason, a Policy is proposed that the GGPC will monitor the local housing needs and when appropriate explore the option for a Rural Exception Site.

7.1.16 There is also a small need for market housing, largely among households aged 50+ seeking to downsize.

7.1.17 As the housing survey showed, the village is well provided with large 3, 4 and 5 bedroom houses but these tend to be expensive as Great Gransden is a highly desirable place to live and lies within commuting distance of Cambridge and London.

The village is not well provided with smaller dwellings and affordable housing. The mix of housing is not ideal for all generations including young families with small children. The community would be more likely to support housing developments that provide a mix of housing size that enables provision for older people accommodation and a mix of dwelling types such as bungalows and flats to cater for changing needs and younger individuals and families, thus sustaining and growing a multi-generation community.

Impact of development on village infrastructure

7.1.18 Policy LP 9 'Small Settlements' states that a proposal in a built-up area of a Small Settlement will be supported where the amount and location of development proposed is sustainable in relation to the level of service and infrastructure provision within the settlement. The question of adequate infrastructure being in place in Great Gransden has been a key concern expressed during public consultation on the GGNP. There is a shared concern that existing infrastructure constraints are not fully recognised by developers and decision makers. This concern is addressed in more detail below in this section, under 'Community Facilities, Leisure and Infrastructure'.

G1 – A Built-Up Area Boundary Strategy for Great Gransden

Policy Intent

7.1.19 The purpose of this policy is to ensure any new residential development proposals are guided to locations within the Built-Up Area Boundary of the village and to allow development in locations outside of this boundary only where this is justified through:

- Sensitively designed affordable housing schemes for people with a Great Gransden connection in locations on the edge of Built-Up Area Boundary in locations which will not harm or undermine village character, consistent with HDC Local Plan Policies above.

- Development which is appropriate in countryside locations, consistent with HDC Local Plan Policies above.

Policy G1 – A Built-Up Area Boundary Strategy for Great Gransden

Development proposals within the Great Gransden Built-Up Area Boundary defined in Figure 7 (page 40) will be supported subject to the location, size and design of the development respecting the character in the immediate area and the settlement as a whole.

a. Development proposals outside the defined Built-Up Area Boundary will be resisted other than the following cases:

- the development comprises a rural exceptions housing scheme referred to in Policy G2, located on a site contiguous with the Built-Up Area Boundary and within easy and safe walking distance to village amenities.

- residential development that complies with one or more of the circumstances set out in paragraph 80 of the NPPF 2021; or

- the development comprises development specifically allowed for by the following policies in the Local Plan – LP10 the countryside, LP19 Rural Economy, LP20 Homes for Rural Workers, LP22 Local services and community facilities, LP23 Tourism and Recreation, LP33 Rural Buildings and LP38 water related development.

b. To be supported, all development proposals must

- maintain or enhance residential amenity of neighbouring properties and deliver good levels of amenity for future occupiers of the proposed scheme.

- demonstrate that necessary infrastructure is in place or will be provided to serve the development;

- demonstrate safe and suitable access for vehicles without undermining pedestrian safety or accessibility

- Where the scale permits residential development proposals will be expected to provide a housing mix suitable for meeting local needs (see Paragraph 7.1.17).

7.1.20 There are no community action plans associated with policy G1.

G2 – Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites.

Policy intent

7.2 The purpose of this policy is to adopt a supportive approach to the delivery of rural exception sites within the parish where the proposed scheme is demonstrated to meet the specific needs of Great Gransden.

7.2.1 **Linked Parish Council action/commitment: CAP 1 -** the Parish Council will monitor the local housing needs and when appropriate explore the option for a local Exception Site.

Policy G2– Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites.

Proposals for small scale affordable housing (10 or fewer dwellings) on rural exception sites contiguous with the Built-Up Area Boundary will be supported in principle for occupation by people with a genuine local connection with Great Gransden parish provided that the criteria in Policy LP 28 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan, and the related reasoning, are met.

In addition, the following local criteria will apply:

- the homes are located within safe and easy pedestrian and cycle access to Great Gransden village centre and amenities; and
- no significant harm shall be caused to the character of the village, its setting or the countryside.

A Rural and Historic Parish

Core Objectives:

- **Objective 3 New development must be of a high quality and sensitive to the key characteristics of Great Gransden taking cues from existing designs.**

- **Objective 4 New developments will protect and enhance the landscape character and important views**

- **Objective 5 The Conservation Area and its essential character will be conserved or enhanced.**

Policy G3 – Local Character and Design

Policy context and rationale:

7.3 The NPPF states (paragraph 127) that Neighbourhood Plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development. The Great Gransden Character Assessment has been developed alongside the GGNP and is available as Supporting Document 1. This document describes the key distinguishing features of the built environment in the parish.

7.3.1 Great Gransden is an ancient rural village. The village has a spacious feel; with many houses set in plots with gardens both front and rear. The village layout incorporates open green spaces at road junctions, often with large trees. There are many mature trees, hedges and grassy verges around the village, reflecting its rural nature and providing the link to the countryside.

7.3.2 At its heart is a picturesque conservation area, with many well-preserved historic buildings, including several large distinctive houses, including Gransden Hall, Rippington Manor, Audley House, Old Vicarage, Rectory Farm, The Old Barn, Manor House and Brinkley House. There are sixty listed buildings in the parish.

7.3.3 Many buildings are wattle and daub construction, often with thatched or clay tile roofs, and with rendered walls washed in white, terracotta or pastel shades. Other heritage buildings are built with traditional local brick, often with feature chimneys and windows, detailed with contrasting brick colours.

7.3.4 Buildings are almost all two storey or less, with some incorporating dormer windows in the roof.

7.3.5 The village has expanded and evolved over the last few decades with the addition of housing developments (typically 10-30 dwellings) and individual builds, each with the style of the time. Grey or black clapboard has been incorporated into some house designs to reflect the rural environment. Most of these developments have a spacious layout, including good sized gardens and public green spaces, with tree planting to provide a rural rather than urban feel. The developments tend to be in the form of a close, which limits through traffic.

7.3.6 These more recent developments often have limited visibility from the streets, an important factor in retaining the rural village ambience that is greatly valued by residents and visitors.

7.3.7 There is limited street lighting, so the village enjoys dark skies.

7.3.8 The village is surrounded by agricultural land with extensive views to the open countryside, but there is limited access for recreation.

7.3.9 In some locations in the village on-street parking creates problems for pedestrians, and unwanted congestion in the village.

7.3.10 It is therefore considered important that any new development proposals incorporate adequate parking provision to provide for the residents and their visitors. To avoid adverse impacts on the street and pedestrians, designated parking should be located off-street. Care must be taken that the designation of off-street parking does not dominate the appearance of the road frontage and detract from the quality of the built environment in Great Gransden. In addition, any on-road parking must not make it difficult for service vehicles and emergency vehicles to negotiate the streets.

Policy Intent:

7.3.11 The intent of this policy is to ensure all new development contributes in a positive way to the built environment in a way which is in keeping with the built environment and sensitive to the rural setting of the village.

Policy G3 – Local Character and Design

All development proposals should contribute in a positive way to the quality of the built environment in the parish.

Development proposals must be the result of a design-led process with regards to a scheme's location, layout, design, choice of building materials and density.

To be supported, development proposals must also be sympathetic to the existing rural character of Great Gransden, detailed in the Great Gransden Character Assessment (available as supporting Document 1 alongside this Neighbourhood Plan), and demonstrate how they accord with the Design Guide principles set out below and follow guidance in the Design Guide (Section 6 (Design Guide for Great Gransden) of this Plan).

Design Guide Principles

a. For all development proposals:

    i. Proposed schemes must be in harmony with the character of those in the local proximity.

    ii. The landscaping of any new developments on the edge of the village should be congruent with the adjacent countryside

    iii. Boundary treatments should be harmonious with the immediate surroundings including retention of existing trees and hedgerows where these are native or of local historic interest. New boundaries should incorporate native hedgerow species.

    iv. Developments should be within the Built-Up Area Boundary of the village, prioritising brownfield sites or infill, and designed to integrate with the existing settlement with units arranged to maximise pedestrian permeability, promote activity and surveillance of existing and proposed streets. Ribbon or greenfield development will not be supported unless it accords with the specific opportunities afforded by local and national policy.

    v. Building materials for walls and roofs should echo those found already in the village.

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b. For residential development proposals:

    i. Schemes of more than two dwellings should have a variety of design styles with individual features

    ii. All dwellings should have private gardens proportionate to dwelling size and in-keeping with properties in immediate vicinity

    iii. House design and construction should aim for the lowest carbon footprint and highest standard of sustainability in materials (source, lifetime and recyclability) and energy (insulation, heat source).

In addition, development proposals must include adequate provision for the parking of cars, cycles, electric scooters and mobility scooters to meet the needs of the residents and their visitors. Every house must have sufficient designated parking spaces appropriate to its size. On-street designated parking will only be acceptable where the street environment will not be compromised with respect to pedestrian safety or emergency vehicle access and does not risk causing on street congestion. Proposed schemes will conform with the HDC Design Guide SPD section 3.5 Parking and Servicing https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/2573/huntingdonshire-design-guide-2017.pdf

7.3.12 There are no community action plans associated with policy G3.

Policy G4 – Development, Landscape Character and Valued Views

Policy context and rationale

7.4   A key component of Great Gransden Village's character is the landscape character of the built environment itself and its setting within the wider landscape. The village feels very green with many mature trees, hedgerows and grass verges. The topography is undulating, adding interest to the built environment. Existing features of landscape value within the built up area of the village include:

- Roadside paddocks and meadows, e.g. alongside Little Gransden Lane where a paddock to the east provides a strong and characterful rural opening along the southern edge of the village

- Roadside greens and large trees at the following junctions: Eltisley Road/Fox Street; Fox Street/West Street; West Street/Crow Tree Street; Caxton Road/Fox Street and Mandene Gardens/Sand Road.

- Green spaces, often with feature trees, within newer developments such as Winchfield and Audley Close

- Roadside verges, often tree lined, which often provide a transition from countryside to village environment, such as Caxton Road, Mill Road, Eltisley Road

- The Mill Weir pond, used nowadays for fishing

- The landscape surrounding the village provides many long distance vistas across rolling landscape and views of key landmarks along the approaches into the village both from the roadside and from the network of public rights of way.

- There are also striking views within the village, particularly the setting of the listed and heritage buildings.

- The valued views both within and surrounding the village are shown on Figure 8 and described as follows:

    A.   An open view across Gransden Brook Valley to the north when travelling along Waresley Road towards the village. Key features in this view to be respected are the many trees and hedgerows, and an ancient green lane along Meadow Lane. Several of the hedgerows would appear to be of ancient origin and thus of significant historic interest.

B. The green arc-shaped corridor along the valley of Gransden Brook. This provides important visual amenity linking to the SSSI of Gransden Wood, in addition to being an important contributor to biodiversity. Key features in this view to be respected are the open ancient parkland landscape with scattered large trees, an ancient moated feature surrounded by trees, a range of hayfields, horse grazing meadows and various copses and scrub. These together provide a continuous green corridor, visually linking the village to the surrounding woods but also providing a green backdrop to the village itself. As such, this corridor makes a major contribution to the rural character of the village that is so valued by residents and visitors alike.

C. The view from the Hayfield looking over Gransden Brook towards Gransden Hall. Key features to be respected are the Grade II listed building, an abundance of trees along the skyline, other hedgerows and trees along the field margins, and the brook itself, all of which combine to perform an important function in providing setting to the heritage asset"

D. The view from Little Gransden Lane, looking cross to St Bartholomew's Church, Rectory Farm, Rippington Manor and the Dole Field. Key features to be protected are the listed buildings, including Grade I St Bartholomew's Church, Grade II* Rippington Manor, Grade II Rectory Farm, set in mature trees, meadow and hedgerows, looking across the confluence of the Home Dole Brook and Gransden Brook situated along the parish boundaries. These views link back to the south-west to the attractive, much used and much valued footpath and bridleway of Dick and Dolls Lane (which leads to Gransden Wood and itself follows the line of the parish boundary and the old Huntingdonshire/Cambridgeshire county boundary.

E. The views of St Bartholomew's Church on all sides. Key feature to be protected are views of the Grade I listed building, and its grounds, including set in the original village graveyard which features two striking lime trees each around 50 metres tall. The churchyard is also of significant botanical interest, being the Type Locality for the Gransden Goldilocks Buttercup Ranunculus obovatilobatus, a local species virtually endemic to West Cambridgeshire

F. The view from the roundabout has many historic buildings and features in all directions. Church Street to the northeast, Middle Street to the north and Crow Tree Street to the west. Key features to be respected are the individual heritage assets, their setting and the significance of the conservation area itself.

Figure 8: Map of Great Gransden Valued Landscape Views

Policy intent

7.4.1   All development coming forward should maintain or enhance the existing landscape character in the parish

> **Policy G4 – Development, Landscape Character and Valued Views.**
>
> All development proposals must contribute positively to existing landscape character in the plan area. To be supported proposals must:
>
> i.   Be designed to be sensitive to the existing landscape character of the village and keep intact and where possible enhance existing features of landscape value (including the features described in the supporting text to this policy) in the immediate vicinity to the proposed development; and
>
> ii. Incorporate its own on-site landscaping scheme (proportionate to the scale of proposed development), where this is informed and sensitive to the existing setting of the site in relation to surroundings, and in a way which contributes to the overall rural character of the village.
>
> Proposals will not be supported where there would be a significant adverse impact upon the valued views shown on Figure 8 and described in the supporting text to this policy.

7.4.2   There are no community action plans associated with policy G4.

Policy G5 – Conserving and enhancing Great Gransden's Conservation Area

Policy context and rationale:

7.5   The parish is rich in built-heritage assets. There are sixty statutorily listed buildings (mostly focused in Great Gransden village) including three Grade II* buildings and the Grade I listed Church of St. Bartholomew. The restored Great Gransden Windmill is also a scheduled monument. A full list is provided in the Character Assessment (Supporting Document 1).

7.5.1   A large part of Great Gransden village is a designated conservation area, extending beyond the built up area boundary into the adjoining countryside. (See Figure 4, page 15, above.)

7.5.2   In keeping with paragraph 189 of the NPPF, the parish heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource which should be conserved so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

7.5.3   The NPPF requires that local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected by a development proposal, including any contribution made by their setting. The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to take account of three elements when assessing development proposals:

  a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

  b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

  c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

7.5.4   In Great Gransden, the built heritage, particularly within the village centre and the conservation area, makes a very important contribution to local character and distinctiveness. The heritage assets, summarised above, make the place what it is today. Any proposal which undermines the significance of the Great Gransden Conservation Area will have an adverse impact on character and local distinctiveness of the place as a whole. No changes to the Conservation Area boundary are proposed in this Plan.

7.5.5   Policy LP34 in the HDC Local Plan attaches great weight and importance to the conservation of heritage assets and their setting. The policy states that the statutory presumption of the avoidance of harm can only be outweighed if there are public benefits that are powerful enough to do so.

7.5.6   Policy LP34 states that proposals within, affecting the setting of, or affecting views into or out of, a conservation area should preserve and where possible enhance features that contribute to the area's character, appearance and setting as set out in character statements or other applicable documents. HDC have not, as at time of writing, prepared a conservation area character appraisal or statement for Great Gransden Conservation Area. The Great Gransden Character Assessment prepared alongside this GGNP includes a description of the conservation area.

Policy intent:

7.5.7   To ensure that all development proposals preserve or enhance the quality of the historic built environment in the parish.

7.5.8 To ensure adherence to Policy LP34 in the HDC Local Plan, which provides a development management approach to all proposals which may impact on heritage assets including conservation areas.

7.5.9 To complement the approach set out in Policy LP34 of the Local Plan by providing detail specific to Great Gransden.

> **Policy G5 – Conserving and enhancing Great Gransden's Conservation Area**
>
> Development proposals are required to conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets (and their setting) in line with local and national policy.
>
> To be supported, development proposals in the Conservation Area (including infill development) or within the setting of the conservation area must be sensitive to the significance and distinctive character of the Conservation Area as well as the individual heritage assets within it. To achieve this, proposals will be expected to be informed by the context and guidance (where it is relevant to the conservation area) set out in the Great Gransden Character Assessment.
>
> Development proposals will not be supported where there would be a significant adverse impact upon views into, out of and within the Great Gransden Conservation Area (as shown on Figure 8), where these views include features of heritage value. However, where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

7.5.10 There are no community action plans associated with policy G5.

The Natural Environment

Core Objectives:

- **Objective 6 Existing areas of important semi-natural habitats within the parish and the biodiversity that they support will be effectively protected.**

- **Objective 7 The biodiversity value of existing areas of semi-natural habitats should be enhanced and lost habitats restored where possible.**

- **Objective 8 Protection and habitat enhancement will be targeted to areas which increase their connectivity across the landscape and thus their viability and long-term sustainability.**

Biodiversity in Great Gransden

7.5.11 The natural environment in Great Gransden is treasured by the people who live here. Key features are the attractive countryside, a strong sense of tranquillity, dark skies and the wildlife diversity. This rich wildlife asset enjoyed by local people is very broadly provided by the Waresley and Gransden Woods Nature Reserve, the community orchard and a wildflower meadow both located on the Allotments site, the agricultural landscape and habitats, meadows, copses and rural gardens.

7.5.12 In addition to Gransden Woods (see below) there are various small copses of deciduous broadleaved woodland in and around the parish.

7.5.13 A green arc-shaped corridor along the valley of Gransden Brook, as shown on the map in Figure 5 (page 18, above) has been identified as an area to target an improved network for protection and habitat enhancements. This arc could then connect to other important habitats such as the Gransden Wood, directly supportive of the West Cambridgeshire Hundreds plan (See 7.6.6 below). The implementation of such a project largely lies outside the planning scope of the NP, it would require community engagement and delivery by a Community Action Plan. The GGPC may use contributions generated via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) towards the implementation of habitat protection and enhancement projects.

7.5.14 Development proposals will be required to deliver net gains in biodiversity in line with Policy LP30 in the Local Plan. This may for example mean protecting or designing in existing features of biodiversity value such as hedgerows, trees and ponds and/or creating new features of biodiversity value.

7.5.15 Development proposals must ensure compliance with Local Plan Policy LP30 Biodiversity and Geodiversity, which provides a framework for development management officers to use when assessing planning applications that may impact biodiversity and geodiversity.

Policy G6 – Protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the parish including at Gransden Woods.

Policy context and rationale

7.6 Waresley and Gransden Woods are a very popular destination for visitors. There are no public rights of way in the woodland, but the Wildlife Trust provides access via permissive routes. The Wildlife Trust need to balance the needs of wildlife conservation with public access. In recent years the Woods have been closed to public access for extended periods to prevent excessive damage to footpaths during bad weather. Dogs are required to be kept on the lead.

7.6.1 Gransden Wood can be accessed by footpath from the village, providing beautiful views of the countryside and the village heritage. It can also be accessed from the Waresley Wood car park located just off Waresley Road, over 1 km away from Great Gransden village centre. Public footpath 104/3 and 104/2 run from the southern edge of the village on Little Gransden Lane south and follows the western boundary of the woods towards and into the neighbouring parish Waresley-cum-Tetworth.

7.6.2 Gransden Wood is an ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland site, which has been continuously wooded for the last 400 years but potentially for over 1,000 years. As such an ancient survivor, Gransden Wood is clearly a site of high importance from a nature conservation perspective. In the spring there is a spectacular showing of Bluebells Hyacinthus non-scriptus and other characteristic ancient woodland flowers which make it a very popular site with visitors.

7.6.3 The Waresley and Gransden Woods Nature Reserve is owned and managed by the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust and forms part of an SSSI (listed as "Waresley Wood SSSI") located in and to the south west of the parish. The northern part of this reserve comprises part of Gransden Wood which lies entirely within Great Gransden parish. Waresley Wood forms the southern part of this block of woodland and lies within the neighbouring parish of Waresley-cum-Tetworth. A northern section of Gransden Wood is not owned by the Reserve but is in private ownership and there is no public access to this section.

7.6.4 Figure 9, below, shows the extent of the SSSI (totalling 54.22 ha) and the ownership.
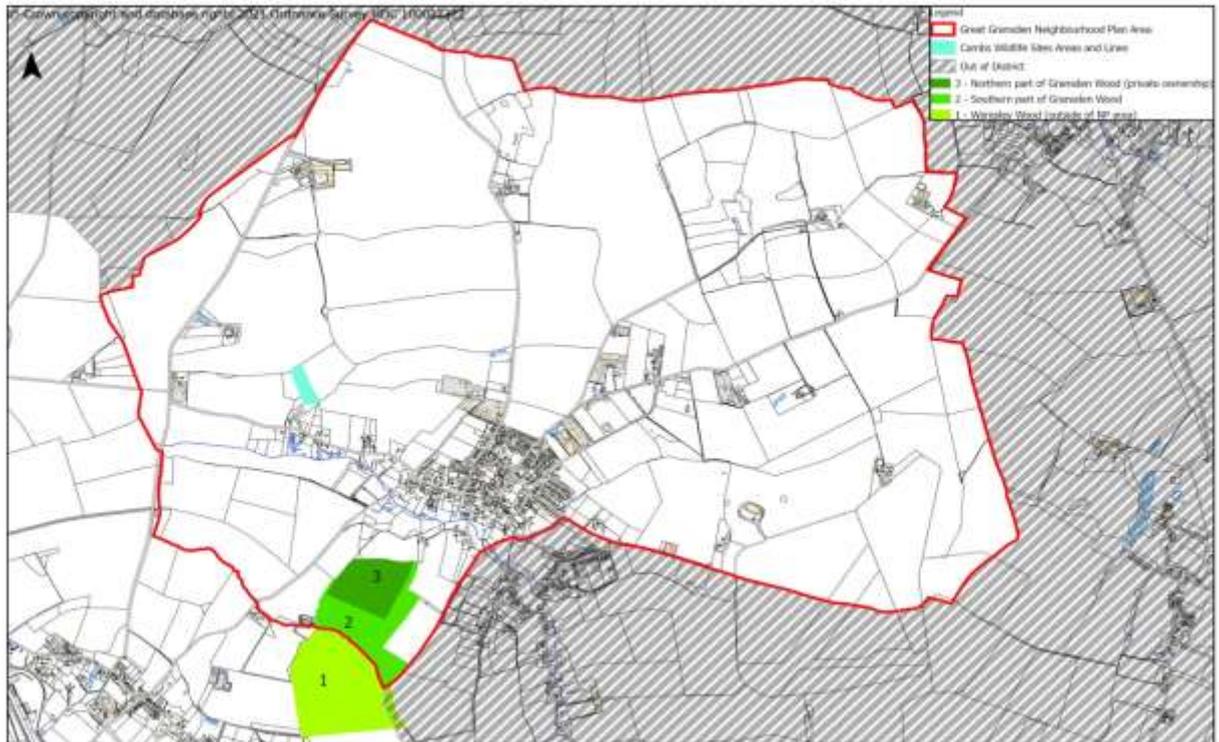
Figure 9: Waresley and Gransden Woods SSSI

7.6.5   Discussions between the GGNP Steering Group and The Wildlife Trust have highlighted the need to improve management of the permissive path routes through the woodland and the adjacent public footpaths and bridleways during all seasons, and for Great Gransden to be provided with alternative natural green space to give alternative options for recreational enjoyment of the countryside thus relieving pressure on the Nature Reserve site. In a public Waresley & Gransden Woods Statement (February 2019) The Wildlife Trust commented 'Increased numbers of visitors and dogs within the woods also causes increased disturbance to the detriment of wildlife'.

7.6.6   The West Cambridgeshire Hundreds is a strategic project focused on a collection of wildlife rich ancient woodlands to the SW of Cambridge, including the ancient woodland at Waresley and Gransden Woods. These lie within an area defined for over 1000 years by the old Anglo-Saxon regional divisions known as the Cambridgeshire Hundreds. The scheme aims to enhance the unique biodiversity found in these woodlands through better management, maintaining or reinstating traditional coppicing, widening rides and providing better conditions for butterflies and other insects. The vision for the project is for the wide area to be a landscape of connected woodlands between which wildlife can move freely. Maintaining and enhancing connectivity between the small copses, woodland areas, adjacent grassland areas and hedgerow networks will be crucial to the success of this initiative. https://www.wildlifebcn.org/westcambshundreds

7.6.7   The HDC Local Plan recognises the strategic importance of the West Cambridgeshire Hundreds Project, Paragraph 4.36.

7.6.8 Waresley and Great Gransden Woods are already recognised as part of the national network of SSSIs. The intention is to identify that part of the SSSI that falls within Great Gransden parish as a parish site of value to biodiversity and resist any development proposals which would risk impacting directly or indirectly on the biodiversity integrity of the site.

7.6.9 Policy G6 also requires the delivery of biodiversity net gain (aligned with the Environment Act) on all sites and signposts what measures might be appropriate in the parish.

7.6.10 **Linked Parish Council commitment CAP 2 -** Outside the scope of the GGNP, GGPC will aim to work with both landowners of the Waresley and Gransden Woods site to find ways to effectively protect their woodland whilst facilitating ongoing public enjoyment of these woodlands, and also continue to seek alternative outdoor recreation provision to serve the parishioners.

7.6.11 **Linked Parish Council commitment: CAP 3** - will support a community-led initiative to recognise an arc shaped corridor shown on the map in Figure 5, page 18 above, along the valley of Gransden Brook and its tributaries to maintain its connectivity value for wildlife and encourage landowners to target this for habitat protection and enhancement.

Policy G6 – Protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the parish including at Gransden Woods.

(It should be noted that only part of the SSSI lies within the Plan area, the remainder being in the adjacent parish of Waresley).

The area of woodland shown on Figure 9, page 57 above, is an SSSI and highly valued as a parish wide biodiversity asset. Any development proposals which would impact adversely on the biodiversity value of the site will be resisted.

Contributions may be sought, where this would be compliant with tests set out in paragraph 57 of the NPPF, LP 4 of the Local Plan (Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery) and the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) (or any successor documents), towards measures which seek to protect or enhance the biodiversity value of Gransden Woods.

Proposals which would protect wildlife assets at Gransden Woods such as provision of alternative open space for Great Gransden parishioners to enjoy will be sought.

Delivering biodiversity net gain in the parish:
All development should provide net gains in biodiversity by creating, restoring and enhancing habitats for the benefit of species. Measures to deliver net gains will be proportionate to the size of the development being proposed and could include:
- Trees, hedgerows, water and other habitats integrated into a development site;
- Bat roosts and bird boxes
- installation of green or brown roofs
- taking available opportunities to restore or enhance the existing ecological network across the Gransden Brook Corridor (see Figure 5)
- taking available opportunities to protect and enhance Gransden Woods including the delivery of an alternative open space designed to relieve pressure.

Open Space

Core Objectives:

- **Objective 9 Maintain and protect key areas of green space within the village and elsewhere in the parish where these are valued by the community for their amenity and recreational value and/or rural landscape value.**

- **Objective 10 Increase the quality and quantity of accessible open space within the parish, to enable local people to experience a wider enjoyment of the Gransden countryside and the associated recreational and health benefits.**

- **Objective 11 Improve access to the countryside whilst fully respecting the rights of private landowners and legitimate uses of the land.**

Policy G7 – Local Green Spaces and Other Valued Green Spaces

Policy context and rationale

7.7   The NPPF 2021 allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them by designating them as a Local Green Space (LGS) through a Neighbourhood Plan or a Local Plan. To qualify for LGS designation a space must meet certain criteria:

- be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.

- be demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife.

- be local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

7.7.1   Community engagement work has identified a number of valued open spaces. The Four spaces are designated as Local Green Spaces. In recognition of the public value attached to them, a further seven spaces are designated as Other Valued Green Spaces. Supporting Document 3 provides an assessment of the LGS spaces against the criteria above, together with an assessment of the Other Valued Green Spaces.

Local Green Spaces

7.7.2   The Local Green Spaces are:

> **The Sportsfield:** Owned by the Parish Council and located 0.5 miles from the village centre.
>
> This space is demonstrably special to the community it serves, due being the principal sports facility for the village. In addition, it is used for community events. See Supporting Document 3 for more detail.
>
> **The Playing Field:** Owned by the Parish Council and located in the heart of the village.
>
> This space is demonstrably special to the community it serves due its function as an outdoor recreation area serving all ages. See Supporting Document 3 for more detail.

The Allotments: Owned by the Parish Council and run by Gransden Allotment and Leisure Gardens Society and located 0.5 mile from the village centre on Caxton Road.

This space is demonstrably special to the community it serves, principally due to its amenity value but also includes areas of biodiversity value. See Supporting Document 3 for more detail.

The Mill Weir: Common land maintained by the Parish Council and located 0.4 miles from the village centre.

This space is demonstrably special to the community it serves due its amenity value as a publicly accessible open space with a pond and a course fishing spot for local residents. See Supporting Document 3 for more detail.

Other Valued Green Spaces

7.7.3 Due to the public value attached to these spaces, Local Plan Policy LP 32 (Protection of Open Space) will apply to proposals impacting upon these spaces. The purpose of Policy LP 32 is to protect against the loss of open space. It does so by only supporting proposals which result in the whole or partial loss of an area of open space of public value if there would be no significant adverse impacts on the character of the surrounding areas and, as clarified in paragraph 8.28 of the Local Plan, *"where the space is to be replaced with an alternative for which there is a proven need or where compensatory measures that will deliver net gains for the community can be delivered."*

7.7.4 Paragraph 8.27 in the Local Plan states that:

"*Open space takes many forms including parks, village greens, play areas, sports pitches, allotments, semi-natural areas and substantial private gardens. Many provide important recreational and sporting facilities or are important for biodiversity. Others are part of heritage assets or form part of the setting of heritage assets. Whatever their size, function and accessibility they all contribute to the character of place and quality of life for the local community. It is important to prevent the loss of open space where this would harm the character of a settlement, the visual quality of the locality or the quality of life of residents and visitors*"

7.7.5 The specific nature of the Other Valued Green Spaces and how they contribute to the character of the Great Gransden settlement is described below:

Other Valued Green Spaces and how they contribute to the character of Great Gransden

Green spaces adjacent to road junctions in the village:
These three spaces are described below. They formerly marked the ancient village boundaries, with large specimen trees

Fox Street/ Middle Street/ East Street/ Caxton Road Crossroads (Figure 11 marked A)

A roughly triangular piece of land in the heart of the village, slightly elevated above the road, displays the Great Gransden village sign and is the site of a specimen chestnut tree and a hornbeam. On the opposite corner is a substantial wildflower verge extending down West Street and Middle Street and very large and handsome sycamore tree.

The space contributes to settlement character by providing a connection with the past, a local landmark and an attractive and verdant space, with biodiversity value, in the heart of the village.

Crow Tree Street/ Meadow Road/ West Street (Figure 11 marked C)

A triangular piece of grass and wildflower land in the fork of the junction has the stump of one of the old boundary trees, a young oak tree and a public bench.

The space contributes to settlement character by providing a connection with the past, a local landmark and an attractive and verdant spaces, with biodiversity value, in the heart of the village.

Eltisley Road/ Fox Street/ West Street (Figure 11 marked B)

A large grassed space with edge planting and a small tree sweeps down from the new development on the corner of Fox Street and Eltisley Road. This piece of land is privately owned. On the opposite corner is a mature lime tree and a public bench, on a green triangle owned by Highways Department

The space is cherished as an open greenscape feature in a busy part of the village near the shop and the Reading Room. It provides a view of the Grade II listed Fox Cottage, which is set at 90°to the road.

Policy intent

- To protect existing open spaces of value to Great Gransden parishioners.

Policy G7 – Local Green Spaces and Other Valued Green Spaces

Local Green Spaces:

The following open spaces as shown on Figure 10, below, are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- The Sportsfield (2)
- The Playing Field (4)
- The Allotments (1)
- The Mill Weir (3)

Development on these sites shall be consistent with national Green Belt Policy and where it would support the identified use of the space

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Other Valued Green Spaces:

The Other Valued Green Spaces, shown on Figure 11 are Other Valued Green Spaces to which Local Plan Policy LP 32 (Protection of Open Space) will apply.

- Green spaces adjacent to road junctions in the village:
  - Fox Street, Middle Street, East Street, Caxton Road Crossroads (A)
  - Eltisley Road/ Fox Street, West Street (B)
  - Crow Tree Street/Meadow Road/ West Street (C)
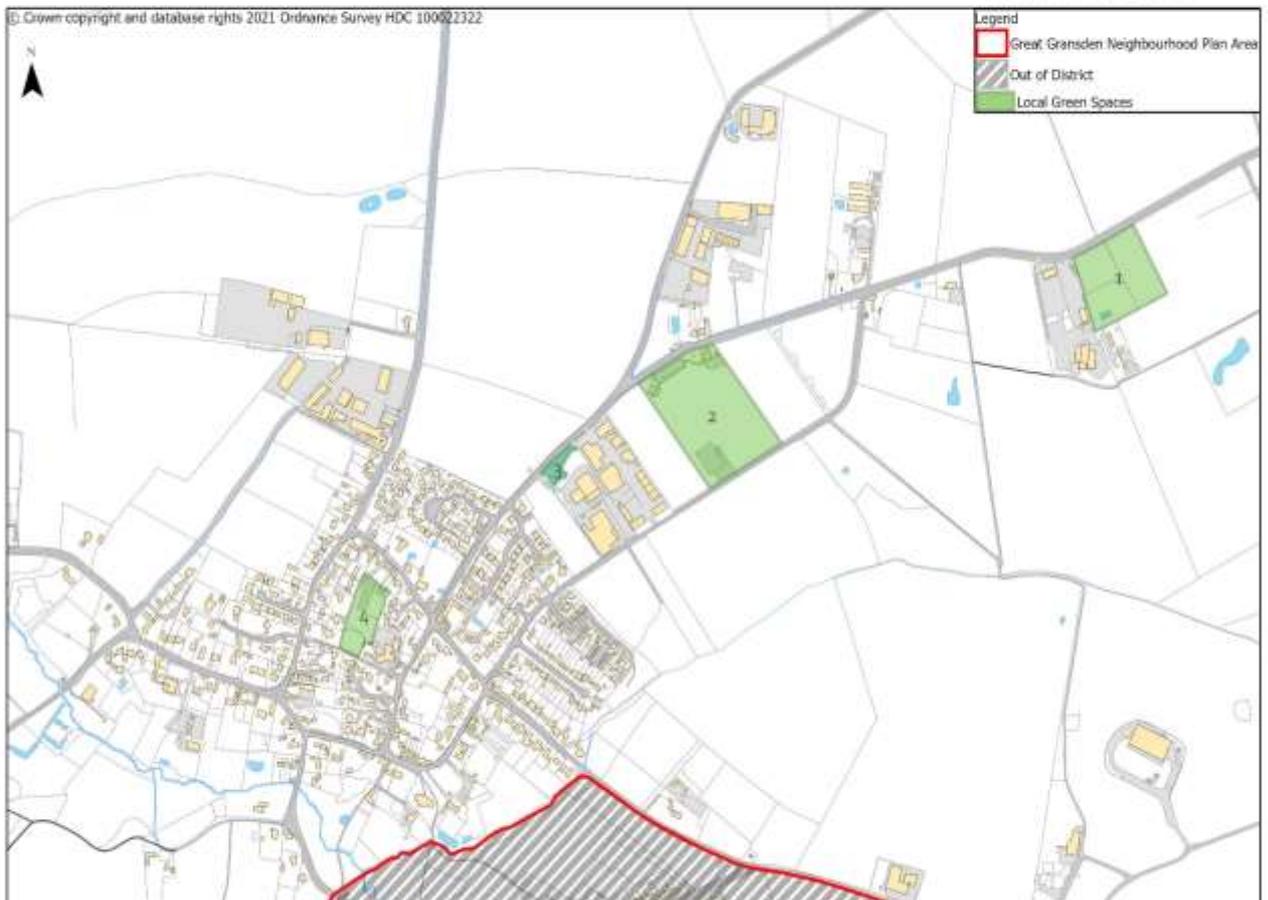
Figure 10: Local green spaces
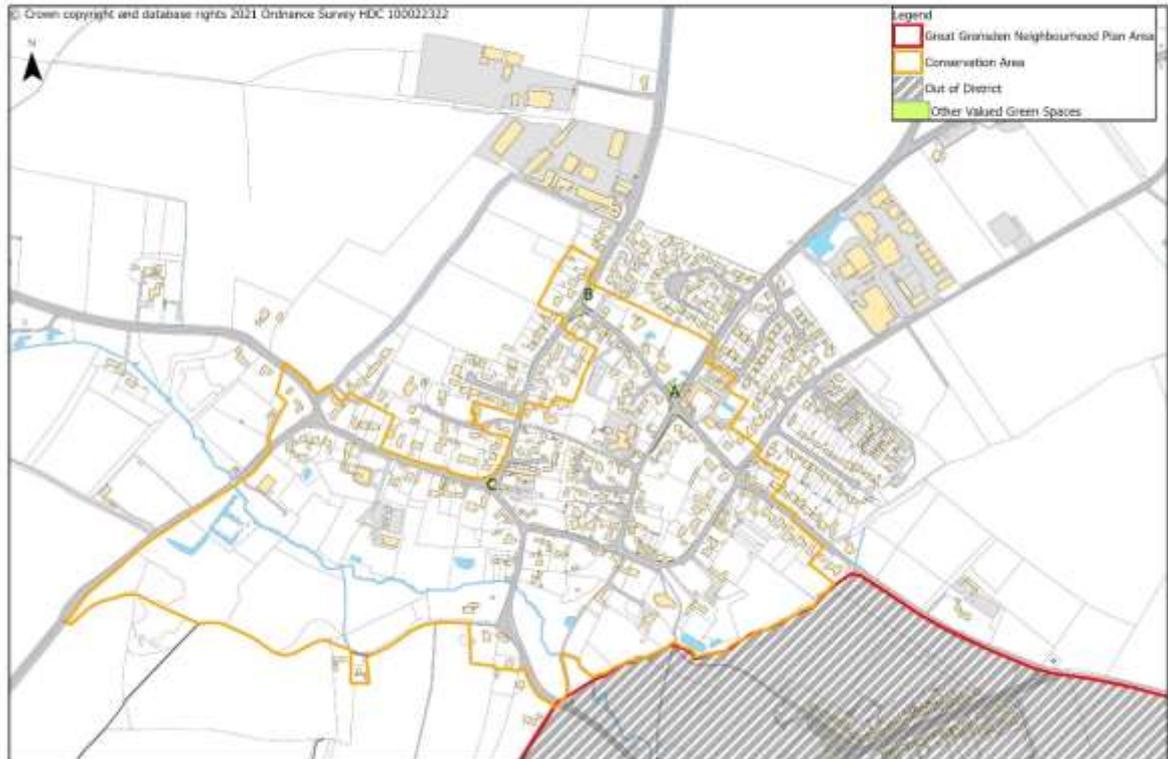
Figure 11: Other Valued Green Spaces

7.7.6   There are no community action plans associated with policy G7.

Policy G8 – Development and Open Space Requirements

Policy context and rationale

7.8   The NPPF 2021 allows local planning authorities to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of open space, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation and to retain and enhance landscapes

7.8.1   In terms of publicly accessible open space, the following shortfalls have been identified during the initial public engagement phase detailed in 1.3

- Publicly accessible informal open space. There is an identified lack of public open space

- Dog walking opportunities. There is a lack of open space and publicly accessible rural paths providing dog walking opportunities

- Poor access to the countryside which surrounds the village.

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- Circular walks from the village are particularly important, to help relieve the pressure on the woods.

7.8.2 This conclusion is supported by other earlier studies. As part of the Local Plan evidence base, a Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2016-21 was produced. This finds that whilst Great Gransden residents have good access to playing fields, they have no access to amenity space or other informal provision. This remains the case today. With respect to dog walking opportunities, under local byelaw, the existing public open green spaces (the sportsfield, the playing field, Mill Weir and the Allotments) do not allow dog walking. As a result, many residents resort to walking dogs at the Waresley and Gransden Woods Reserve. However, as discussed in paragraph 7.6.5 in this plan, the Wildlife Trust have expressed concern with respect to dog walking activity undermining the conservation goals at this SSSI. See paragraph 7.6.5.

7.8.3 Local Plan Policy LP3 Green Infrastructure requires development proposals to incorporate open/green space in accordance with the Council's Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document 2011. This document requires provision of land for additional informal open space on schemes of 10 or more dwellings.

Policy intent

7.8.4 The purpose of Policy G8 is to establish the priorities with regard to open space provision as part of new schemes. It is not the intention of the policy to undermine delivery of necessary on-site play or open space infrastructure that is designed-in or triggered by particular schemes but to complement these.

7.8.5 **Linked Parish Council action/commitment: CAP 4 -** To complement Policy G8, GGPC will aim to work with landowners and the community to identify a suitable location for a new open space close to the village centre.

Policy G8 – Development and Open Space Requirements

All development schemes will be expected to contribute (subject to Paragraph 57 of the NPPF, LP 4 of the Local Plan (Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery) and the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) (or any successor documents) to the provision of open space in the parish in terms of both quality and quantity having regard to the following locally identified priorities:

- New informal open space close to (within half a mile from the Village Hall) the village centre providing an alternative destination to Gransden Woods

- Improved access into the countryside for informal recreation, walking, wildlife enjoyment, countryside relaxation

- The creation of new routes and spaces where residents can walk, ride or cycle safely, including dog walking and also including horse riding

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Policy G9 – Public Rights of Way

Policy context and rationale:

7.9   A related common concern shared by many residents is the lack of access or difficulty of access to public rights of way (PROW)[4] and permissive paths from the built-up environment of Great Gransden into the open countryside. There are a number of public rights of way in and around the parish, as shown on Figure 12, below - there are few networks, few opportunities for circular walks and not many of the public rights of way have access points from the edge of the village. (Figure 13 shows the PROWs in a larger area centred on The Gransdens; in both figures, the public highways are not highlighted, just the public footpaths and the bridleways.) As an example, there is a public right of way from Little Gransden Lane in the south of the village which leads towards Gransden Wood but there is no official access point into the wood at the northern end. However, the wood is a popular outdoor recreation resource for villagers, so many villagers drive to the woods instead, as the public access points are quite remote from the village.

7.9.1   Villagers feel there are only limited opportunities for dog owners/carers to walk their dogs near the village, so many walks will begin and end with a car journey.

7.9.2   Other than the PROWs there are limited publicly accessible footpaths. Expanding accessibility by establishment of permissive footpaths could greatly increase access to the countryside and relieve the pressure on the established footpaths. This would require agreement with private landowners.

7.9.3   Due to their importance to well-being, it is important that the existing public rights of way and their amenity value are protected. Existing PROWs should be maintained to an appropriate standard, allowing easy use. Where a development proposal is near to an existing public right of way or permissive path which provides access to the open countryside, opportunities to link the development in with that network should be taken. Where there are no or limited nearby public rights of way providing access to the countryside, consideration should be given to how the development itself could deliver or contribute towards enhanced access to outdoor recreation space.

   Linked Parish Council action/commitment: CAP 5 - To complement Policy G9, GGPC will support a community-led action to start initial dialogue with and then to work with landowners to identify improved access into the countryside via permissive footpaths and permissive bridleways.

Policy intent:

7.9.4   The purpose of this policy is to highlight to developers the existing network of public rights of way, to protect this network (and its amenity value) and require future proposals to either link in with this network and/or explore opportunities for creating new links.

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[4] For a definition of various types of public right of way, see the following article on the Land Registry's website: https://www.landregistry-titledeeds.co.uk/frequently-asked-questions/information/public-rights-of-way.asp

Policy G9 – Public Rights of Way Network

The existing PROW should be protected or enhanced.

Any new development on or adjacent to an existing Public Right of Way must:

1. consider the appearance of the proposal from the Right of Way or Permissive Path, and incorporate green landscaping to reduce any visual impacts, and
2. provide links to the network in and around the village.

Enhancements or extensions to the PROW network - for example through improving accessibility or connectivity - will be encouraged where this does not result in harm to ecology or landscape character, and may be required where a development is likely to lead to a significant increase in the usage of the network.
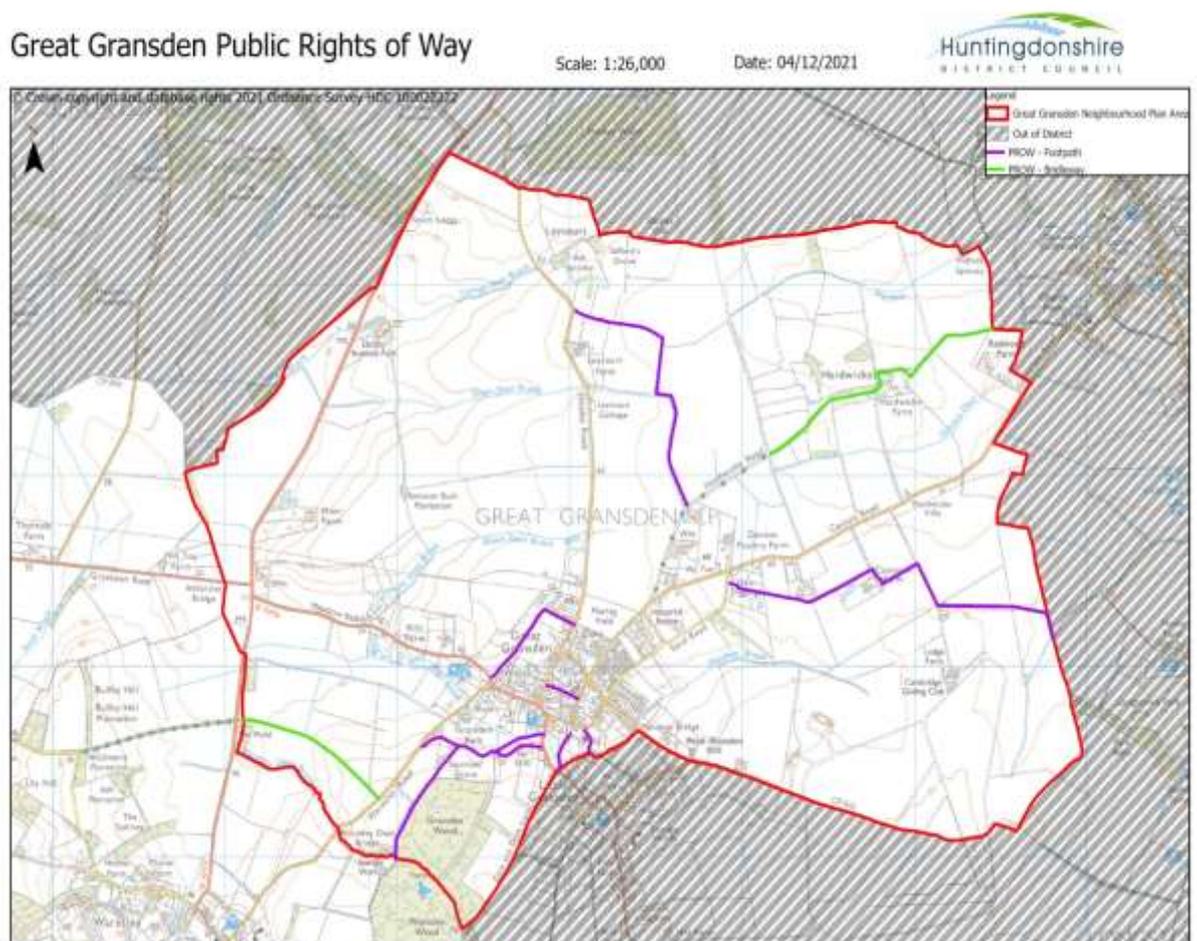
Figure 12: Public rights of way in The Gransdens
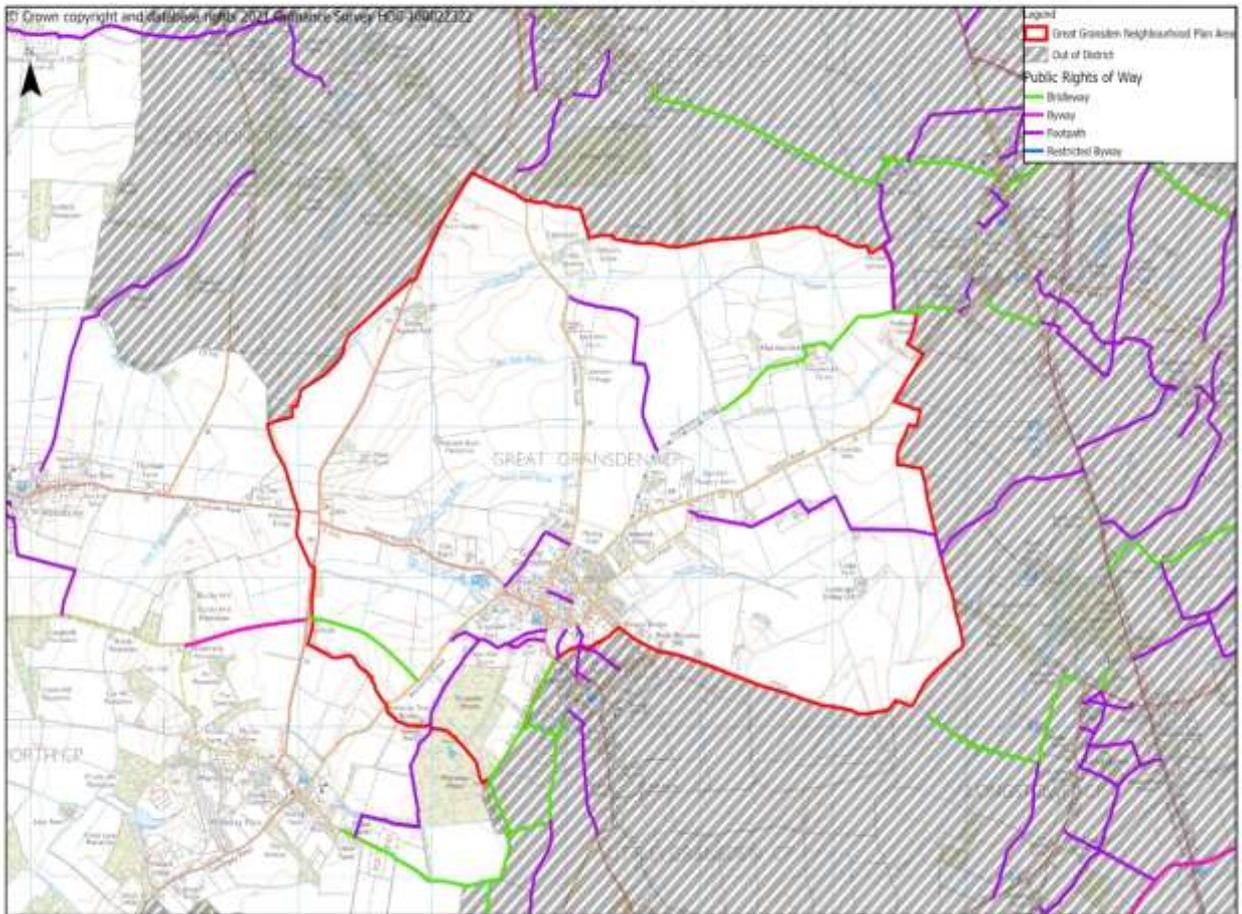
Figure 13: Public rights of way in The Gransdens and neighbouring villages

Transport and Road Safety Improvements

Core Objectives:

- **Objective 12 A prioritised programme of improvements will be implemented, to enhance road safety for all road users, particularly pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.**

- **Objective 13 Cycleways, footpaths, and pavements on key routes around the village, and to and from the village will be established and upgraded.**

- **Objective 14 New development will allow for safe movement of vehicles and non-motorised users in and around the village.**

Policies G10 and G11 – Policy context and rationale.

7.10   Car movements to and through the village are relatively light during the day, but high at peak periods. The morning peak consists of users going to work or school, people dropping off children at the school, people coming to work in the village and people using the village as a through route on their way to work in Cambridge – which is often to avoid traffic problems on the A roads. The evening peak consists of people leaving the industrial estates from 4pm onwards, users returning home from work, and others cutting through the village on their way home from work. Middle Street is the subject of a 20mph speed limit.

- Bus movements to and through the village are very light and consist mostly of school buses.

- Heavy goods vehicle movements consist mainly of deliveries to and from the industrial sites, vehicles delivering to building sites around the village, vehicles visiting the weighbridge on the airfield via Mill Road, and vehicles using the village as a through route. Many of the village roads are too narrow for two HGVs to pass each other without going onto the verges or pavements. Junctions that cause particular difficulties are the Sand Road/Mill Road/East Street crossroads and the East Street/Caxton Road crossroads. HGVs have difficulty manoeuvring around the roundabout at the Crow Tree St/Church St/ Middle St junction which lies on an HGV route to the Caxton Road Industrial area. Vehicles are seen going the wrong way around the roundabout.

- A common concern expressed by residents is the difficulties that pedestrians and cyclists face in moving around the village and into the countryside. Whilst the village is relatively compact, the pedestrian route is not safe in places. Many of the roads either lack a pavement altogether or lack an adequately wide path. Road crossing points are often on blind corners and junctions.

- Irrespective of new developments, it is important to establish a prioritised improvement plan for road safety in Great Gransden.

Policy G10 – A walkable village and reducing village car use.

Policy intent

7.10.1 The pedestrian environment is poor. Investments will be sought to improve cycle way network.

7.10.2 The quality of the pedestrian environment should be a key consideration for all planning proposals. All future residents of the village should be able to walk and cycle safely to village facilities including the shop, the school, the bus stop, employment areas and recreation facilities.

7.10.3 Linked Parish Council action/commitment: CAP 6

GGPC will:

- support the development of a prioritised improvement plan for road safety in Great Gransden for all road users, including traffic calming, pedestrian safety, pavement widening, reduced parking on pavements, new pavements, parking and support fundraising for implementation.

- support a community-led action plan to encourage reduced car usage within the village, especially for short trips; and,

- work with neighbouring parishes, the District and the County to explore the potential for a new cycle route to Cambourne, St Neots and Cambridge to link in with similar networks in neighbouring parishes.

> **Policy G10 – A walkable village and reducing village car use**
> New multiple-dwelling development proposals, and new build proposals providing places of employment must enable residents to walk and cycle along safe and direct routes into the village centre to access services. Where pavements or routes are not in place, provision shall be made as required by the District Council in consultation with the local highway authority as part of the proposed development. Attempts should be made in development proposals to improve existing pavements serving the development to make them more accessible for all users including children and those using mobility aids.

Policy G11 – Roads and new development

Policy intent

7.11 It is important for safety reasons that all dwellings are accessible by emergency vehicles – ambulances, fire appliances and police cars. The GGNP seeks to ensure that any roads are wide enough to ensure emergency vehicles and service vehicles (e.g. refuse collection vehicles) have safe access even if all designated on-street parking slots are occupied.

> **Policy G11 – Roads and new development**
>
> Where development proposals involve the creation of new roads, these must be wide enough to allow for two-way traffic (unless one-way movement of traffic has been deliberately designed-in as part of the scheme-wide movement strategy addressing all users across the scheme).
>
> The design and layout of roads should enable ease of access for service vehicles which should have ready access to all properties and open areas when all on-street parking areas are occupied. This will not prejudice the introduction of low order shared surface private drives and mews streets if required,
>
> All roads in new developments should be to adoptable standard to ensure the maintenance of access and safety standards.

Community Facilities, Leisure and Infrastructure

Core Objectives:

- **Objective New development will be supported by improvements in village infrastructure**

- **Objective 16 CIL spending by GGPC will reflect local priorities as expressed through the GGNP and through ongoing liaison with the community following adoption of the plan.**

- **Objective 17 Community-led projects will be identified to move towards net zero carbon.**

Infrastructure: Existing, Shortfalls and Aspirations for the Future.

7.11.1 Great Gransden has a wealth of clubs and societies. There is a strong sense of community and volunteering capacity is high. The parish has a shop/post office, a primary school, a pub, the Reading Room (village hall) and a church. It also has two playgrounds (one of which is currently unusable), and a large sportsfield providing grassed football pitches, and hosting the tennis club which has three floodlit courts. Allotments are situated approximately one mile from the village.

7.11.2 Engagement work on the GGNP has identified that the residents are concerned with existing shortfalls in community infrastructure and how any new development may impact upon this.

7.11.3 The following shortfalls in Great Gransden have been identified during the initial public engagement phase detailed in paragraph 1.3

- Very poor public bus service meaning the population is heavily dependent on the private car. Even secondary school children are predominantly dependent on being driven to school.[5]

- A need for improved indoor recreational facilities.

- A need for improvements to the children's playgrounds particularly some repair to existing equipment, the replacement of an aging roundabout with a wheelchair accessible roundabout and also some other special needs equipment.

- A lack of informal open space in and around the village. This is supported by ongoing work with the Wildlife Trust in relation to Gransden Woods. See paragraph 7.6.5.

- A need to upgrade the clubhouse facilities on the Sportsfield to provide an improved standard of hygiene and safeguarding.

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[5] Great Gransden secondary school aged children are in the catchment of Comberton or Longsands St Neots.

Policy G12 – Great Gransden Infrastructure Priorities

Policy context and rationale:

7.12 The NPPF 2021 seeks to allow planning authorities to plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

7.12.1 Residents consider that any increase in the number of dwellings in Great Gransden should be accompanied by improvements in community facilities, leisure and infrastructure and these should be decided on the basis of local priorities.

7.12.2 The GGNP seeks to set out the infrastructure that the parish requires when new development comes forward. How infrastructure improvements are delivered will vary from case to case. For some proposals, there will be the need for a Section 106 agreement to be tied to a planning consent to ensure necessary improvements e.g. improving a road junction which can make a development proposal acceptable in planning terms. A number of the planning policies in this section refer to such requirements.

7.12.3 Low and unreliable broadband speed is a problem in parts of Great Gransden. Significant improvements could be achieved with the implementation of full fibre broadband.

7.12.4 The Reading Room and garden is a popular venue for small events and club meetings. It is small, with no room for a stage and can only accommodate up to 60 people. As a listed building remodelling is not straightforward but the Reading Room Management Committee is examining the potential to extend in order to accommodate a greater variety of activity and larger groups and maintain its viability. Such a project would require substantial funding.

7.12.5 Great Gransden has no natural gas, so households are dependent on oil, LPG or electric heating systems. Some dwellings have installed ground or air source heating systems. Great Gransden has an outdoor playground that is beginning to show its age. Most of the facilities are dated and require constant attention to ensure their safe use by children. The updating of these facilities is seen as a priority by GGPC.

Policy intent

7.12.6 This policy highlights the priorities for financial contributions to direct new and improved infrastructure, where it can be locally determined. Policy G7 – 'Gransden Woods', Policy G9 'Development and Open Space Requirements' and Policy G10 – 'A walkable village and reducing village car use' all include references to a possibility of infrastructure improvements being sought as part of specific development proposals. The intention of this policy is to articulate a general principle that for all development proposals there may be requirements for financial contributions or direct provision of new infrastructure where this is necessary to make the development acceptable and where this is directly, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. Many development proposals coming forward in the plan will be subject to CIL contributions (as required by HDC). The CIL contribution will be fully taken into account before determining whether additional contributions are required to make a scheme acceptable.

The current levy (revision date 2019) of 15% capped at £100/dwelling (indexed for inflation), paid to parish each year will rise to 25% uncapped when the Neighbourhood Plan is finally 'made'. These funds can be spent on community infrastructure projects.

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Policy G12 – Great Gransden Infrastructure Priorities.

Financial contributions or direct provision of new infrastructure will be sought to secure infrastructure improvements made necessary by development proposals. Use of developer contributions that are locally determined will be directed to any of the following priorities:

- Improvements to the children's playground

- Improvements to the Reading Room

- Improvements to the Playing Field carpark in the centre of the village

- Improvements to indoor facilities provided at Great Gransden Sportsfield*

- Improvements to the Sportsfield carpark

- Installation of new pavements and improvements to the existing pavements and pedestrian environment within the village of Great Gransden subject to a prioritised road safety improvement plan

- Implementation of traffic calming measures

- Creation of new informal open space in and around Great Gransden*

- Extending or improving the public rights of way network and permissive footpaths so as to increase access to the countryside*

- Creation of a cycle route to access neighbouring parishes and linking up with wider cycle network and to provide access to public transport

- Habitat protection and enhancement measures along the valley of the Gransden Brook as shown on Figure 5 (page 18)*

- Improvements to the communications and broadband capabilities*

- Evaluation of ground and air source heat projects*

- Enhanced opportunities for education for all ages*

Priorities marked with an asterisk * will require community leadership, with support from GGPC

</div>

Health and Education

Core Objectives:

- **Objective 18 The village primary school will maintain its very high standards of education and its strong community ethos through any period of housing growth. It will be well-resourced and financially secure.**

- **Objective 19 Residents in the village will have easy access to good educational opportunities for all age groups – pre-school through to adult learning.**

- **Objective 20 Health provision in the village will be restored and expanded**

Policy G13 - Barnabas Oley Primary School and parish pre-school provision

Policy context and rationale:

7.13   As Great Gransden has a lot of family housing, access to good pre-school and after-school provision is essential, both for the social and intellectual development of infants and for the convenience of working parents. There is currently excellent provision in the village of a playgroup, a nursery and an after-school/school holiday club but they all have limited space. All these are managed as businesses or not-for-profit enterprises and are fee-paying.

7.13.1 Barnabas Oley Primary School, located in the very centre of Great Gransden, is one of the prized facilities of the village, rated Outstanding by Ofsted (2019) and Excellent by SIAMS (the Schools Inspectorate for Anglican and Methodist Schools) (2019). The community wishes for the primary school to thrive through the plan period, and it is important that every primary aged child in the Gransdens and wider catchment area should have the opportunity to attend the school.

7.13.2 Housing development in the village may have an impact on the resourcing and character of Barnabas Oley Primary School. The school can accommodate around 150 pupils in its current buildings and configuration of classrooms. Revenue funding for schools is pupil-related, so growth in pupil numbers is financially beneficial and a fall in numbers would have a negative financial impact. Demographic projections suggest modest growth in primary-age pupil numbers over the next eight years (less than 10%)[6] but the completed and committed housing developments in the plan period, of some 87 additional dwellings (see 7.1.2) could take this growth over the 150 mark. If pupil numbers were to expand beyond 180 a full capital appraisal would be necessary in order to determine the best solution for the school.

Policy Intent

7.13.3 Barnabas Oley Primary School is situated on Middle Street in the centre of the village. It is conveniently situated adjacent to the playing field with playground, the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), and close to the village shop and St Bartholomew's church. Pupils and staff from the Gransdens are able to walk to school; those from outside the village generally arrive by car. This can add to traffic congestion at the start and end of the school day. As highlighted in paragraph 7.11.3 a very poor public bus service means that the population is heavily dependent on the private car. Middle Street is

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[6] According to the ONS National population projections: 2020-based interim.

narrow, with 20mph speed limit, and is the main thoroughfare for traffic including HGVs for the Industrial Estates. Pavements on both sides are present for only part of its length. There is a layby which is used as a bus stop and for parking. Additional traffic calming is being considered to improve road safety for pedestrians. Road safety would be a consideration if the school were to grow significantly.

> **Policy G13 – Barnabas Oley Primary School and parish pre-school provision**
>
> All development proposals which create additional primary school or pre-school demand on the parish will be assessed for this impact and required, as per the NPPF, Local Plan, Policy LP 4 (Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery) and the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) (or any successor documents), to contribute to pre-school and primary school provision accordingly.
>
> Proposals which will help sustain and enhance pre-school or primary school infrastructure in the parish (for example through housing which is targeted at younger families) will be considered favourably subject to meeting other policy criteria in this plan.
>
> Proposals that seek to extend or alter Barnabas Oley Primary School to meet changing demands or provide additional educational facilities required to accommodate growing pupil numbers will be supported in principle, provided there are no adverse impacts on road safety, congestion, the appearance of the conservation area and still maintaining a high standard of residential amenity for existing and future residents.

Secondary Schooling

7.13.4 The majority of secondary school-aged children in the parish attend Comberton Village College. The County Council designates two schools as catchment schools for the parish - Longsands Academy in St Neots and Comberton Village College - but the Local Authority only provides free public transport to Longsands Academy from Great Gransden. As a consequence, many secondary-aged children living in the parish either travel by private transport to Comberton Village College or pay for a place on a non-funded school bus. It is not within the scope of the GGNP to secure a funded public transport service from the parish to Comberton Village College as this is a matter for the County Council as the Local Authority. However, the GGNP has identified two **Parish Council commitments/actions**:

- GGPC to explore with the Local Authority the possibility of instating free travel as the cost of such journeys has a financial implication for families and could be disadvantaging people from lower incomes; and,

- GGPC to explore with stakeholders including the school, neighbouring parishes and parents the possibility of operating a locally run and part resident-funded/part subsidised secondary school bus.*

- GGPC to collaborate with the school to monitor the impact of growth and student numbers.

Adult Learning Opportunities

7.13.5 The parish is well-provided with village societies, which are a highly valued aspect of Great Gransden village life. The aspiration is that village societies are able to offer more learning opportunities to parishioners, and that village societies themselves have better access to improved meeting facilities. Current meeting venues in the parish include the Reading Room, the Primary School and the Lighthouse Café/Baptist Chapel. Meetings are also often held in the village pub. The owners or

committees responsible for these facilities will be encouraged to provide greater access to community groups as far as is practical for them to do so.

7.13.6 It is not within the scope of the GGNP to deliver these aspirations as they are not land use matters. The GGNP therefore identifies the following **Parish Council commitments**:

- GGPC to work alongside village societies to see how learning opportunities for all parishioners can be expanded*
- GGPC to work alongside owners of buildings and committees responsible for managing community spaces to see how greater access to existing meeting rooms and community buildings can be best provided.

Health Provision

7.13.7 There is currently no GP surgery in the parish. Residents must therefore travel to Bourn or Gamlingay to receive GP care. The Bourn Surgery used to run a weekly Gransden Clinic to enable less mobile residents to access GP services more easily but this was suspended in September 2019. It is recognised that more suitable premises would be required by the general practitioners in order for a consultation clinic to be restored to Great Gransden. The GGNP therefore identifies the following **Parish Council commitment:**

- GGPC to discuss with GP surgeries at Bourn and Gamlingay to try to identify and agree suitable premises for appropriate consultation clinics to be held in Great Gransden.

Health and Education Infrastructure.

Development can place additional demands upon infrastructure, the environment and the social sustainability of a community, and it is therefore essential to mitigate these impacts by providing adequate infrastructure and other services to meet economic, social and environmental needs. To this end GGPC will lean heavily on the HDC Local Plan Development Strategy Section LP4 – Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery and on HDC Developer Contributions SPD, which sets out their policy for securing developer contributions from new developments that require planning permission.

8 Monitoring the Planning Policies

The monitoring will be summarised in a report produced by the GGPC annually and published on the GGPC website.

GGPC will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Plan to ensure relevance and to monitor delivery. Monitoring will include:

- how the policies are being applied to shape decisions on planning applications (development management)

- Whether projects and/or actions identified are being achieved

- level of monies raised through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and how such monies are being used

- whether plan aims are being achieved

- changes to national and local policy

- changes in the local area

9 Community Action Plans

9.1 Several of the action areas in the GGNP will be delivered by a combination of Planning Policies supported by Community Action Plans. These Community Action Plans are listed below, with the rationale having been detailed in Section 7 (Planning policies), where they are flagged as Parish Council commitments.

9.2 Community Action Plans (CAPs) will be community-led projects, sponsored and supported by GGPC.

Policy Theme	Policies	Related Community Action Plans
Spatial Strategy	Policy G1 – A Built-Up Area Boundary Strategy for Great Gransden	*There are no community action plans associated with policy G1.*
	Policy G2 – Affordable Housing on rural Exception Sites	**CAP 1** The Parish Council will monitor the local housing needs and when appropriate explore the option for a local Exception Site.
A rural and historic parish	Policy G3 – Local Character and Design	*There are no community action plans associated with policy G3.*
	Policy G4 – Development, Landscape Character and Valued Views	*There are no community action plans associated with policy G4.*
	Policy G5 – Conserving and enhancing Great Gransden's Conservation Area	*There are no community action plans associated with policy G5.*
The Natural Environment	Policy G6 – Protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the parish including at Gransden Woods	**CAP 2** Outside the scope of the GGNP, GGPC will aim to work with both landowners of the Waresley and Gransden Woods site to find ways to effectively protect their woodland and continue to seek alternative outdoor recreation provision to serve the parishioners. **CAP 3** GGPC will support a community-led initiative to recognise an arc shaped corridor shown on the map in Figure 5, page 18 above, along the valley of Gransden Brook and encourage landowners to target this for habitat protection and enhancement.
Open spaces	Policy G7 – Local Green Spaces and Other Valued Green Spaces	*There are no community action plans associated with policy G7.*

	Policy G8 – Development and Open Space Requirements	**CAP 4** To complement Policy G8, GGPC will aim to work with landowners and the community to identify a suitable location for a new open space close to the village centre.
	Policy G9 - Public Rights of Way	**CAP 5** To complement Policy G9, GGPC will support a community-led action to start initial dialogue with and then to work with landowners to identify improved access into the countryside via permissive footpaths and permissive bridleways.
Transport	Policy G10 – A walkable village and reducing village car use Policy G11 – Roads and new development	**CAP 6** GGPC will: Support the development of a prioritised improvement plan for road safety in Great Gransden for all road users, including traffic calming, pedestrian safety, pavement widening, reduced parking on pavements, new pavements, parking and support fundraising for implementation. Support a community-led action plan to encourage reduced car usage within the village, especially for short trips; and, Work with neighbouring parishes, the District and the County to explore the potential for a new cycle route to Cambourne, St Neots and Cambridge to link in with similar networks in neighbouring parishes. Similarly, new route provision should be sought for horse riders and all non-motorised users.
Community Facilities, Leisure and Infrastructure	Policy G12 – Financial Contributions for Great Gransden Infrastructure Priorities.	Financial contributions or direct provision of new infrastructure will be sought to secure infrastructure improvements made necessary by development proposals. Use of developer contributions that are can be locally determined will be directed to any of the following priorities: - Improvements to the children's playground - Improvements to the Reading Room - Improvements to the Playing Field carpark in the centre of the village - Improvements to indoor facilities provided at Great Gransden Sportsfield*

		• Improvements to the Sportsfield carpark
		• Installation of new pavements and improvements to the existing pavements and pedestrian environment within the village of Great Gransden subject to a prioritised road safety improvement plan
		• Implementation of traffic calming measures
		• Creation of new informal open space in and around Great Gransden*
		• Extending or improving the public rights of way network and permissive footpaths so as to increase access to the countryside*
		• Creation of a cycle route to access neighbouring parishes and linking up with wider cycle network and to provide access to public transport
		• Habitat protection and enhancement measures along the valley of the Gransden Brook as shown on Figure 5 (page 18, above)*
		• Improvements to the communications and broadband capabilities*
		• Evaluation of ground and air source heat projects*
		• Enhanced opportunities for education for all ages*
		Priorities marked with an asterisk * will require community leadership, with support from GGPC
Health and Education	Policy G13 – Barnabas Oley Primary School and parish pre-school provision	GGPC to explore with the Local Authority the possibility of instating free travel as the cost of such journeys has a financial implication for families and could be disadvantaging people from lower incomes; and, GGPC to explore with stakeholders including the school, neighbouring parishes and parents the possibility of

		operating a locally run and part resident-funded/part subsidised secondary school bus*. GGPC to collaborate with the school to monitor the impact of growth and student numbers.
		GGPC to work alongside village societies to see how learning opportunities for all parishioners can be expanded;* GGPC to work alongside owners of buildings and committees responsible for managing community spaces to see how greater access to existing meeting rooms and community buildings can be best provided.
		GGPC to discuss with GP surgeries at Bourn and Gamlingay to try to identify and agree suitable premises for appropriate consultation clinics to be held in Great Gransden. **Priorities marked with an asterisk * will require community involvement, with support from GGPC**

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Report on Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan
2021 - 2036

An Examination undertaken for Huntingdonshire District Council with the support of Great Gransden Parish Council on the August 2022 submission version of the Plan.

Independent Examiner: Andrew S Freeman BSc (Hons) DipTP DipEM FRTPI

Date of Report: 30 November 2022

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Main Findings - Executive Summary

From my examination of the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) and its supporting documentation, including the representations made, I have concluded that subject to the policy modifications set out in this report, the Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

I have also concluded that:

- the Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body – Great Gransden Parish Council;
- the Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan Area – Figure 1 on Page 11 of the Plan;
- the Plan specifies the period to which it is to take effect – 2021 - 2036; and
- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum on the basis that it has met all the relevant legal requirements.

I have considered whether the referendum area should extend beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates and have concluded that it should not.

1. Introduction and Background

Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan 2021 - 2036

1.1   Great Gransden is a civil parish and village in the southeastern corner of the Huntingdonshire District of Cambridgeshire, with South Cambridgeshire District being on the other side of the parish boundary to the southeast. The village lies between Bedford and Cambridge, with Cambridge some 20 km to the east-northeast. Huntingdon itself is about 16 km away to the north-northwest and St Neots approximately 10 km to the west-northwest.

1.2   The parish was designated as a neighbourhood area by Huntingdonshire District Council in July 2018. Since then, plan preparation has proceeded under the auspices of a Steering Group. The resultant draft Neighbourhood Plan has a vision, seven broad topic areas and 13 detailed policies.

The Independent Examiner

1.3   As the Plan has now reached the examination stage, I have been appointed as the examiner of the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan by

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Huntingdonshire District Council with the agreement of Great Gransden Parish Council.

1.4   I am a chartered town planner and former government Planning Inspector with over forty years' experience. I have worked in both the public and the private sectors. I am an independent examiner and do not have an interest in any of the land that may be affected by the draft Plan.

The Scope of the Examination

1.5   As the independent examiner I am required to produce this report and recommend either:

(a) that the neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum without changes; or

(b) that modifications are made and that the modified neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum; or

(c) that the neighbourhood plan does not proceed to a referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

1.6   The scope of the examination is set out in Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) ("the 1990 Act"). The examiner must consider:

- Whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions;

- Whether the plan complies with provisions under Section 38A and Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ("the 2004 Act"). These are:

    - it has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body for an area that has been properly designated by the local planning authority;

    - it sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land;

    - it specifies the period during which it has effect;

    - it does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'; and

    - it is the only neighbourhood plan for the area and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area.

- Whether the referendum boundary should be extended beyond the designated area, should the plan proceed to referendum.

- Such matters as prescribed in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ("the 2012 Regulations").

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1.7   I have considered only matters that fall within Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act, with one exception. That is the requirement that the Plan is compatible with the Human Rights Convention.

The Basic Conditions

1.8   The "Basic Conditions" are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the neighbourhood plan must:

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;

- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;

- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area;

- be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations; (under retained EU law)[1] and

- meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.

1.9   Regulation 32 of the 2012 Regulations prescribes a further Basic Condition for a neighbourhood plan. This requires that the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.[2]

2. Approach to the Examination

Planning Policy Context

2.1   The Development Plan for this part of Huntingdonshire District Council, not including documents relating to excluded minerals and waste development, is Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

2.2   Planning policy for England is set out principally in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) offers guidance on how this policy should be implemented.

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[1] The existing body of environmental regulation is retained in UK law.
[2] This revised Basic Condition came into force on 28 December 2018 through the Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018.

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Submitted Documents

2.3 I have considered all policy, guidance and other reference documents I consider relevant to the examination, including those submitted which comprise:

- the draft Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2036, August 2022;
- a map of the Plan which identifies the area to which the proposed neighbourhood development plan relates (Figure 1 on Page 11 of the Plan);
- the Consultation Statement, August 2022;
- the Basic Conditions Statement, August 2022;
- all the representations that have been made in accordance with the Regulation 16 consultation;
- the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report, August 2022; and
- the request for additional clarification sought in my letter dated 20 October 2022 and the response from Great Gransden Parish Council of 3 November 2022.[3]

Other published (Regulation 16 consultation) supporting documents comprise:

- the Character Assessment, August 2022;
- the Housing Need Survey Results Report, June 2018;
- the Rationale for Local Green Spaces and Other Valued Green Spaces, August 2022; and
- the Built-Up Area Boundary Rationale, August 2022.[4]

Site Visit

2.4 I made an unaccompanied site visit to the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 7 November 2022 to familiarise myself with it and visit relevant sites and areas referenced in the Plan and evidential documents.

Written Representations with or without Public Hearing

2.5 This examination has been dealt with by written representations. I considered hearing sessions to be unnecessary as the consultation responses clearly articulated the objections to the Plan and presented arguments for and against the Plan's suitability to proceed to a referendum.

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[3] View at: https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-planning/
[4] View all Regulation 16 published documents at: Great Gransden Submission (Regulation 16) Neighbourhood Plan - Details - Keystone (objective.co.uk)

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Modifications

2.6   Where necessary, I have recommended modifications to the Plan (**PMs**) in this report in order that it meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. For ease of reference, I have listed these modifications separately in the Appendix.

3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights

Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area

3.1   The Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by Great Gransden Parish Council, which is a qualifying body for an area that was designated by Huntingdonshire District Council on 30 July 2018.

3.2   It is the only Neighbourhood Plan for the Great Gransden parish and does not relate to any land outside the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Plan Period

3.3   The Plan specifies clearly the period to which it is to take effect, which is from 2021 to 2036.

Neighbourhood Plan Preparation and Consultation

3.4   Plan preparation and consultation on the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan were carried out as detailed in the Parish Council's Consultation Statement, August 2022. Designation by Huntingdonshire District Council took place on 30 July 2018. In advance of this, there was an inception stage (May 2017 to January 2018) involving initial discussions, a decision to proceed and the raising of initial awareness throughout the parish.

3.5   There followed an initial Plan development stage between February 2018 and February 2019. The main focus of this phase was consultation with the community and evidence gathering. A survey of residents and a housing needs survey were carried out at this stage.

3.6   Advanced Plan development took place between March 2019 and December 2021. The output from earlier phases was refined into a draft Plan. Further engagement and consultation were also carried out.

3.7   Formal consultation under Regulation 14 was undertaken between 1 March 2022 and 12 April 2022. There were 51 responses from residents and 20 from statutory consultees. A summary of the comments made and the actions to be taken are set out in Appendices F and G of the Consultation Statement.

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3.8   Consultation under Regulation 16 ran from 25 August 2022 until 7 October 2022. The District Council has recorded some 76 representations from 20 different parties. These include the District Council itself as well as developers and landowners, various public bodies and members of the public.

3.9   I am satisfied that, at both the Regulation 14 and the Regulation 16 stages, the consultation process met the legal requirements and there has been procedural compliance. Regard has been paid to the advice on plan preparation and engagement in the PPG.

Development and Use of Land

3.10   The Plan sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in accordance with Section 38A of the 2004 Act.

Excluded Development

3.11   The Plan does not include provisions and policies for "excluded development".

Human Rights

3.12   Great Gransden Parish Council is satisfied that the Plan does not breach Human Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998). From my independent assessment, I see no reason to disagree.

4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions

EU Obligations

4.1   The Neighbourhood Plan was screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) by Huntingdonshire District Council, which found that it was unnecessary to undertake SEA. Having read the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion, I support this conclusion.

4.2   The Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan was further screened for Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), which also was not triggered. The site is not in close proximity to a European designated nature site. Natural England agreed with this conclusion.[5] From my independent assessment of this matter, I have no reason to disagree.

Main Issues

4.3   Having regard to the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan, the consultation responses and other evidence, and the site visit, I consider that there are

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[5] See email dated 24 February 2022 in Appendix 1 of the Screening Report.

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five main issues relating to the Basic Conditions for this examination. These concern:

- Spatial Strategy;
- Natural and Historic Environment;
- Open Space;
- Transport and Road Safety Improvements; and
- Education.

4.4 Before I deal with the main issues, I have a few observations to make with regard to the representations. First, the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan should be seen in the context of the wider planning system. This includes Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 as well as the NPPF and PPG. It is not necessary to repeat in the Neighbourhood Plan matters that are adequately dealt with elsewhere.[6] Having said that, there may be scope to give emphasis to issues particularly relevant in the context of Great Gransden.

4.5 Secondly, the Neighbourhood Plan does not have to deal with each and every topic raised through the consultation. In this regard, the content of the Neighbourhood Plan and the scope of the policies is largely at the discretion of the qualifying body, albeit informed by the consultation process and the requirements set by the Basic Conditions.

4.6 Thirdly, my central task is to judge whether the Neighbourhood Plan satisfies the Basic Conditions. Many of the representations do not demonstrate or indicate a failure to meet those conditions or other legal requirements. Similarly, many of the suggested additions and improvements are not necessary when judged against the Basic Conditions.

4.7 The following section of my report sets out modifications that are necessary in order to meet the Basic Conditions. Some of the proposed modifications are factual corrections.[7] Others are necessary in order to have closer regard to national policies and advice. In particular, plans should contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous.[8] In addition, the policies should be supported by appropriate evidence.[9]

Issue 1 – Spatial Strategy

4.8 Policy G1 of the draft Plan sets a boundary for the built-up area of Great Gransden and determines provisions that will apply to proposals both within and outside this boundary. In this regard, there are a number of clarifications that are required.

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[6] See NPPF Paragraph 16 f).
[7] Modifications for the purpose of correcting errors is provided for in Paragraph 10(3)(e) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act.
[8] NPPF, Paragraph 16 d).
[9] PPG Reference ID: 41-041-20140306.

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4.9   First, there is reference to the acceptability of rural exception housing schemes "on the edge of the Built-Up Area Boundary". This term is lacking in precision. It is intended to mean[10] that the scheme would share a common boundary with the defined built-up area. As such, reference to a contiguous scheme would be appropriate. I appreciate that this is different from the terminology used in the Local Plan ("well related"); but a contiguous development would be one that is well related and which uses a defined boundary as the reference point.

4.10 A further criterion is for the development to be "in safe walking distance to village amenities". For clarity, this should be expressed in a way that doesn't exclude other considerations; also, for consistency (for example with Policy G2), to "easy" walking distance.

4.11 Secondly, the policy refers to the "exceptional circumstances" set out in Paragraph 80 of the NPPF (avoiding isolated homes in the countryside). This is a term that has limited and specific application (for example, in relation to Green Belts). To avoid any confusion, reference should be made to "the circumstances" in common with the NPPF on this point.

4.12 Thirdly, the policy refers to residential development proposals that provide a "housing mix suitable for meeting local needs". For the avoidance of doubt, this should cross-refer to the explanatory text where this means schemes including one or more of the following elements: smaller dwellings, affordable housing, housing for older people, bungalows or flats.

4.13 As written, this requirement would apply to all housing schemes, regardless of their size. This was not the intention.[11] There should be inclusion of the proviso "where the scale permits".

4.14 I have given consideration as to whether other sites should be included within the built-up area boundary. These sites include Brook House (east of Mandean Brook), Gransden Hall riding school area and land off Eltisley Road. However, I am happy that the proposed boundary reasonably defines the extent of Great Gransden's built-up area without unnecessary extension or inclusion of outlying development.

4.15 Appropriate clarifications to Policy G1 – A Built-Up Area Boundary Strategy for Great Gransden are set out in proposed modification **PM1**.

4.16 The second policy under the spatial strategy heading is Policy G2 – Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites.   This provides for "small scale" affordable housing "on the edge of the Built-Up Area Boundary" for people with "a Great Gransden connection". The meaning of these terms is not stated and needs to be clarified in a modification.

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[10] See Parish Council's answers to my questions, 3 November 2022.
[11] See Parish Council's answers to my questions, 3 November 2022.

4.17   The policy overlaps with Local Plan Policy LP 28, Rural Exceptions Housing. Both policies deal with matters such as the number, size, type and tenure of the affordable housing; affordability in perpetuity; and the role of open market housing or plots suitable for custom or self-build homes. However, these provisions are expressed in different ways and there is duplication as well as considerable scope for confusion.

4.18   The Local Plan deals with such matters in a more comprehensive manner. For a decision maker to apply policy on rural exception sites with sufficient clarity and with consistency and confidence, it would be better for the Neighbourhood Plan policy to defer to the Local Plan albeit with provisions that are particularly relevant in Great Gransden. This is achieved through proposed modification **PM2**.

4.19   Policy G3 (Local Character and Design) includes a provision whereby ribbon and greenfield development will not be supported. This could be seen as contrary to exceptions allowed by national policy and the Development Plan. The policy should recognise such exceptions.

4.20   On a further point, there is reference to the parking of cars, cycles "etc". This is intended to be a reference to electric scooters and mobility scooters.[12] Proposed modification **PM3** provides clarification as well as accordance with local and national policy.

Issue 2 – Natural and Historic Environment

4.21   Policy G4 (Development, Landscape Character and Valued Views) includes a provision whereby proposals will not be supported where they would adversely impact on valued views as shown on Figure 8 and described in the text of the draft Plan.

4.22   On a preliminary note, I would say that the policy should refer to any *significant* impact. It is quite possible that there would be an adverse impact of some sort but that such impact would not be material. My principal concern is, however, whether the ten views to which the policy relates can be regarded as views of any particular merit or significance.

4.23   Starting with View A, this looks over an undulating landscape falling away from the road and then rising to the horizon. There are field boundary hedgerows and wooded areas in view but with overhead power lines and large buildings in the distance. I cannot say that views of The Postmill (Grade II* listed building and scheduled monument) are particularly obvious. It is a fairly typical agricultural landscape of no special merit.

4.24   As to View D, there are two identified views, one looking southeast from The Riddy and one looking to the west. Views into the land to the southeast of The Riddy are severely restricted by the trees and shrubs that line the ditch at this point. Beyond are overgrown fields with the

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upper parts of houses and bungalows along West Road visible along the rear boundary.

4.25 To the west, there is a similar overgrown field of no visual interest rising to a thin hedge line on the northwestern boundary. Overhead power lines and industrial buildings can be glimpsed in the distance.

4.26 There are also two views labelled as View E. The view looking south is from a vantage point in the middle of a field, away from the closest footpath or other public vantage point.

4.27 From what I have read and seen, I have concluded that there is insufficient evidence to support the inclusions of Views A, D (both views) and E (view looking south) within Policy G4. Appropriate modifications are included in proposed modification **PM4**. Otherwise, I am content that the remaining Valued Landscape Views are sufficiently evidenced to justify the inclusion of the viewpoints.

4.28 In Policy G5 (Conserving and enhancing Great Gransden's Conservation Area), there is again reference to adverse impacts (as opposed to significant adverse impacts). It is adverse impacts on views into, out of and within the Conservation Area that will not be supported. Such views are, in fact, shown on Figure 8. However, this is not stated nor is the Conservation Area boundary shown on the plan. Appropriate amendments (proposed modification **PM5**) would clarify the situation.

4.29 Policy G6 deals with protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the parish including the possible seeking of contributions that would help protect or enhance Gransden Woods. It is unclear however how contributions would be assessed and calculated. Clarity would be added through reference to Policy LP 4 of the Local Plan (Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery) and the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (proposed modification **PM6**).

4.30 The policy lists a number of measures aimed at increasing net gains in biodiversity including restoration and enhancement of the existing ecological network across the Gransden Brook Corridor (Figure 5). I appreciate that the Corridor is widely drawn. Nevertheless, it includes land adjacent to the Gransden Brook and its tributaries and covers the likely associated wildlife corridor. It is an appropriate area on which to focus action.

Issue 3 – Open Space

4.31 The first part of Policy G7 deals with Local Green Space where four sites are so designated. The policy indicates that development will not be acceptable "other than in the exceptions identified in national policy". National policy (NPPF Paragraph 147) allows for the demonstration of "very special circumstances" as an exception. However, development would be allowed in principal if "not inappropriate". For clarity, Policy G7

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should refer to consistency with national Green Belt policy as a whole, including all its various provisions. I am however content that the four listed sites be confirmed as Local Green Spaces.

4.32   The second part of Policy G7 deals with Other Valued Green Spaces to which Local Plan Policy LP 32 (Protection of Open Space) would apply. The open space covered by Policy LP 32 include parks, village greens, play areas, sports pitches, allotments, semi-natural areas and substantial private gardens. However, some of the spaces identified under Policy G7, and Spaces A, B, C and D in particular, are in a very different category, essentially agricultural land in private ownership.

4.33   Spaces A and B lie on either side of The Riddy. They have been described above in connection with Policy G4 and the views marked D. First and foremost, they are areas of privately-owned but neglected agricultural land of no particular landscape merit. Space C (The Hayfield) has more visual interest providing as it does a contrast between a large open agricultural field (privately owned) and the northern edge of Gransden Woods, all visible from a public footpath. These three spaces are open in character and form part of the village's setting. However, they do not warrant special attention as open space of public value. Normal countryside protection policies would apply.

4.34   Space D (The Showfield) is a typical hayfield in private ownership. It has public value as the site of the annual Gransden Agricultural Show, allowed through the permission of the owners, although that is not its main purpose. It would be wrong to apply the special protection afforded through Policy LP 32 in order to safeguard its ongoing availability for the show.

4.35   In the circumstance, the evidence does not support the designation of Sites A, B, C and D as Other Valued Green Spaces. They should be deleted from Policy G7 as in proposed modification **PM7** which also contains clarifications on Local Green Space. The remaining Other Valued Green Spaces are, in my view, appropriate for inclusion in the policy.

4.36   Under Policy G8 (Development and Open Space Requirements), all schemes will be expected to contribute to the provision of open space in the parish. However, it is unclear how contributions would be assessed and calculated. Clarity would be added through reference to Policy LP 4 of the Local Plan (Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery) and the Developer Contributions SPD. Proposed modification **PM8** refers.

4.37   Policy G9 applies to the public rights of way network. However, as written, the policy would apply to permissive paths; also, to development that is "clearly visible from public rights of way". Permissive paths should not be the subject of the policy since the landowner could withdraw access rights. As to clear visibility, this could extend to a considerable distance. The provision would be unreasonable as well as lacking in clarity.

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Appropriate amendments would be added through proposed modification **PM9**.

Issue 4 – Transport and Road Safety Improvements

4.38   Policy G10 has the title "A walkable village and reducing village car use". There is a requirement that, where pavements or routes are not in place, these must be provided. Such provision can only be made with the agreement of the local highway authority. This point should be recognised, as in proposed modification **PM10**.

Issue 5 – Education

4.39   In Policy G13 (Barnabas Oley Primary School and parish pre-school provision), there is reference to required contributions to pre-school and primary school provision. However, it is unclear how contributions would be assessed and calculated. Clarity would be added through reference to the NPPF, Policy LP 4 of the Local Plan (Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery) and the Developer Contributions SPD. Proposed modification **PM11** refers.

Other Matters

4.40   There remain two policies that have not been the subject of scrutiny in the above report. These concern roads and new development (Policy G11) and infrastructure priorities (Policy G12). To a greater or lesser extent, these topics are covered in NPPF Sections 4 (Decision-making) and 9 (Promoting sustainable transport). I find that there has been regard for national policy and that the Basic Conditions have been met.

4.41   With the modifications that I have recommended, the Plan would meet the Basic Conditions. Other consequential amendments, non-material changes and up-dating (that do not affect the Basic Conditions), including suggestions set out in the representations, can be incorporated into the final version of the Plan.[13]

5. Conclusions

Summary

5.1   The Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan has been duly prepared in compliance with the procedural requirements. My examination has investigated whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements for neighbourhood plans. I have had regard for all the responses made following consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan, and the evidence documents submitted with it.

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[13] PPG Reference ID: 41-106-20190509.

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5.2   I have made recommendations to modify a number of policies and text to ensure the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum.

The Referendum and its Area

5.3   I have considered whether or not the referendum area should be extended beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates. The Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan, as modified, has no policy or proposals which I consider significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Plan boundary, requiring the referendum to extend to areas beyond the Plan boundary. I recommend that the boundary for the purposes of any future referendum on the Plan should be the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Overview

5.4   It is evident that a considerable amount of time and effort has been devoted to the development and production of this Plan and I congratulate those who have been involved. The Plan should prove to be a useful tool for future planning and change in Great Gransden over the coming years.

Andrew S Freeman

Examiner

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Appendix: Modifications

Proposed modification number (PM)	Page no./ other reference	Modification
PM1	Page 43	In the first bullet point of Policy G1, replace "the edge of" with "a site contiguous with". After "Boundary", replace "in" with "and within easy and".
		In the second bullet point, delete "exceptional".
		At the start of the final bullet point, insert "Where the scale permits,". At the end of the final bullet point, add "(see Paragraph 7.1.17)".
PM2	Page 44	Replace Policy G2 with the following:
		"Proposals for small scale affordable housing (10 or fewer dwellings) on rural exceptions sites contiguous with the Built-Up Area Boundary will be supported in principle for occupation by people with a genuine local connection with Great Gransden parish provided that the criteria in Policy LP 28 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan, and the related reasoning, are met.
		In addition, the following local criteria will apply:
		• the homes are located within safe and easy pedestrian and cycle access to Great Gransden village centre and amenities; and • no significant harm shall be caused to the character of the village, its setting or the countryside."
PM3	Pages 46 and 47	In Policy G3, at the end of the reference to ribbon and greenfield development, add "unless it accords with the specific opportunities afforded by local and national policy".

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		In the final paragraph, replace "cycles etc" with "cycles, electric scooters and mobility scooters".
PM4	Page 53	In the final sentence of Policy G4, replace "they would adversely impact" with "there would be a significant adverse impact".
		On Figure 8, delete View A, View D (both) and View E (looking south). Delete related references in the text.
		The remaining sites should be relabelled A-F.
PM5	Page 55	In the third paragraph of Policy G5, replace "they adversely impact" with "there would be a significant adverse impact".
		Insert "(as shown on Figure 8)" after "Conservation Area".
		On Figure 8, show the Conservation Area boundary.
PM6	Page 59	In Policy G6, after "NPPF", insert "LP 4 of the Local Plan (Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery) and the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) (or any successor documents)".
PM7	Page 63	In Policy G7, replace "will not be acceptable other than in the exceptions identified in national policy," with "shall be consistent with national Green Belt Policy and".
		Delete Sites A, B, C and D from the list of Other Valued Green Spaces. Delete from Figure 11 and remove related references in the text.
		The remaining sites should be relabelled A-C.
PM8	Page 66	In Policy G8, after "NPPF", insert "LP 4 of the Local Plan (Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery) and the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) (or any successor documents)".

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PM9	Page 68	In Policy G9, delete "or Permissive Path, or which is clearly visible from a Public Right of Way".
		In the final paragraph, delete "and permissive path".
PM10	Page 71	In Policy G10, replace "these must be provided" with "provision shall be made as required by the District Council in consultation with the local highway authority".
PM11	Page 77	In the first sentence of Policy G13, after "as per" insert "the NPPF, Local Plan, Policy LP 4 (Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery) and the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) (or any successor documents)".

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Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan

Draft Decision Statement

Following an independent examination Huntingdonshire District Council's Cabinet confirmed on the 24 January 2023 that the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan will proceed to a Neighbourhood Planning Referendum.

Background

The Great Gransden neighbourhood area was designated on 30 July 2018 under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012). The plan area covers the parish of Great Gransden.

Great Gransden Parish Council, as the qualifying body, submitted the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan and its supporting evidence to Huntingdonshire District Council on 17 August 2022. The statutory six week submission consultation was held from 25 August to 14 October 2022.

Huntingdonshire District Council, in discussion with Great Gransden Parish Council, appointed an independent examiner, Andrew S Freeman BSc (Hons) DipTP DipEM FRTPI, to review whether the submitted Neighbourhood Plan met the Basic Conditions as required by legislation. Andrew Freeman issued his report on 30 November 2022 which recommended that the Neighbourhood Plan, subject to the modifications proposed in his report, met the Basic Conditions and should proceed to referendum.

Following discussions with the qualifying body it was decided that the Examiner's recommendations would be accepted in full.

The Basic Conditions are:

- Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan;
- The making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- The making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);

- The making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, European Union (EU) obligations; and
- Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plan.

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

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

Decision and Reasons

Huntingdonshire District Council's Cabinet considered the recommendations on 24 January 2023 and agreed to accept the Examiner's proposed modifications and approve the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to referendum.

The modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan, as needed to ensure it meets the Basic Conditions and in accordance with the Examiner's recommendations are listed in the following table. The Examiner also concluded that any other consequential amendments, non-material changes and up-dating (that do not affect the Basic Conditions), including suggestions set out in the representations, can be incorporated into the final version of the Plan.

Examiner's Recommended Modifications Received 30 November 2022

The statement below sets out the modifications considered by the examiner as necessary to enable the submission neighbourhood plan to meet the required basic conditions. Strike-through text indicates a deletion and bold indicates the insertion of additional text.

Proposed modification (PM)	Page no.	Modification
PM1	Page 43	In the first bullet point of Policy G1, replace "the edge of" with "a site contiguous with". After "Boundary", replace "in" with "and within easy and". In the second bullet point, delete "exceptional". At the start of the final bullet point, insert "Where the scale permits,". At the end of the final bullet point, add "(see Paragraph 7.1.17)".
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Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Huntingdonshire Place Strategy Update

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny (Performance & Growth)
4 January 2023

Executive Portfolio: Cllr Sarah Conboy, Executive Leader, Chair of
The Cabinet and Executive Councillor for Place

Report by: Kate McFarlane, Corporate Director (Place)

Ward(s) affected: All

RECOMMENDATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on the development of
the emerging Place Strategy from the Cabinet report attached.

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Public
Key Decision – YES

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Huntingdonshire Place Strategy Update

Meeting/Date: Overview and Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) –
4 January 2023
Cabinet – 24 January 2023

Executive Portfolio: Councillor S Conboy, Executive Leader, Chair of
the Cabinet and Executive Councillor for Place

Report by: Corporate Director (Place)

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

This report provides an update on the development of a new, co-developed Place Strategy for Huntingdonshire, known as Huntingdonshire Futures.

The Place Strategy will be a statement of shared aspirations for the future of Huntingdonshire that seeks to improve the lives of all our residents, communities and businesses. It will guide future strategy and policy developments and investment decisions 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.

This update provides an overview of engagement activity undertaken to date and scheduled for early 2023. It also provides a summary of high-level feedback received and introduces the emerging Place Strategy structure and areas of focus.

Cabinet are asked to note the work completed to date, comment on the emerging Place Strategy and note the intention for the draft Place Strategy to come back to Cabinet in March 2023.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is asked to:

- Note the extensive engagement and work with partners and stakeholders to date.
- Provide comment on the emerging Place Strategy structure and areas of focus.
- Note that the draft Place Strategy will be presented to Cabinet in March 2023.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report seeks to provide an update on the development of a new Place Strategy for Huntingdonshire.

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 are developing a shared Place Strategy, known as Huntingdonshire Futures, that will shape not only the future of Huntingdonshire but our future activities.

2.2 The Council has facilitated the development of Huntingdonshire Futures. It is a priority area of work for the Council given our unique and extensive range of responsibilities and desire to deliver the best outcomes for our geographical area and residents.

2.3 Given the scope of Huntingdonshire Futures it has explicitly and deliberately been developed with others, using a variety of bespoke engagement techniques and building on existing mechanisms where possible. The development of Huntingdonshire Futures has been based on existing data, intelligence, insight and existing strategies. However, a fresh approach has been adopted so that it challenged current thinking and considered 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. WORKING TOGETHER TO DEVELOP HUNTINGDONSHIRE FUTURES

3.1 Huntingdonshire Futures is being developed in collaboration with others. We have deliberately sought to bring together residents, businesses, partners, utilities providers and public sector bodies to set out their views about the future. Huntingdonshire Futures has been co-created to determine what is important and right for Huntingdonshire and to be a strategy that paints the type of place we all want Huntingdonshire to be.

3.2   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 three half day stakeholder workshops with representatives from nearly 70 organisations and engaging existing partnerships and forums such as the Huntingdonshire Place Board and Parish Forum. Outside of the stakeholder workshops regular updates on activities and progress have been widely shared.

3.3   Between July and the end of September 2022 489 resident conversations have taken place, with residents able to visit 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 country parks.

3.4   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.

3.5   Throughout the entire engagement process, thoughts, ideas and feedback have been gathered online at [Huntingdonshire Futures](#). Social Media and promotion through partners such as Town & Parish Councils, the voluntary and community sector 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.

3.6   Diagram 1 summarises the engagement activities undertaken so far. A small number of focus groups and business focussed events were cancelled following the death of Her Majesty the Queen.

3.7   Across December 2022 and January 2023, the focus is on testing and refining the focus of the strategy, with the emerging areas of focus being shared with key partners and stakeholders. There will be a business focussed event, a further Huntingdonshire District Council All Member session, resident focus groups and sessions with young people in local schools. Residents will also be encouraged to review the emerging themes and leave comments at [Huntingdonshire Futures.](#)

Diagram 1: Engagement Activity
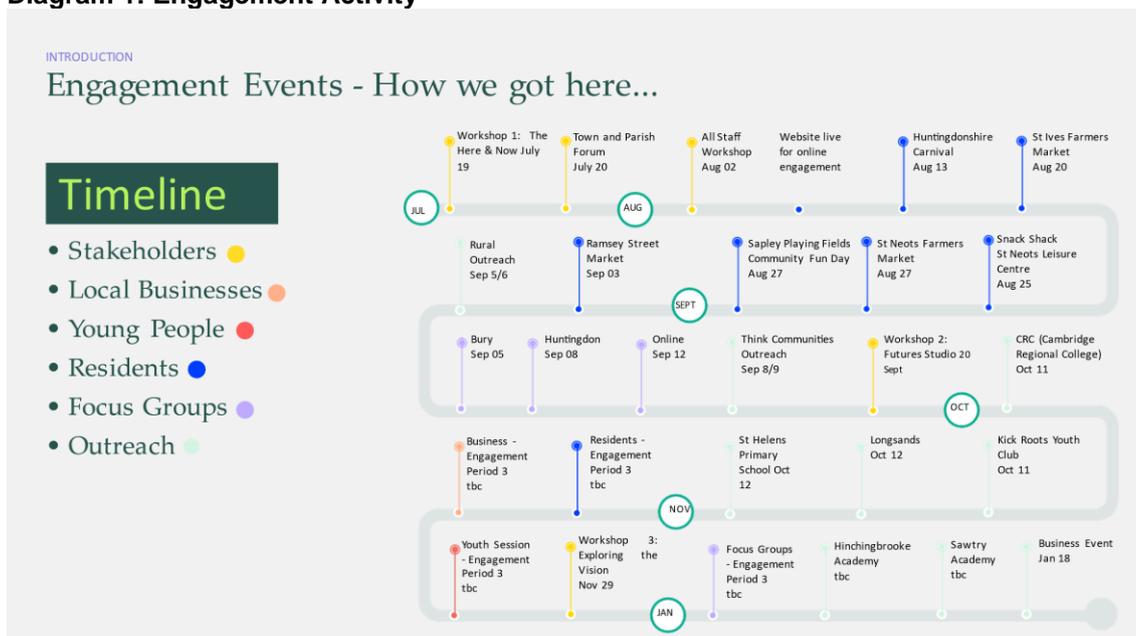
4. WHAT WE HAVE HEARD

4.1 Through our recent engagement exercise, getting the right balance between growing a vibrant local economy, protecting the environment and ensuring the core features that people want from the place they live is key. Below provides a summary of what we have heard.

4.2 **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

4.3 **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

4.4 **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

4.5 **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

4.6 Whilst Huntingdonshire Futures is in development the feedback has been used to inform the Council's Climate Strategy which is also being presented to Cabinet on the 24 January 2023. Feedback from the climate specific focus groups has also been fed into Huntingdonshire Futures. This deliberate planning of activity has ensured we have maximised engagement with residents and used funding efficiently. Feedback from Huntingdonshire Futures is also being used to inform the development of the Council's 2023/24 Corporate Plan.

4.7 Feedback will also be used to inform the initial phase of public engagement on an updated Local Plan, pending agreement by the Cabinet on the 24 January 2023 to commence a full update to the adopted Local Plan.

5. EMERGING PLACE STRATEGY

5.1 It is proposed to have one **Destination Statement** that sets out what we collectively seek to achieve, with the Huntingdonshire Place Strategy providing the route map towards our destination: **a brighter future for Huntingdonshire.**

5.2 **Five Journeys** underpin the Destination Statement. These express the desired outcomes and reflect what has emerged through discussions to date. These focus areas, listed below will enable stakeholders to work towards common outcomes.

1. Pride in Place
2. Environment Innovation
3. Equitable Economy

4. Health Embedded
5. Travel Transformed

5.3 Each Journey is supported by a number of ambitions, known as **Pathways**. These Pathways articulate how we want to get to a desired outcome. There are currently twenty Pathways. How they all fit together is shown in Diagram 2.

Diagram 2: Place Strategy Route map

5.4 An example of one of the Journeys and associated Pathways is shown below. The emerging strategy structure and areas of focus can be found at Appendix 1.

Diagram 3: Journey and Pathway example
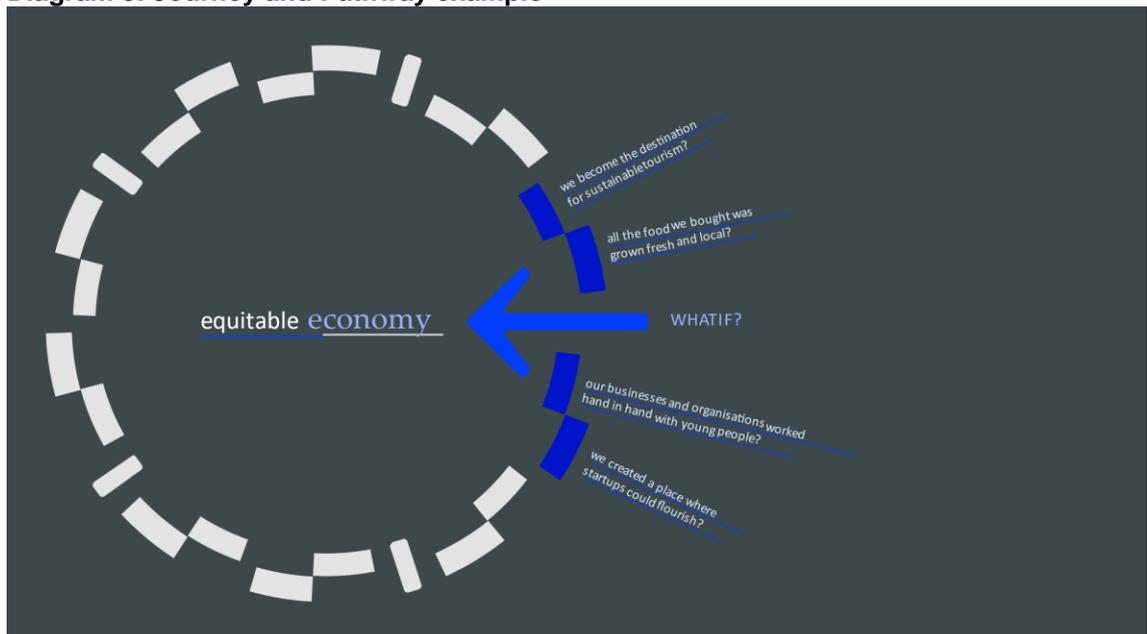
6. **COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

6.1 The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet. It should be noted that all Council members were invited to a workshop on the 27 September 2022 to share their views. Members are invited to a further session on the 31 January 2023 to further refine the strategy.

7. **KEY IMPACTS / RISKS**

7.1 The biggest risk is maintaining momentum after the intensive period of strategy development and engagement concludes. Mitigations include pro-active activities within workshops, forums and conversations with partners focussing on pilots and action to test new ways of working.

8. **WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

8.1 Cabinet is asked to consider the recommendation to endorse the work to date and to provide comment on the emerging Place Strategy structure.

8.2 The immediate next step is to conclude activities and dialogue to further test and refine the focus of the strategy through the planned engagement activities outlined in paragraph 3.7.

8.3 The Place Strategy will be used to inform the development of the Council's future policies and plans including the Corporate Plan and issues explored in the Local Plan.

8.4 The intention is for the draft Place Strategy to be brought to Cabinet and full Council for adoption in March 2023.

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

9.1 The delivery of the Place Strategy is a key action within the Council's 2022/23 Corporate Plan. The draft strategy will directly deliver against the Council's current objectives of:

- Tackling Climate Change and caring for the environment
- Enhancing employment opportunities and supporting businesses
- Improving Housing Provision
- Supporting needs of residents
- Strengthening our communities

9.2 The 2022/23 Corporate Plan is a transitional, interim plan. Feedback from Huntingdonshire Futures is informing the development of the Council's new three-year Corporate Plan, which starts in 2023/24.

10. CONSULTATION

10.1 Please refer to section 3 on engagement and consultation activity completed and scheduled.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

12. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no direct financial or resource implications as a result of this report.

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 Place Strategy conversation, resulting in one of the five Journeys focussing on **Health Embedded**. Pathways for action include it being easier to live healthily, nobody being lonely and people of every age having the opportunity to skill up. 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 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.

14.2 Within the draft Place Strategy 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 all our children being fluent in sustainability.

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 the Place Strategy 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 provide an update on work to date, feedback received so far and opportunity for Cabinet input into shaping the emerging strategy.

17. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Emerging Place Strategy overview slides.

CONTACT OFFICER

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Tel No: 01480 388332
Email: Kate.McFarlane@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

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Huntingdonshire
FUTURES

Key Directions - Place Strategy

Our objectives

- Gain a **greater understanding** of what is most important to residents, communities and stakeholders within our key towns and rural areas and across Huntingdonshire as a whole.

- **Unite stakeholders** through a shared sense of direction and ambition.

- **Articulate Huntingdonshire's aspirations and ambitions** taking into account the unique features, opportunities and challenges.

- To develop a Place Strategy that **enables more effective delivery** and draws us all closer around shared and common outcomes

Engagement Events - How we got here...

Timeline

- **Stakeholders** 🟡
- **Local Businesses** 🟠
- **Young People** 🔴
- **Residents** 🔵
- **Focus Groups** 🟣
- **Outreach** 🟢

JUL

Workshop 1: The Here & Now
July 19

Town and Parish Forum
July 20

AUG

All Staff Workshop
Aug 02

Website live for online engagement

Huntingdonshire Carnival
Aug 13

St Ives Farmers Market
Aug 20

Rural Outreach
Sep 5/6

Ramsey Street Market
Sep 03

SEPT

Sapley Playing Fields Community Fun Day
Aug 27

St Neots Farmers Market
Aug 27

Snack Shack St Neots Leisure Centre
Aug 25

Bury
Sep 05

Huntingdon
Sep 08

Online
Sep 12

Think Communities Outreach
Sep 8/9

Workshop 2: Futures Studio
20 Sept

OCT

CRC (Cambridge Regional College)
Oct 11

Business - Engagement Period 3
tbc

Residents - Engagement Period 3
tbc

St Helens Primary School
Oct 12

Longsands
Oct 12

Kick Roots Youth Club
Oct 11

NOV

Youth Session - Engagement Period 3
tbc

Workshop 3: Exploring the Vision
Nov 29

Focus Groups - Engagement Period 3
tbc

Hinchingbrooke Academy
tbc

Sawtry Academy
tbc

Business Event
Jan 18

JAN

What we heard

Build on our unique characteristics

- Celebrate our market towns - revitalise and diversify
- Maximise the benefits of our landscape - tourism, access, climate response
- Support our thriving entrepreneurial networks for start-ups to small and medium sized enterprises

Be people focussed

- Create communities not just new homes
- Maximise participation in volunteering and support existing organisations and initiatives
- Establish training and ups killing programmes as well as collaborations between businesses and local schools to connect children and young people with local opportunities

Identify where we can be leaders

- Transition away from reliance on the car - new forms of public transport, walking and cycling
- Pioneer the transition towards the Circular Economy
- Encourage sustainable growth by building responsibly

Engagement Feedback - Website

Huntingdonshire
FUTURES

The emerging Place Strategy

How are we proposing to structure the Huntingdonshire Place Strategy?

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.

This slide deck provides further detail on the above structure and is an early draft for feedback and comment.

One Destination

The Huntingsonshire Place Strategy provides our routemap towards our destination: a brighter future for Huntingdonshire.

Our journey starts today.

Shared ambitions and collective endeavour will lead to a place renowned for realising opportunities for all.

How will you help us think imaginatively and collaboratively to reach our destination?

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.

Pride in Place

environmental innovation

travel transformed

equitable economy

health embedded

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.

Pride in Place

travel
transformed

environmental
innovation

health embedded

equitable economy

The Pathways

DESTINATION
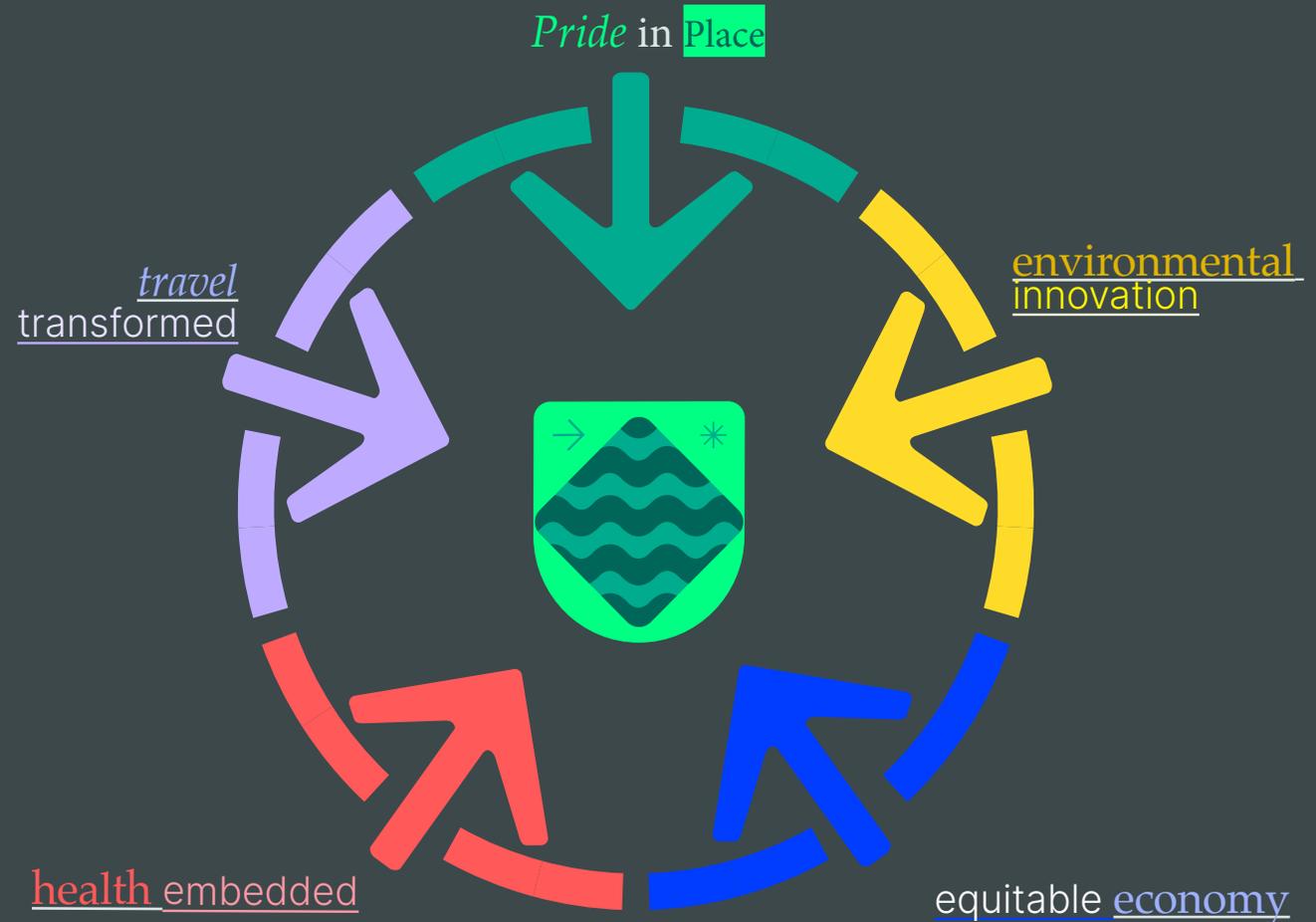
Pride

in Place

Huntingdonshire
FUTURES

Pride in Place

WHAT IF?

we had beautiful places to call home?

we had a strong identity for the whole district?

we were incentivised to look after our own patch?

our high streets were the centre of social and cultural life?

WHAT IF?

we had a strong identity for the whole district?

Pride in <mark>Place</mark>
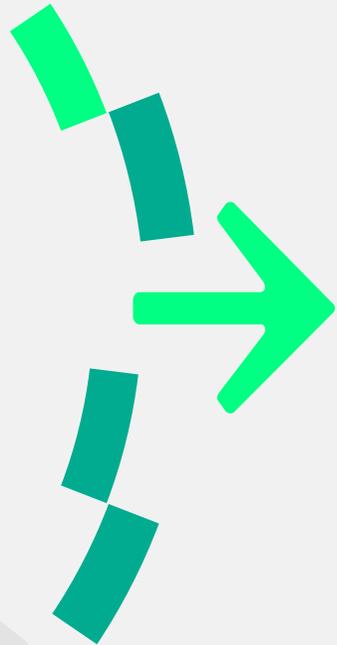
In a world where

we're all spending more time locally, so feeling a sense of pride in our local area is important. Yet we've heard that Huntingdonshire lacks a strong identity compared to neighbouring places like Cambridge and Peterborough, residents, particularly our younger ones, don't feel a sense of belonging to the district.

There is a place

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 a lot to enjoy about our charming market towns and villages like St Neots and St Ives.

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 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 define what makes our place and people unique. The District Council, residents, businesses and community groups must work together to decide what the essence of Huntingdonshire is and begin to promote our shared story.

WHAT IF?

we had beautiful
places to call home?

Pride in Place
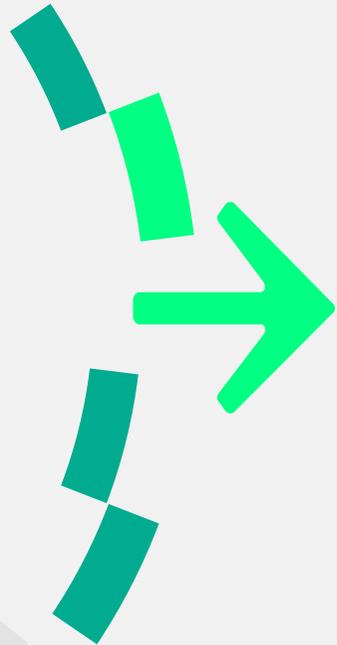
In a world where

the Housing Design Audit for England by the Place Alliance found the majority of new housing development in England lacks design quality and distinctiveness. People in Huntingdonshire are concerned that developers focus on building homes, not communities.

There is a place

with picturesque market towns such as St Ives and villages like Great Staughton with distinctive character and landscapes that can inspire the creation of beautiful places.

Which could become

a leader in delivering high quality, low-carbon and energy efficient housing across the district which weaves imaginative contemporary design with the rich local character. New homes feel unique to this place and are centred around inviting public spaces.

But only if

we ensure new development projects help to contribute to and express local character and deliver neighbourly, well-connected communities. This includes encouraging developers to go above and beyond the current local design guides.

WHAT IF?

we were incentivised to look after our own patch?

Pride in Place

In a world where

the squeeze on income for both people and businesses reduces everyone's ability to do good things for other people. People can feel disconnected from where they live and young people in Huntingdonshire particularly feel alienated here.

There is a place

where there are many strong, conscientious communities and business networks, where people are fiercely proud of their neighbourhood.

Which could become

a place that makes it easy for everyone to get involved. A place where the Council supports bottom-up initiatives by helping businesses, organisations and the local community work together, making sure everyone sees the value of investing in the fabric of our society.

But only if

programmes are established by the Council to make new engagement and collaboration easy, backed up by increased awareness of opportunities and support that's available.

WHAT IF?

our high streets were the centre of social and cultural life?

Pride in Place
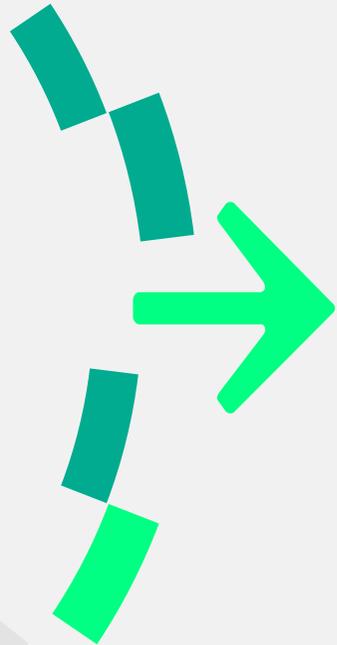
In a world where

High Streets are in decline and 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

benefits from a cluster of market towns each with its own unique offer, picturesque historic cores and plenty of citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit.

Which could become

a district that leads the revival of the High Street. With spaces that go beyond retail, that allow people to come together to work and play. Places that attract and retain locals and visitors alike, day and night.

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.
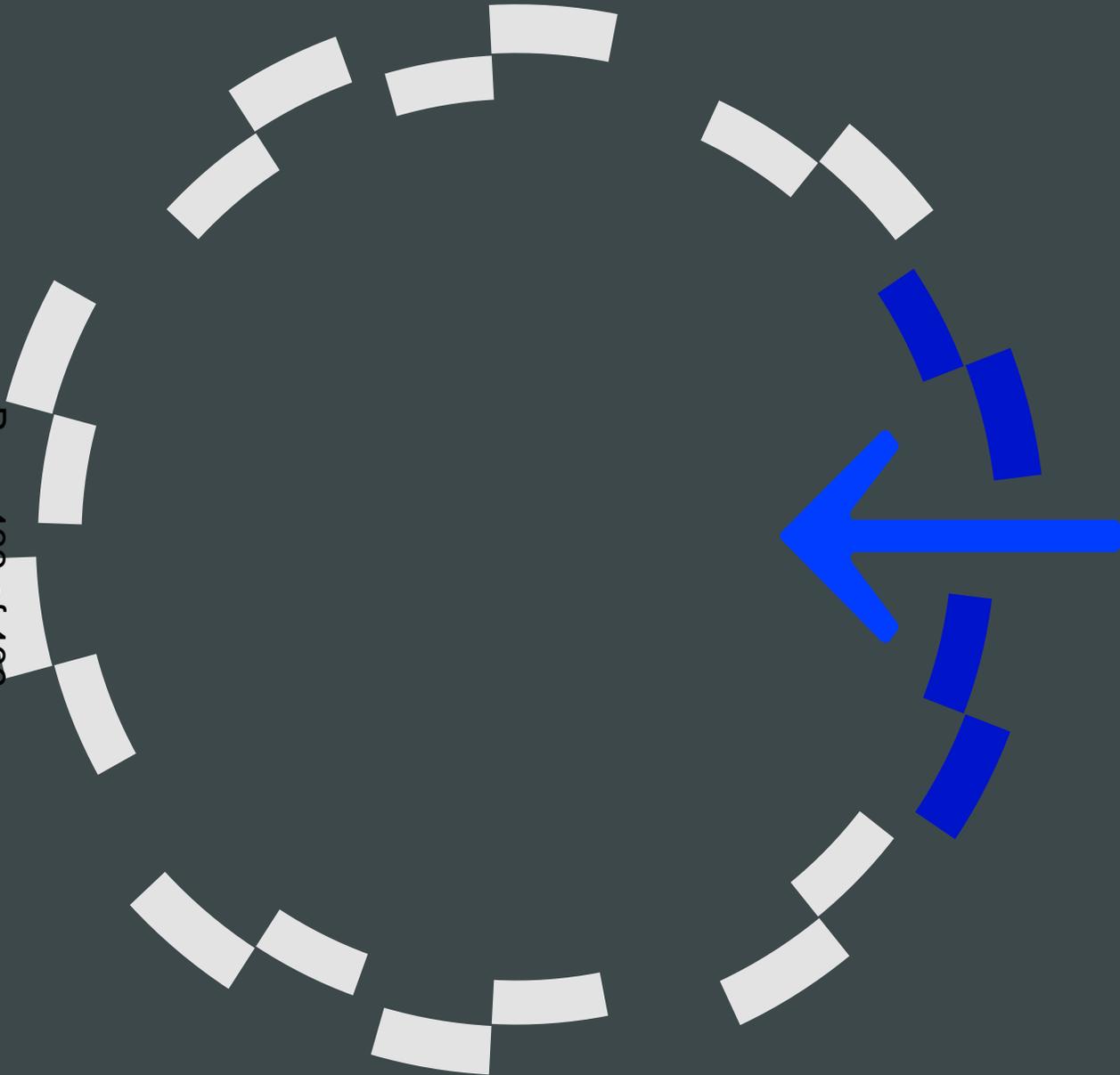
DESTINATION

equitable
economy

Huntingdonshire
FUTURES
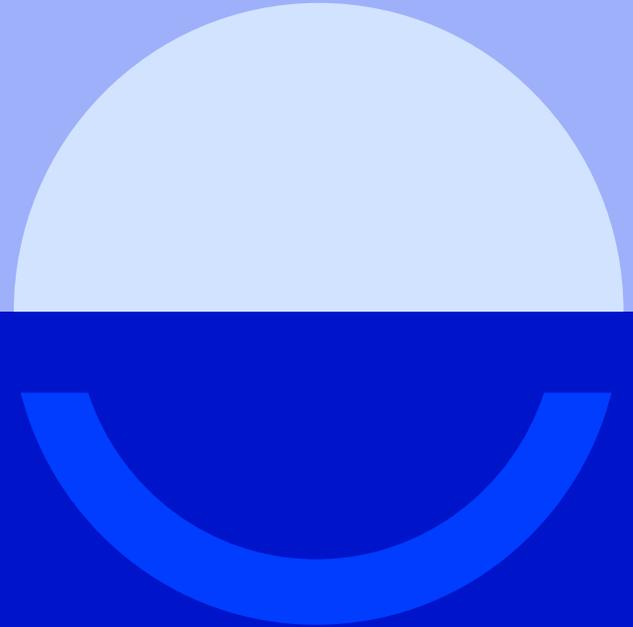
equitable economy
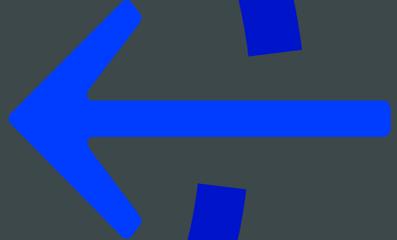
WHAT IF?

we become the destination for sustainable tourism?

all the food we bought was grown fresh and local?

our businesses and organisations worked hand in hand with young people?

we created a place where startups could flourish?
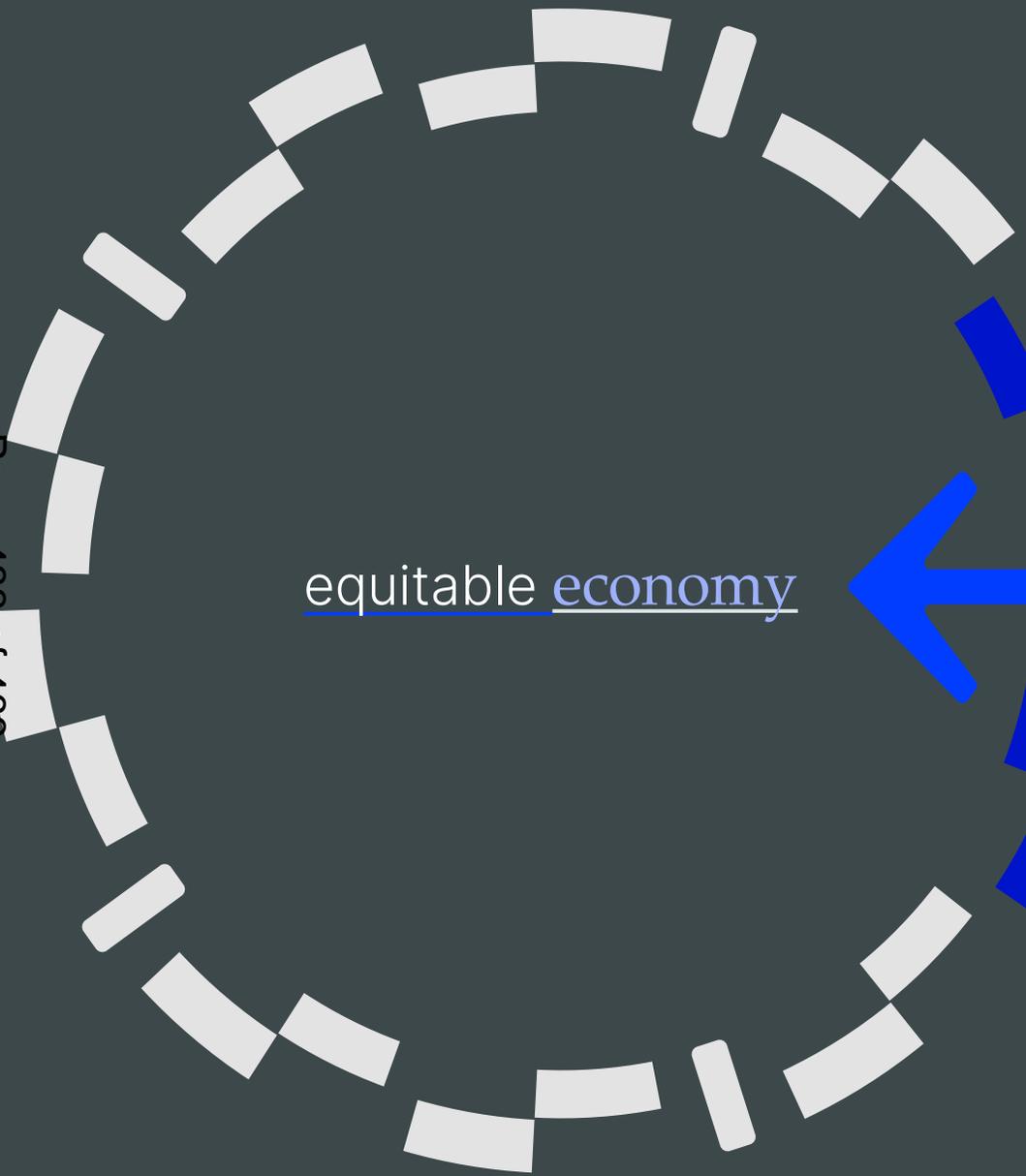
WHAT IF?

we become the destination for sustainable tourism?

equitable economy
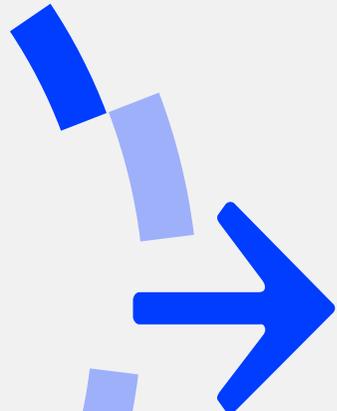
In a world where

we are increasingly aware that taking regular flights abroad is contributing to climate change, so we are placing greater value on spending our leisure time a little closer to home and in ways that benefit our mental and physical wellbeing.

There is a place that

is a well kept secret with a rich array of attractions that could drive sustainable or 'slow' tourism. From intriguing heritage sites such as Elton Hall, to energising open spaces such as Hinchingbrooke Country Park and the Ouse Valley, Huntingdonshire has plenty to offer those looking to engage and unwind.

Which could become

a destination of choice for those who want to travel but take their time to get to know us. Where visitors come to make the most of hiking, biking and visiting local towns and villages. Here we can offer that feel-good factor, where tourism is led by local people and the benefits are reinvested into local places.

But only if

the right infrastructure is in place and steps to encourage tourism are coordinated. This might involve creating a clear brand or improving the network of trails to offer people access to nature without causing damage to it. We must ensure the profits stay in the local economy by building a strong workforce with the right skills to deliver a first class service.

WHAT IF?

all the food we bought was grown fresh and local?

equitable economy
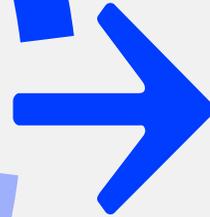
In a world where

food is increasingly expensive and reliant on vulnerable global supply chains. We're seeing a rise in obesity and diabetes because we aren't eating good quality, healthy food any more. In Huntingdonshire, 65.3% of adults are classed as overweight or obese, higher than the England average.

There is a place that

can leverage our healthy environment to nourish healthy people — with rich soils, a moderate climate and a strong local agricultural economy. This includes a network of diverse agricultural businesses supported by a wealth of independent retailers in our market towns.

Which could become

a district with a revitalised food network where local, healthy and sustainable food choices are always the most convenient and cost effective. Local food producers, residents, businesses, supermarkets, schools and hospitals can use physical spaces and digital tools to make local options the go-to options. Community gardens and allotments raise awareness of sustainable food production, healthy eating and support social interaction.

But only if

farmers are encouraged to grow what local people need and sell it locally, the Council and businesses develop appropriate distribution infrastructure, and there is awareness and demand from consumers for healthy, seasonal produce.

WHAT IF?

our businesses and organisations worked hand in hand with young people?

equitable economy
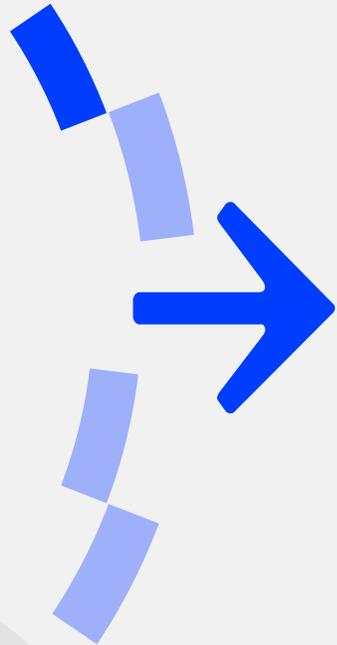
In a world where

young people want to change the world, but realistically just want meaningful work that reflects their values. At the same time businesses struggle to recruit the right staff. 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 SMEs, with plenty of manufacturing, construction, science and tech businesses. This is supported by great connectivity to the rest of the UK and proximity to the economic hubs of Cambridge and Peterborough.

Which could become

a place where businesses and young people work together and listen to each other. With young people aware of local opportunities available and 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 training programmes with apprenticeships and short courses providing different ways to get those valuable qualifications.

WHAT IF?

we created a place where startups could flourish?

equitable economy
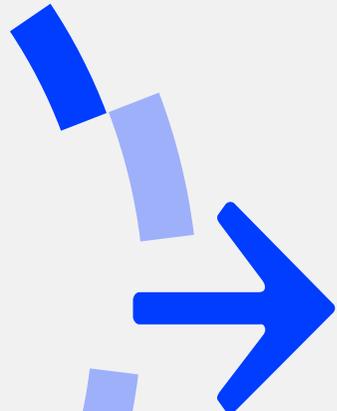
In a world where

startups drive innovation and prosperity but cluster together in areas like Cambridge, leaving other areas behind. Over 80% of businesses in Huntingdonshire are SMEs, but over a third of employees commute out of the district for higher paying jobs further afield.

There is a place that

has a truly entrepreneurial spirit with plenty of well connected, affordable workspaces, some which are well established in towns like Huntingdon, others like Alconbury Weald are providing something new. All our employers here can offer their staff a great quality of life.

Which could become

known across the UK as a desirable and affordable place for startups to launch and grow sustainably.

But only if

we proudly celebrate what sets us apart from nearby Cambridge and Peterborough. The Council must throw its weight behind fledgling new businesses — establishing more support networks like St Neots Initiative and ensuring the planning process facilitates and protects the types of spaces local businesses need.
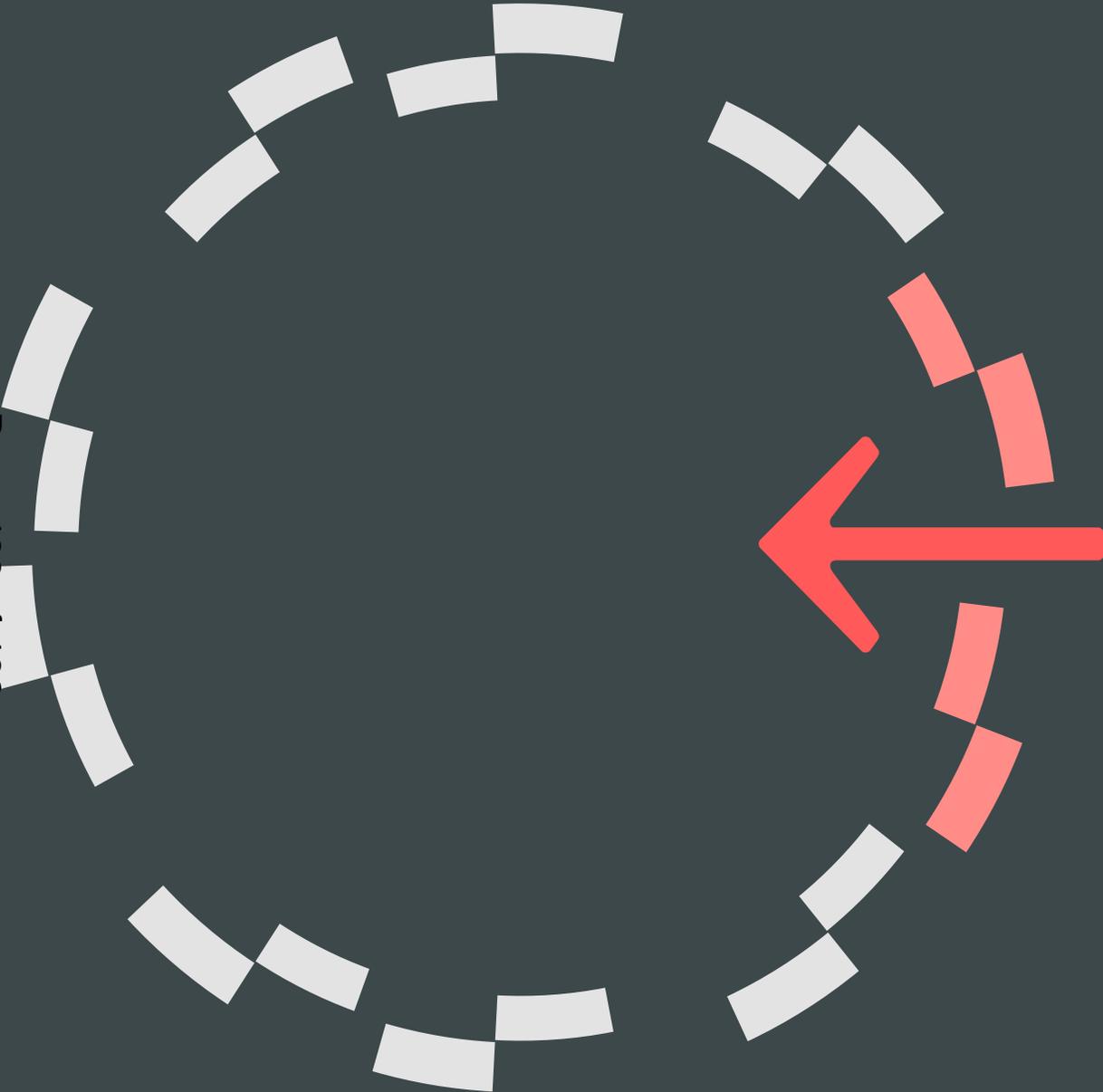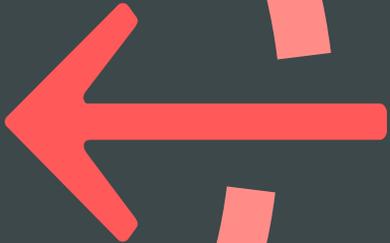
DESTINATION

Health

Embedded

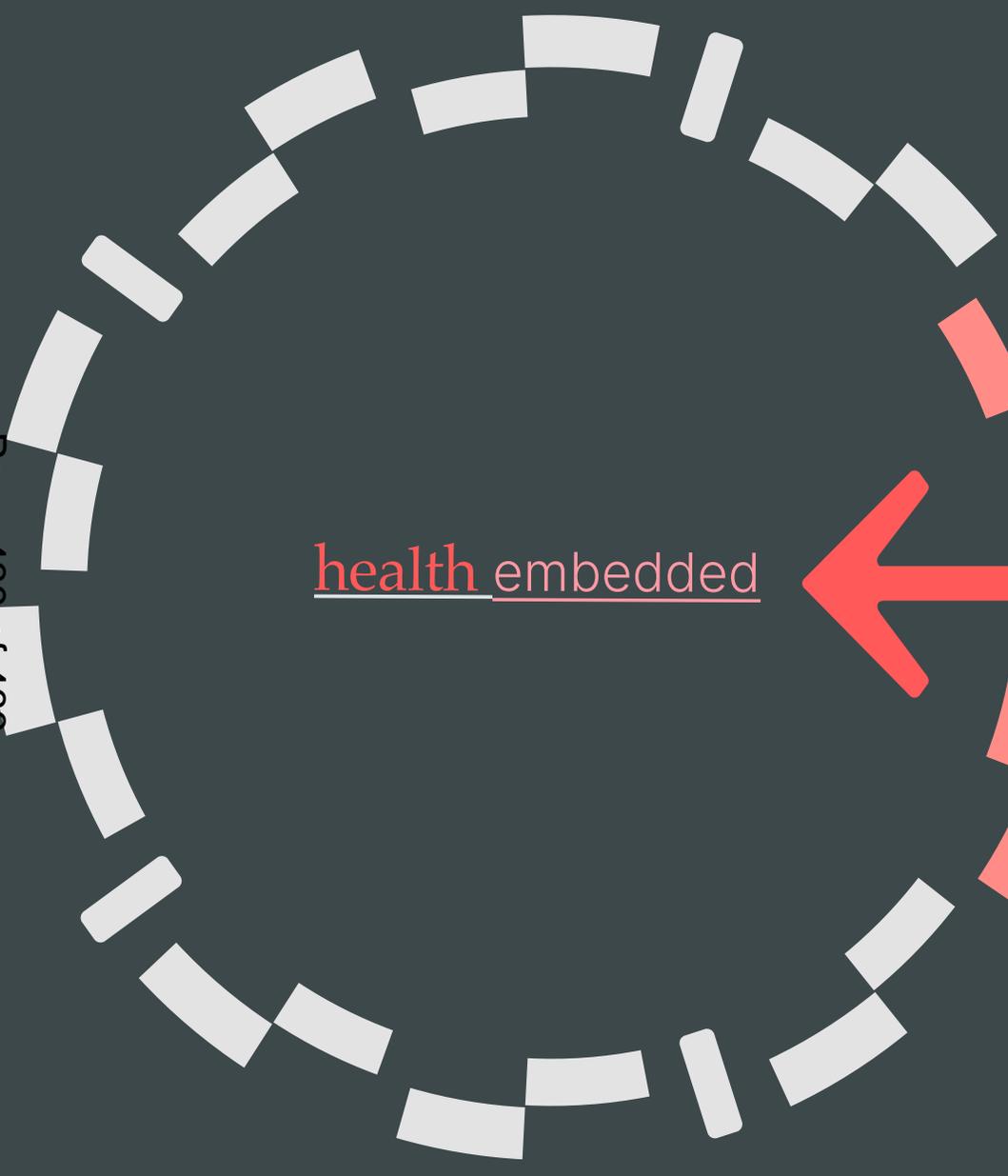Huntingdonshire

health embedded

WHAT IF?

we stopped measuring GDP and started measuring happiness?

it was easier to live healthily?

nobody was lonely here?

people of every age had the opportunity to skill up?

WHAT IF?

we stopped measuring GDP and started measuring happiness?

health embedded

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 life satisfaction is below the national average and falling.

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 the health of its environment. A place with a cohesive support system that starts from the top and spreads through the community. A place with culture, access to nature and opportunities for leisure and play — all the ingredients for a good life.
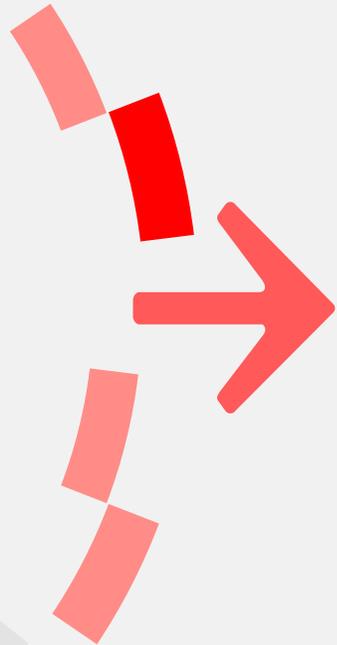
But only if

'happiness' is top of the agenda for the Council and our businesses, not just a nice-to-have. This will involve defining what happiness means for Huntingdonshire and how it can be measured, and then using this to inform our plans and decision making.

WHAT IF?

it was easier to
live healthily?

health embedded

In a world where

our health isn't something we can take for granted. If you're wealthy, you can expect to live on average 7 years longer than the poorest people in Huntingdonshire. Residents are frustrated by the health service — often struggling to get basic appointments. Depression rates have almost doubled since the pandemic began and is also more prevalent amongst those in more precarious economic positions.

There is a place where

parks and open spaces are abundant, the topography supports active travel and community initiatives can help to remove barriers to healthy, happy lifestyles.

Which could become

a healthy environment — where people can easily access their daily needs by foot and bike, so that exercise is embedded in our daily routine. Choosing healthy food options is the easiest and most affordable choice and mobile health units bring care into our communities.
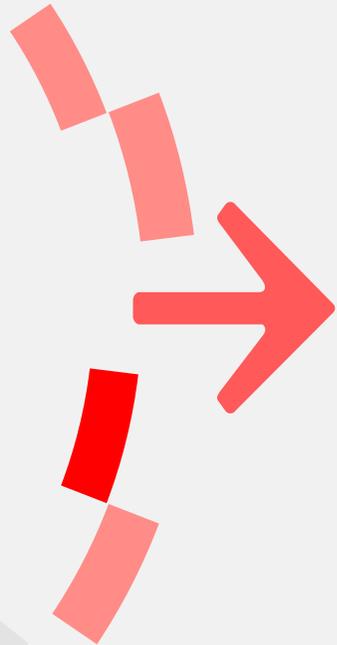
But only if

the Council, NHS, businesses and residents view health and wellbeing holistically, investing in programmes that treat the cause of health complaints before they arise. This includes planning policy that promotes healthy places, encouraging active travel and initiatives to improve mental health.

WHAT IF?

nobody was lonely here?

health _embedded_

In a world where

increasing loneliness and social isolation effects every pocket of society, the most vulnerable and the elderly are hit hardest. Research by the Campaign to End Loneliness found loneliness is likely to increase your risk of death by 26%.

There is a place that

has passionate and empathetic people in an active volunteering sector and communities focused 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 nobody is lonely 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 promotion of a diverse range of volunteering opportunities to increase participation and grow local networks.

WHAT IF?

people of every age had
the opportunity to skill up?

health embedded

In a world where

increasing digitisation and technological advancement means that the job market is shifting rapidly, demand for new skills is gathering pace. Businesses across Huntingdonshire report challenges recruiting the right talent.

There is a place that

has a strong and stable economy with a robust business network and education providers. This includes good local schools and colleges, independent initiatives like Shift Momentum 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 ambition is nurtured 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.
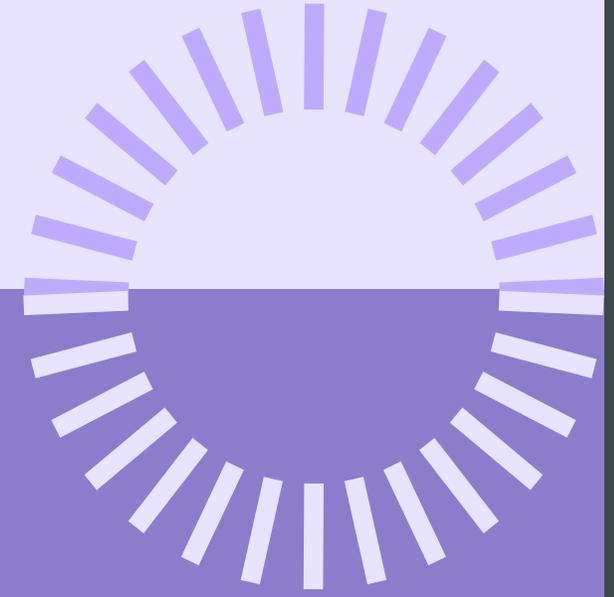
But only if

the public, private and academic sectors come together to raise collective ambitions and provide the training needed by local businesses in a range of accessible formats. This includes physical and digital classrooms as well as in work training and education through internships and apprenticeships.
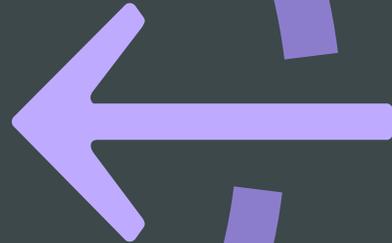
Travel
Transformed

Huntingdonshire
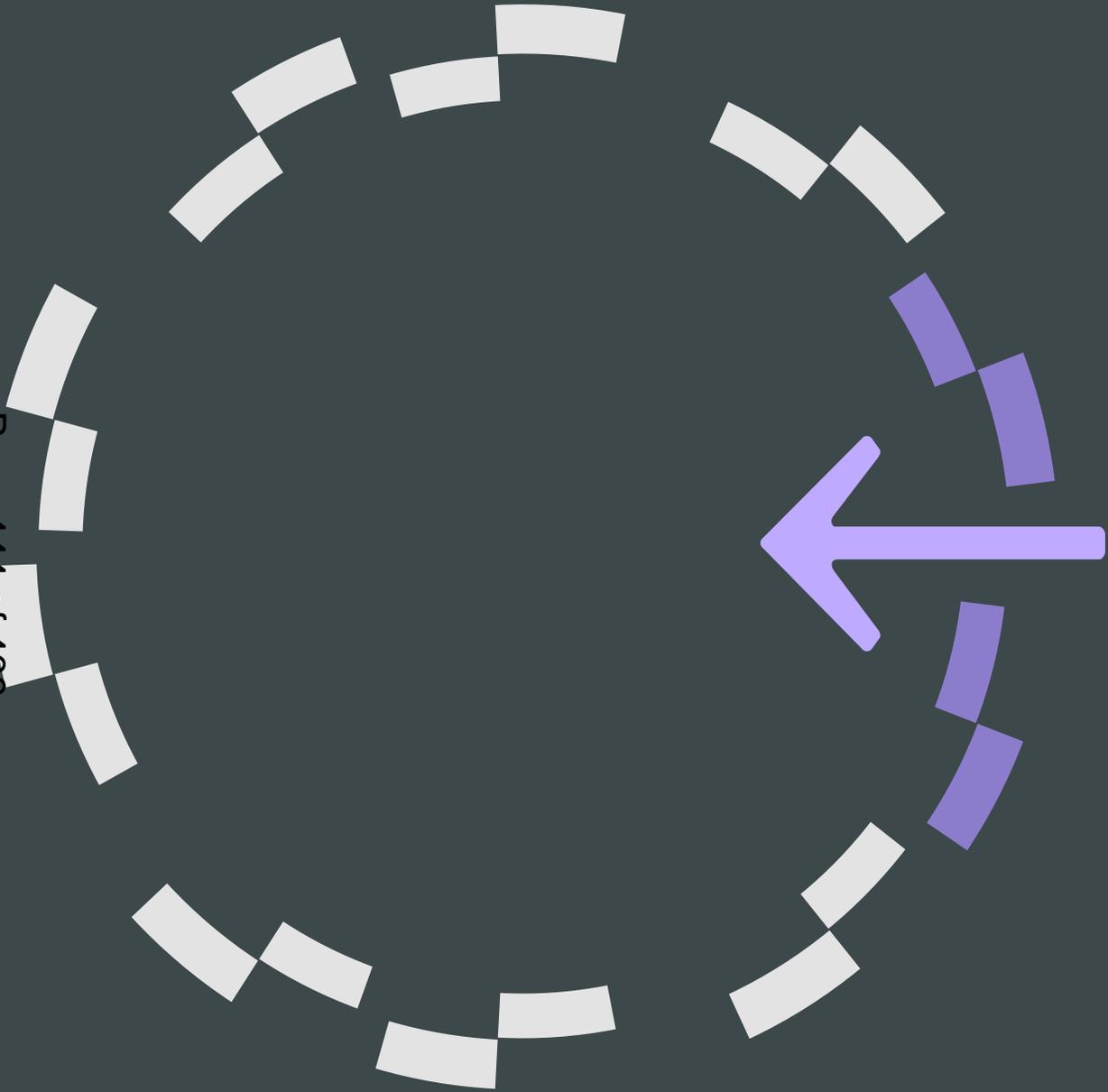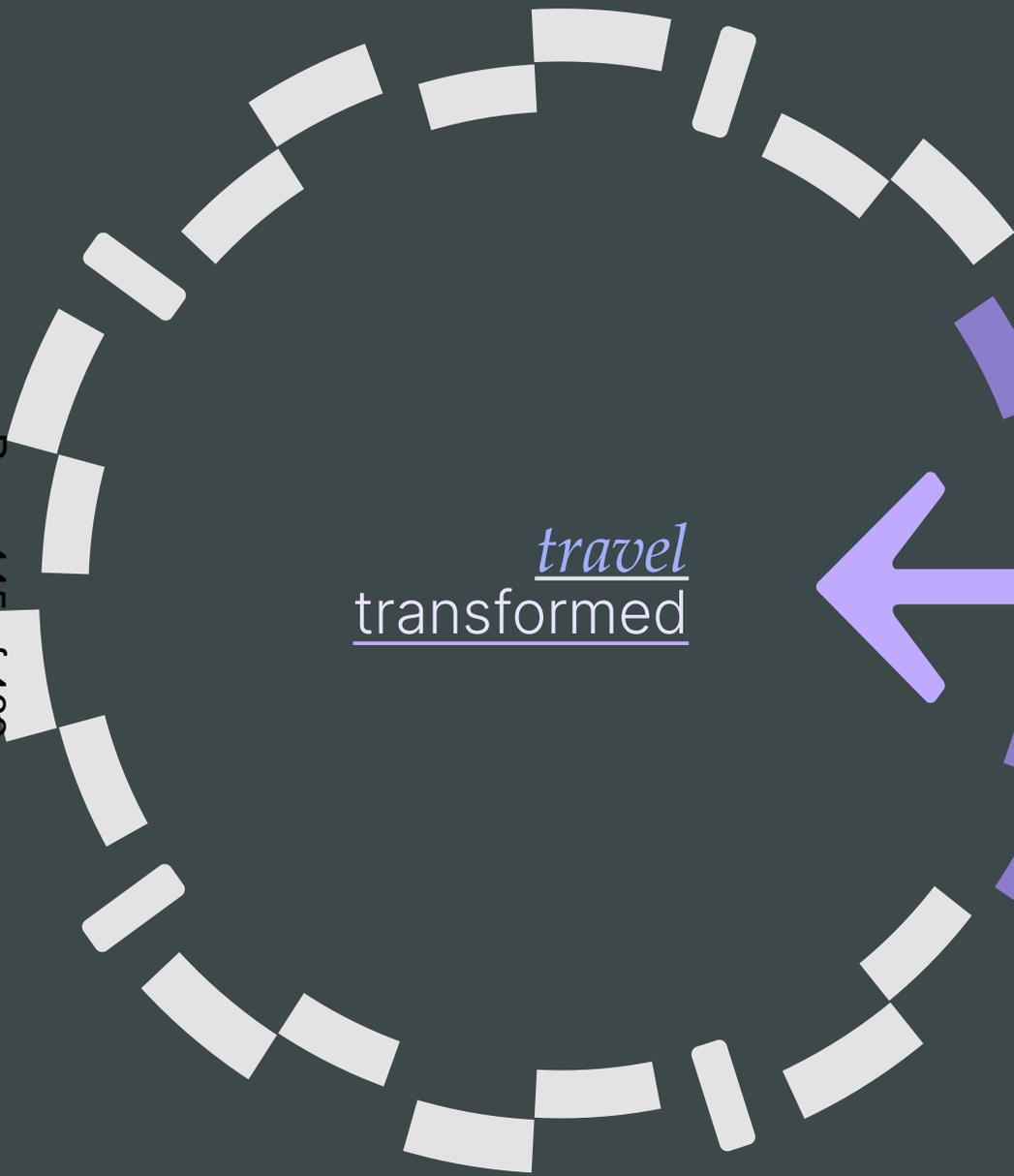
travel
transformed

WHAT IF?

the car was a relic of the past?

our mobility was on demand?

our distribution networks delivered for all of us?

it was fun to move around here?

WHAT IF?

the car was a relic of the past?

travel transformed

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 the rural areas. The impacts of car carbon emissions on the environment are increasingly alarming and Huntingdonshire is currently the most polluting district in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in terms of road transport emissions.

There is a place that

has communities who genuinely care about the climate crisis. The District has flat towns and green picturesque landscapes, perfect for cycling and is already trialling new approaches to public transport including the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway and the on demand Ting 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, and where short trips are only made by walking or cycling. Where bus stops provide real amenity — sheltered, comfortable, equipped with cycle parking and charging facilities and provide real time bus information.

But only if

we invest in our public transport system to make the most sustainable transport options the most efficient, convenient and pleasurable. To be transformative, it will have to be affordable and therefore subsidised.

WHAT IF?

our mobility was on demand?

travel transformed

In a world where

people are reliant on cars, especially in rural regions where traditional public transport options are lacking, but new digital services and technologies means that individual car ownership is being reassessed.

There is a place

is predominantly rural, with villages and towns scattered around expansive landscapes but shows that change is possible with pioneering public transport options including the Ting Bus service and guided busway being tested.

Which could become

a place where reliable, responsive and data-driven on-demand mobility options means that it is easy to live and move around without your own car. The District could become a hub for on-demand mobility with carsharing, ridesharing, bikesharing and the extended Ting Bus serving all our urban and rural neighbourhoods.

But only if

the Council creates the right framework to attract mobility investment, encouraging on-demand providers to set up networks in the District in addition on demand options are celebrated 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.

WHAT IF?

our distribution networks delivered for all of us?

travel transformed

In a world where

storage and distribution is a rapidly expanding sector, distribution hubs, warehouses and infrastructure are a blight on the landscape. Freight contributes to rising emissions, with road traffic through Huntingdonshire one reason why greenhouse gas emissions are much higher than the UK average.

There is a place

is located at the heart of the UK with links to London, the Midlands and the North, is spacious and has strong business networks. It boasts high performing wholesale and retail trade and agriculture industries and potential for logistics and distribution growth provided it is at the right place, of the right scale and works for the people of Huntingdonshire.

Which could become

a pioneer for sustainable logistics that gives back to the places in which it sits. Where clean distribution networks supported equally the economic sectors that rely on it for their growth as well as residents evolving needs.
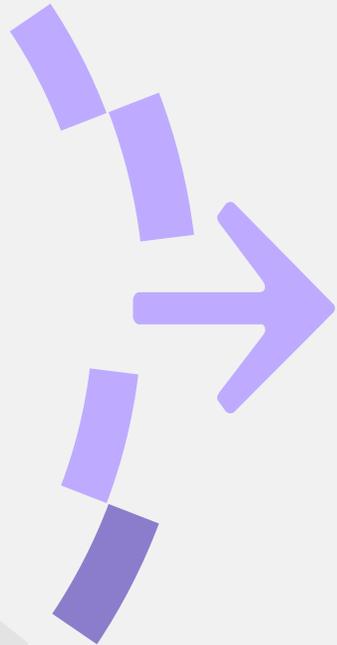
But only if

businesses, developers, the Council and local residents are collaborative and forward thinking to find creative solutions to sustainable logistics including e-cargo bikes, better coordination and environmental mitigation.

WHAT IF?

it was fun to move around here?

travel transformed

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

is characterised by its picturesque towns and villages with beautiful landscapes all with a flat topography and expanding network of trails and quietways.

Which could become

a fun and inviting place for adults and children alike, to walk, cycle and scoot. They could travel on an extended, safe and joyful 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 settlements and key destinations. This should be supported by infrastructure including bike parking spaces, showers and repair stations. To increase accessibility and flexibility e-mobility hire infrastructure should be spread across the district and celebrated as a method to widen participation.

DESTINATION

environmental
innovation

Huntingdonshire
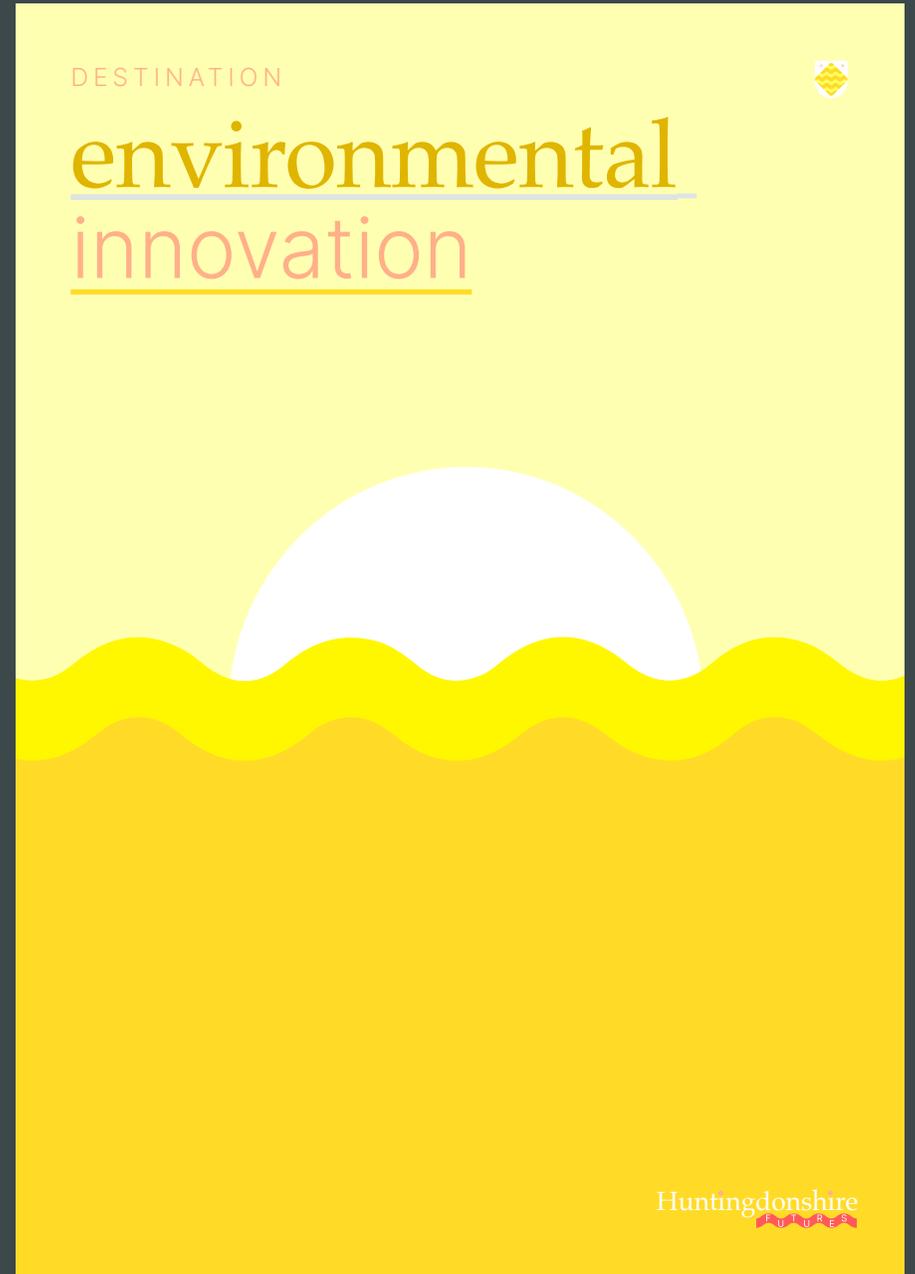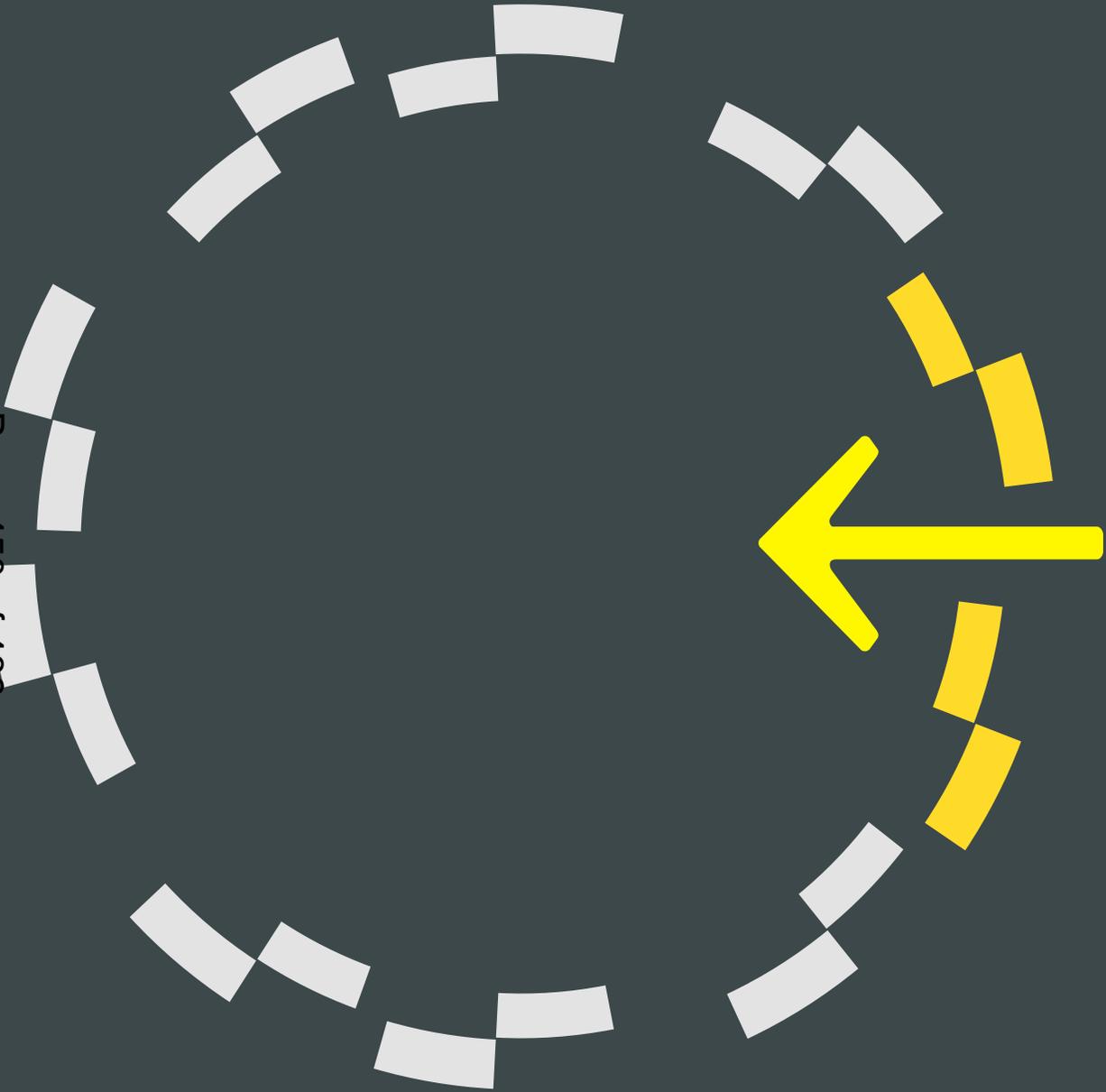
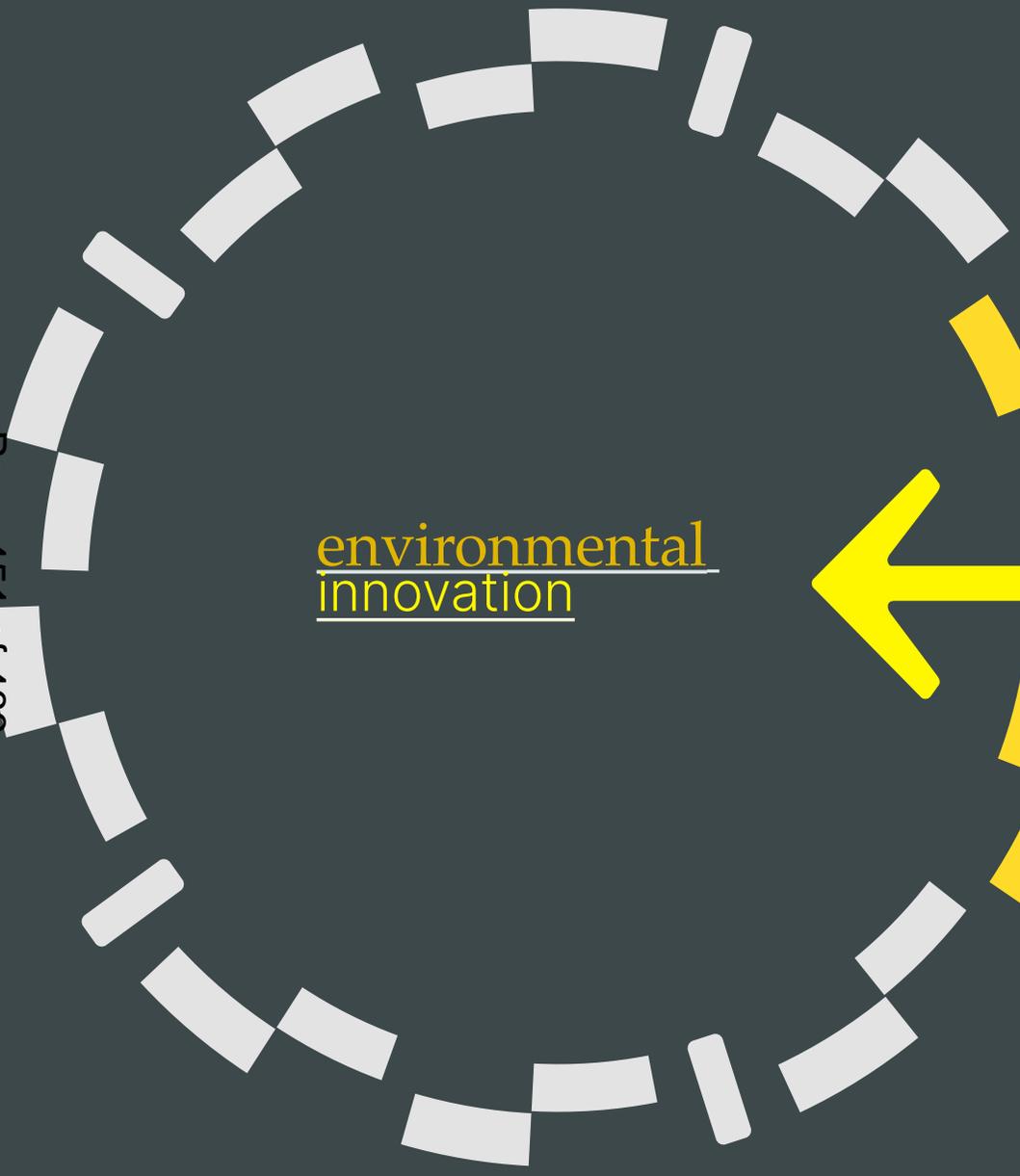# environmental
innovation

WHAT IF?

zero carbon became the norm?

our natural assets inspired a new infrastructure?

all our energy was produced within the district?

all our children were fluent in sustainability?

WHAT IF?

zero carbon became the norm?

environmental innovation

In a world where

concern over the climate emergency has failed to be translated into serious action. 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 space for rewilding, developing carbon sinks and building wind and solar 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, where major infrastructure projects 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.
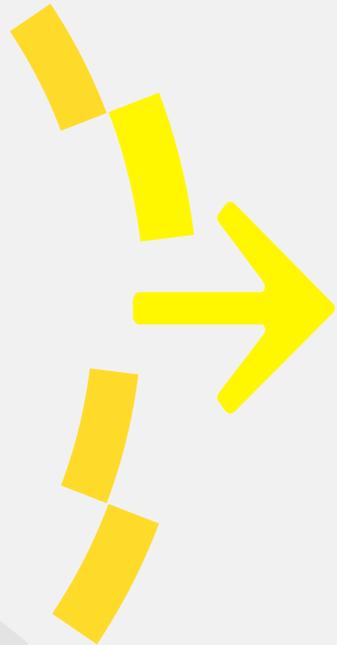
But only if

we establish a culture of openness to experimentation, taking risks and investing in ambitious Net Zero projects, proving to communities that they can share in the benefits of these schemes.

WHAT IF?

our natural assets inspired a new infrastructure?

environmental innovation

In a world where

societies have ignored and exploited nature leading to a climate crisis with accelerating effects including flood events 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 mimic or incorporate natural processes to create resilient urban and natural environments. Through wetlands, green roofs, rain gardens and natural water filtration — we work in step with nature instead of against it.

But only if

new developments are encouraged to deliver, maintain and monitor the measures where appropriate, and support new nature-based solutions both in the public realm and in private buildings.

WHAT IF?

all our energy was produced within the district?

environmental
innovation

In a world where

we are faced by an energy, climate and cost of living crisis. Individual household energy bills are skyrocketing, influenced by global politics. These issues are only going to get worse.

There is a place that

has a strong, aspirational business community, plenty of space and a dry and sunny climate. This includes places and organisations such as Waterside Green Energy that are already delivering community energy.

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 reed mace 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, and if all people can afford to participate.

WHAT IF?

all our children were fluent
in sustainability?

environmental
innovation

In a world where

climate change is beginning to impact every aspect of society, but 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 and community networks where young people 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 trailblazer in embedding sustainability in education. This includes hands-on projects, trips, understanding lifestyle changes and raising aspirations for sustainable future careers. Our youngest members of society will become powerful social influencers, educating their families and older generations about the importance of sustainability.

But only if

local schools, the Council and local environmental organisations collaborate to enrich the school curriculum from early years to College education, including participation and engagement with existing and future sustainability projects.

Pride in Place

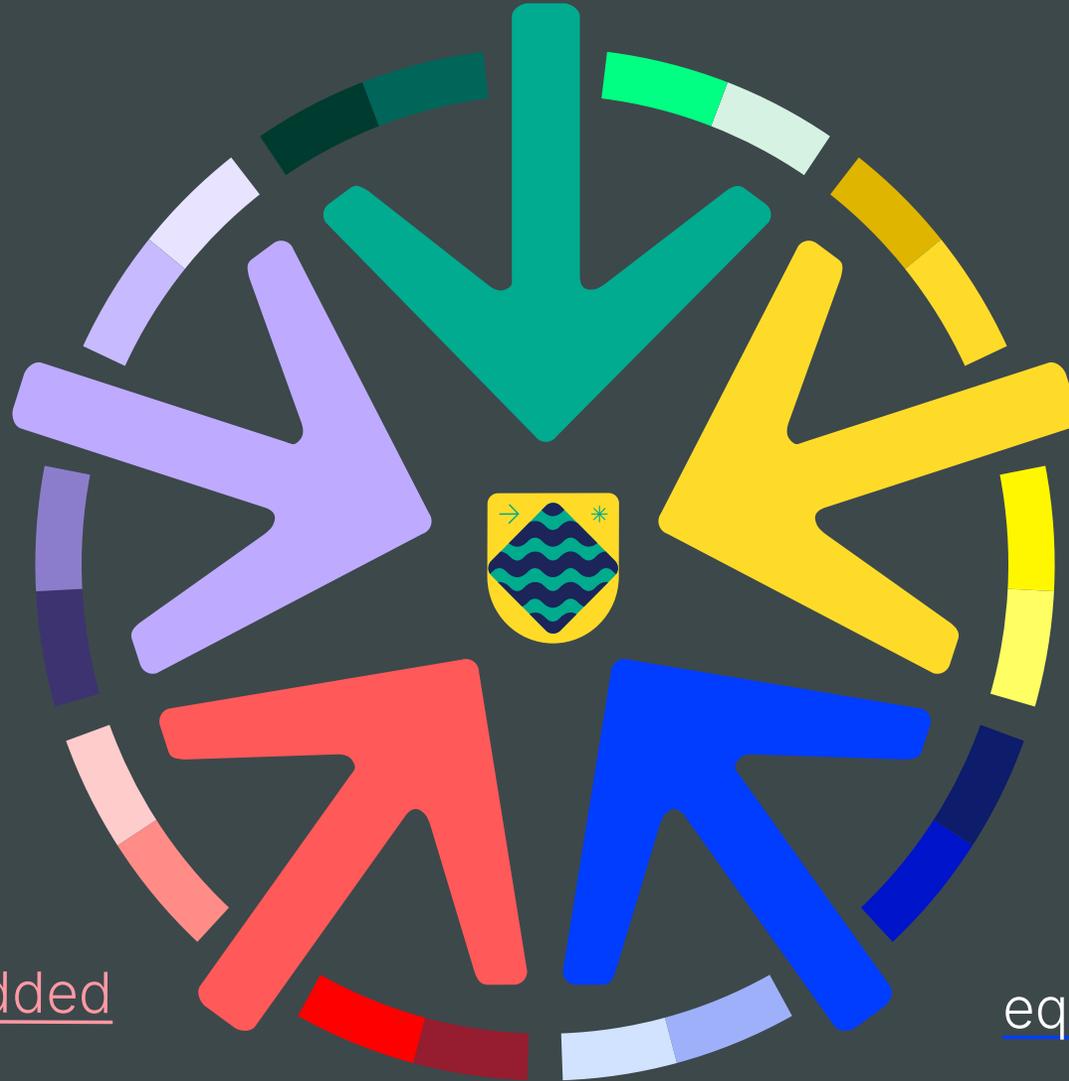*travel* transformed

environmental innovation

health embedded

equitable economy

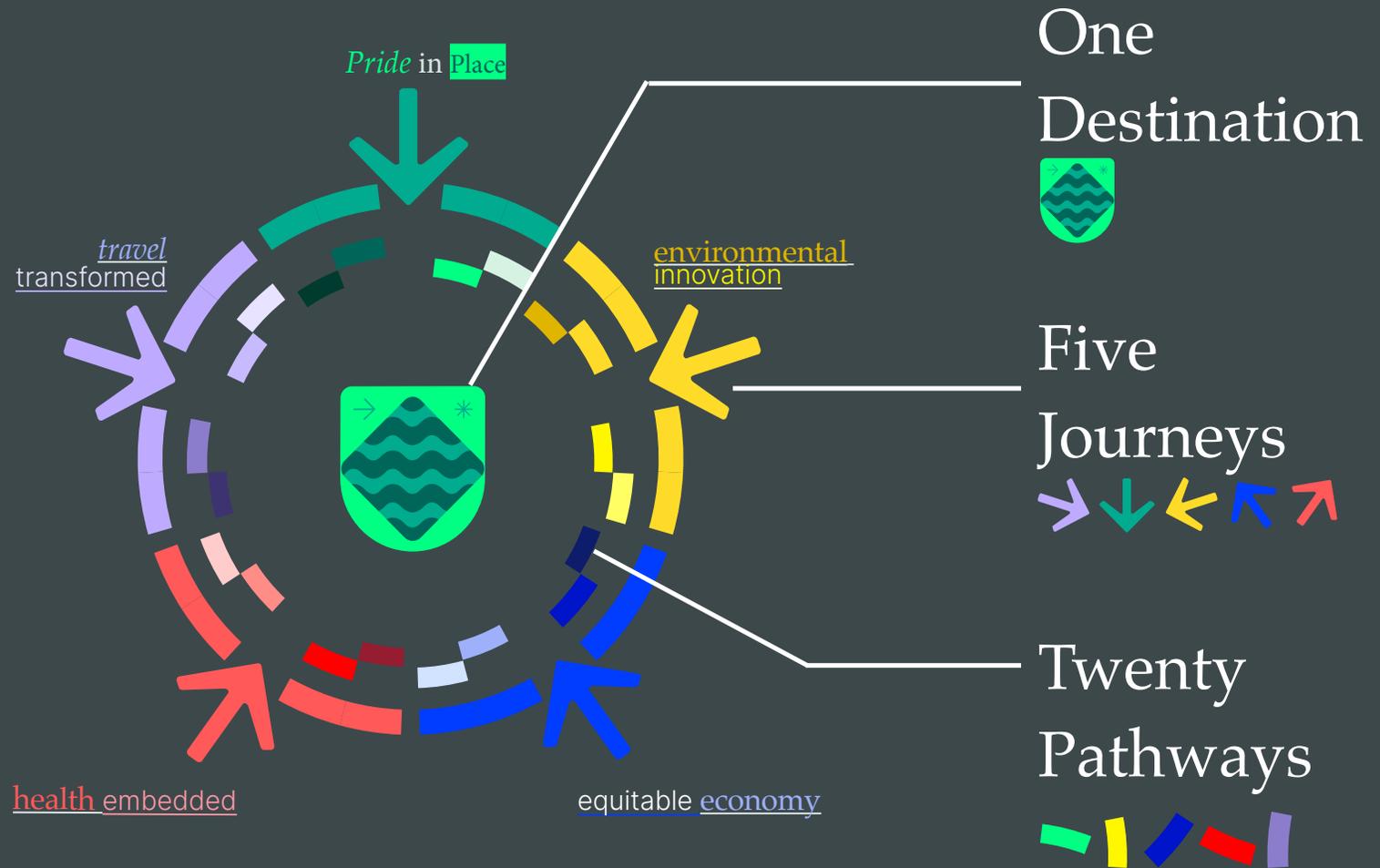# Feedback

Proposed Place Strategy Hierarchy

Does the *hierarchy of the Place Strategy* with One Destination, 5 Journeys and Twenty Pathways provide a clear logic?

Pride in Place

travel transformed

environmental innovation

health embedded

equitable economy

One Destination

Five Journeys

Twenty Pathways

Pathways

Reviewing each Pathway Statement we would like the following questions to guide your feedback.

Do the pathway *'What if Statements'* describe a future we want to work towards in Huntingdonshire?

Do the pathway statements accurately reflect the *existing context / challenges* we face in Huntingdonshire? If not, please tell us what you think is missing?
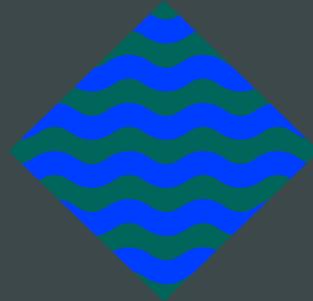
Do the pathway statements fully capture the *place specific qualities* of Huntingdonshire? If not, please tell us what you think is missing?

Do the pathway statements identify appropriately identify *near term barriers* we will need to overcome? If not, please tell us what you think is missing?

Next steps

Next Steps

2022							2023	
JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR

Engagement Period 1: Huntingdonshire Here & Now

Workshops

- Stakeholders & Key Businesses
- HDC Forums
- Residents

Engagement Key Findings — Publish Online

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* Future Thinking

Engagement Period 2: Future Trends + Opportunities

Workshops

- Stakeholders & Key Businesses
- HDC Forums
- Residents

Engagement Key Findings — Publish Online

Online Engagement Activity

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* Draft Vision and Structure

- Targeted Stakeholder Testing

Engagement Period 3: Exploring the Vision

Workshops

- Stakeholders & Key Businesses
- HDC Forums
- Residents

Engagement Key Findings — Publish Online

Online Engagement Activity

Place Strategy Drafting

Workshops

- Targeted Stakeholder Testing
- Resident Engagement

Jan Committee - Testing the Direction

Engagement Key Findings — Publish Online

Online Engagement Activity

Finalising the Place Strategy

Publishing the Place Strategy

PRIOR
+PTNRS

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23

Performance and Growth

In Progress

Topic	Membership & Scope	Lead Officer	Progress
Review of External Appointments to Outside Organisations	Cllrs S Cawley, S J Corney, I D Gardener and S A Howell	TBC	**Summer 2022**: Terms of Reference have been established. Questionnaire has been sent to all relevant boards and organisations. Regular meetings are established from September. **September 2022:** Evidence and information gathering underway. **November 2022:** Information gathering completed. **Next steps**: Draft report underway

Environments, Communities and Partnerships

In Progress

Topic	Membership & Scope	Lead Officer	Progress
Climate	Councillor T D Alban Councillor J Kerr Councillor C Lowe Councillor D Shaw	Neil Sloper	**November 2022:** Initial Meetings held to establish Terms of Reference for the group. **Next Steps:** Regular meetings established. Evidence and information gathering to be progressed.
One Leisure and Burgess Hall	n/a	Gregg Holland	**Autumn 2022:** The Panel requested an update on future plans for One Leisure and Burgess Hall. **February 2023:** Business Plan updates for the services will be presented to the Panel
Flooding	n/a	Oliver Morley	**Autumn 2022:** The Panel requested an update on how effective the measures which were put in place in July 2021 following a Flooding Task and Finish Report have been. **Spring 2023:** An update will be presented to the Panel.

| Warm Spaces | n/a | | Liz Smith | **Autumn 2022:** The Panel requested an update on the Warm Spaces Project.

November 2022: The Warm Spaces Project was presented to the Panel.

Spring 2023: An update on the Warm Spaces Project will be presented to the Panel following the winter season. |

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