

## IMPACT OF LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT FROM HUNTINGDON TOWN CENTRE

1. The District Council is one of a small number of large employers located within or adjacent to Huntingdon Town Centre.
2. As part of the 'Centrevision' project for Huntingdon town centre, initiated by The Council and carried out by the Civic Trust, Chesterton Planning and Economics were commissioned to undertake a commercial review. The resulting report describes Huntingdon's role as 'the principal administrative and business centre for the District'. Although comparative figures are not available at this level it is evident that the presence of major public sector employment, in particular, has resulted in a much higher level of office employment in Huntingdon Town Centre compared to other market towns in the District. This is a very significant contributory reason why this town centre can attract a wider range of shops and facilities compared to those other centres. With 350 employees located in the town centre HDC is, self evidently, the largest town centre office employer.

3. To quote the Chesterton report :-

"Non-retail uses in the town centre are predominantly public sector offices and residential dwellings. Public sector buildings include the main Huntingdonshire District Council offices, numerous Cambridgeshire County Council Offices, Huntingdon County Library, Huntingdon Town Council office, Inland Revenue and other Government offices, the Town Hall and Court and local job centre. In addition, the town centre incorporates the British Telecom Exchange and Huntingdonshire Enterprise Agency."

The report goes on to conclude :-

"Office based employees located in the central area of Huntingdon have a greater propensity to spend money in the town centre, in comparison to the alternative out-of-town Huntingdon Retail Park and the Tesco foodstore at Abbots Ripton Road especially during the lunchtime period. In contrast, employees working for firms on the principal employment sites at Stukely Meadows, St. Peter's Road, Ermine Business Park and St. John's Business Park located to the north of the town centre have more opportunity to shop at Huntingdon Retail Park, due in part to its easier accessibility".

4. The 'Centrevision' project also included a Business Survey the results from which led to the following conclusion in the main "Centrevision" report :-

"Huntingdon has an unusually high office population, which makes weekday lunchtimes one of the busiest shopping periods. **This market accounts for nearly a quarter of traders' incomes.**"

The presence of a large public office in the town centre also has the potential to encourage linked trips and is likely to lead to spending in the town centre by visitors to the offices.

5. There is already a loss of some office employment from the town centre, for example a reduction in Anglia Water employment, the additional loss of such a major employer as HDC would be likely to have a much more serious impact, particularly in the light of the above findings. Local agents have advised that there

is a low demand for large-scale town centre office floorspace such that the vacation of any significant floorspace is not likely to be balanced by re-occupation for employment purposes.

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