

DECEMBER 2022

Key Directions - Place Strategy



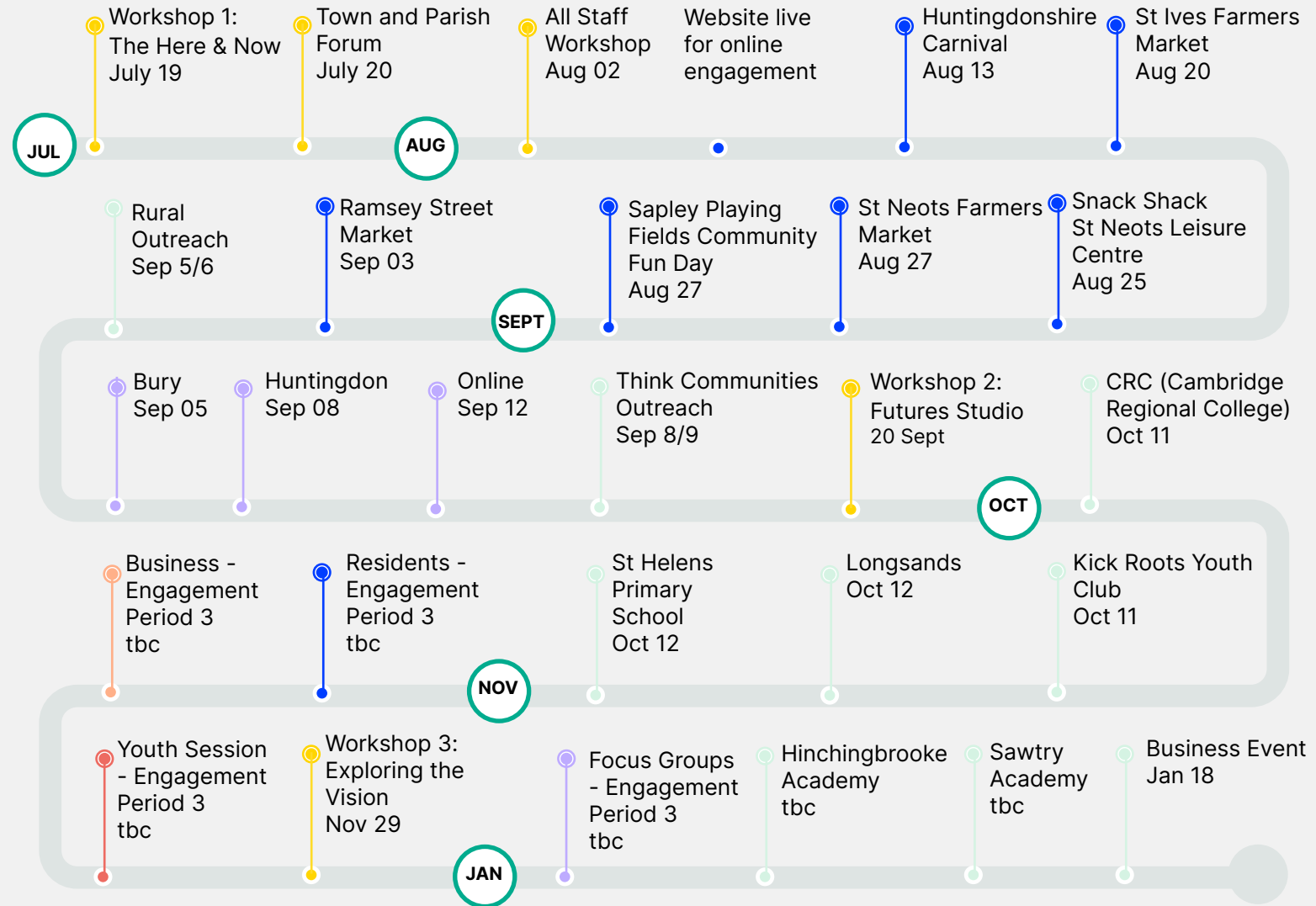
Our objectives

- 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 ●



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 upskilling 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

What we have heard

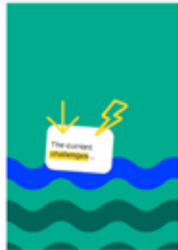
We have engaged with the community, local stakeholders, businesses, focus groups and members in order to gather as many opinions and ideas as possible, to inform this collective project.

Featured Projects

The current challenges

Read about and comment on what we have heard around Huntingdonshire's current challenges.

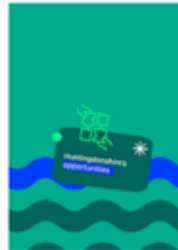
[View Project](#)



Huntingdonshire's Opportunities

Read about and comment on what we have heard around Huntingdonshire's greatest opportunities.

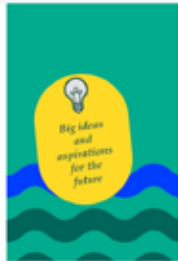
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Big Ideas and Aspirations for the Future

Read about and comment on the big ideas and aspirations for the future we have heard.

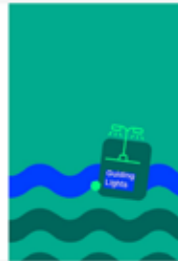
[View Project](#)



Guiding Lights

Read about and comment on projects and inspiration from elsewhere to ignite our ideas for the fut...

[View Project](#)



Have Your Say



My Huntingdonshire

Drop a pin to tell us about Huntingdonshire. What's great and what can we improve.

[Visit Page](#)



Ideas for a better Huntingdonshire

We want to hear your ideas to help us deliver a better future for Huntingdonshire.

[Visit Page](#)



The future of Huntingdonshire is in your hands. What are you going to do about it?

As we develop Huntingdonshire Futures - a new strategy that will shape a vision for the future of the area by incorporating Economy and Environment - this is a space for you to share your ideas and contribute to the future of Huntingdonshire.

Over recent months we have been out and about at pop-up events, resident focus groups, schools, community groups and stakeholder workshops to capture the views of people and organisations across the District.

From Huntingdonshire's greatest opportunities and big ideas and aspirations for the future, to the greatest challenges we want your opinions on what people have said so far.

What are you waiting for? Join the conversation to have your say on what you want the future to look like in Huntingdonshire.

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 Huntingdonshire 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.

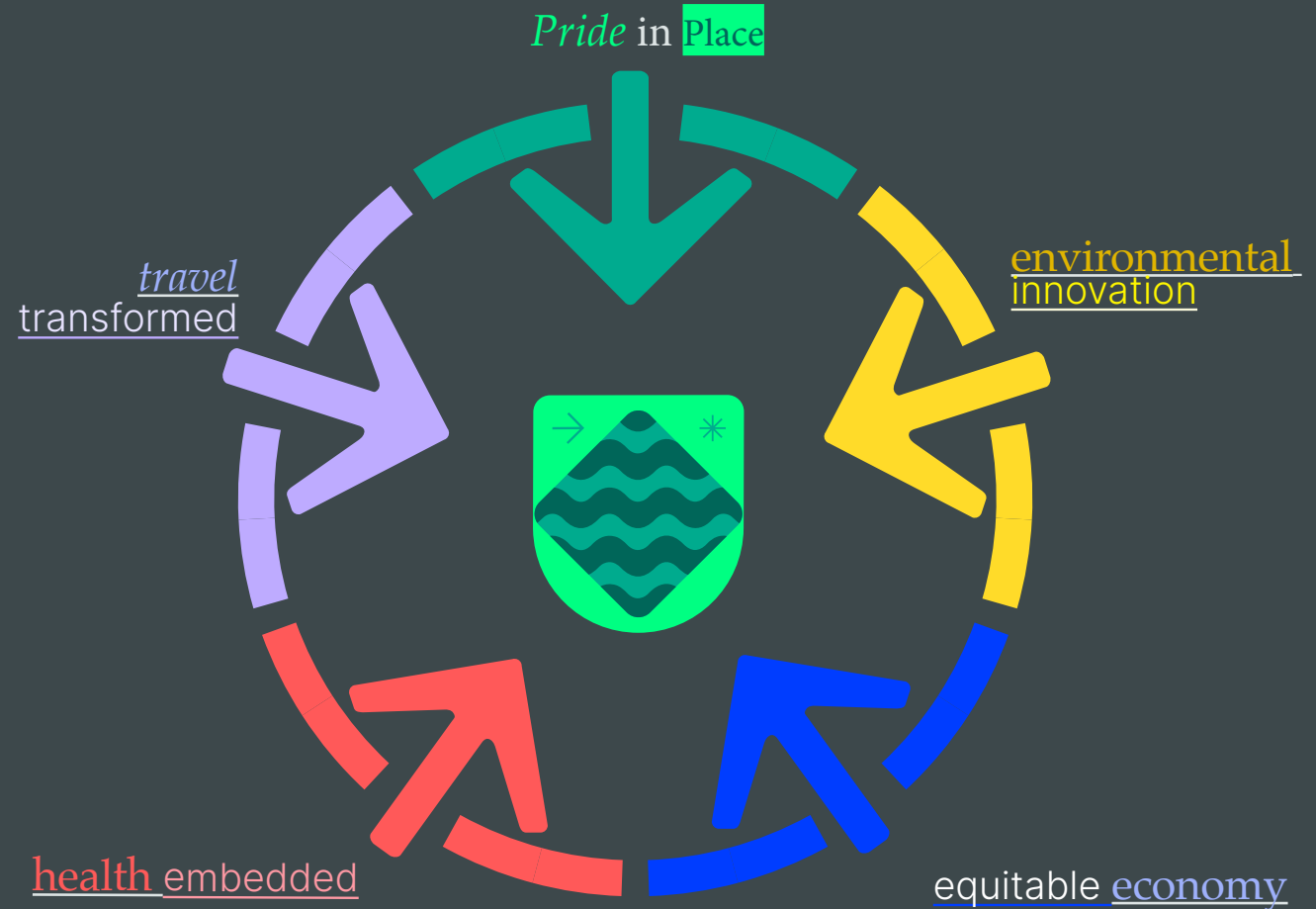
How will you help us think imaginatively and collaboratively to reach our destination?



Five Journeys

The Strategy is proposed to be framed by five journeys.

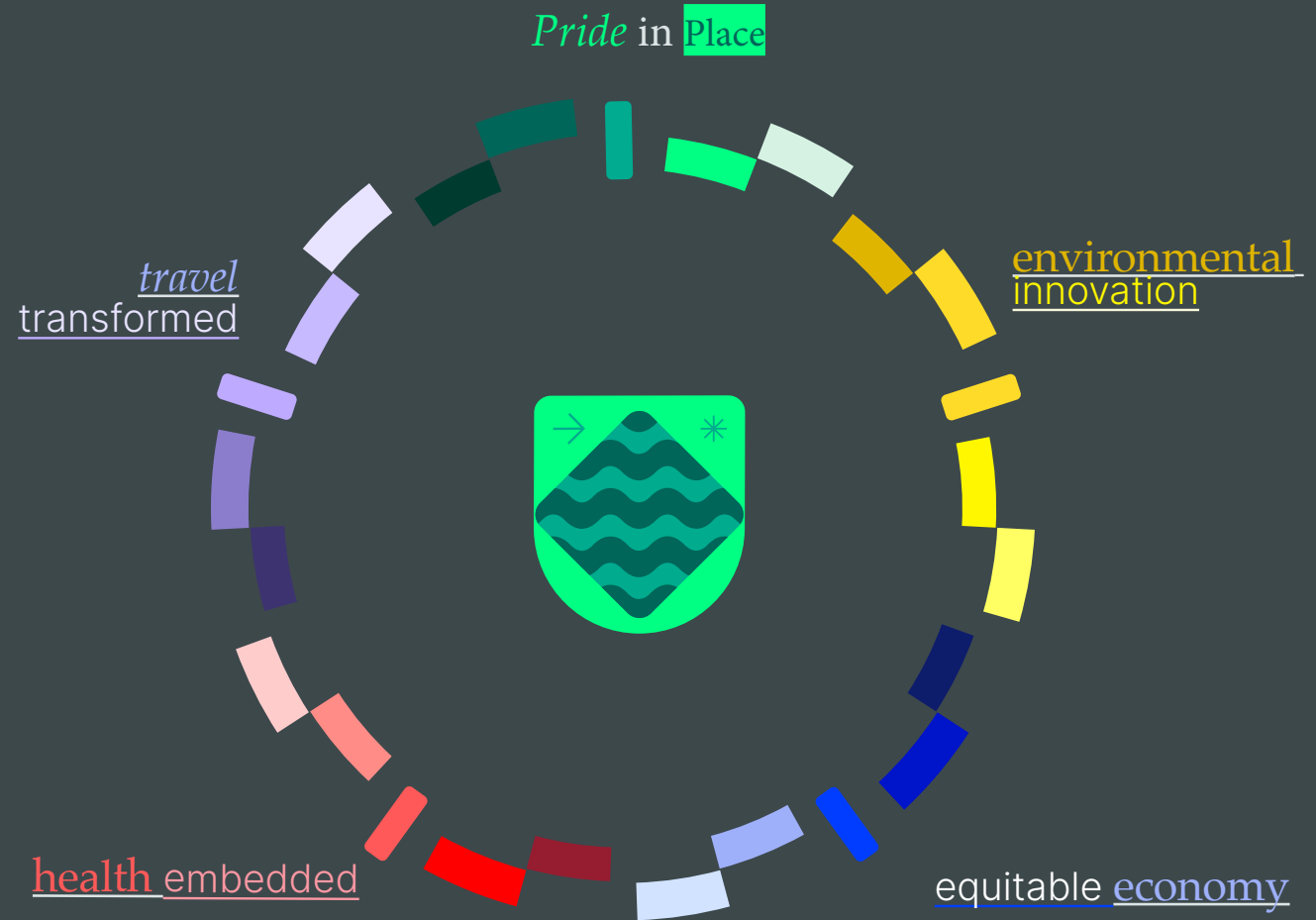
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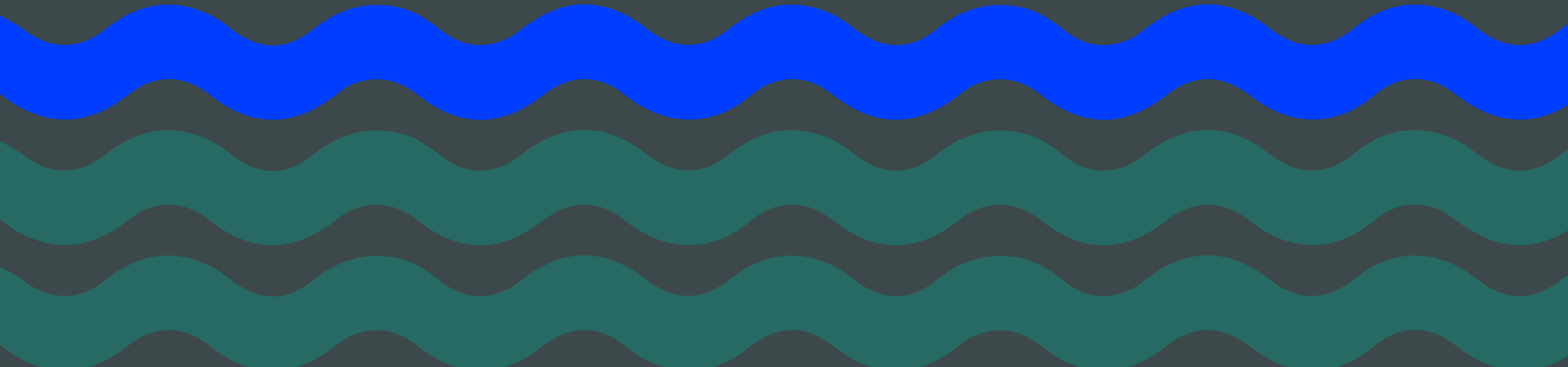
Twenty Pathways

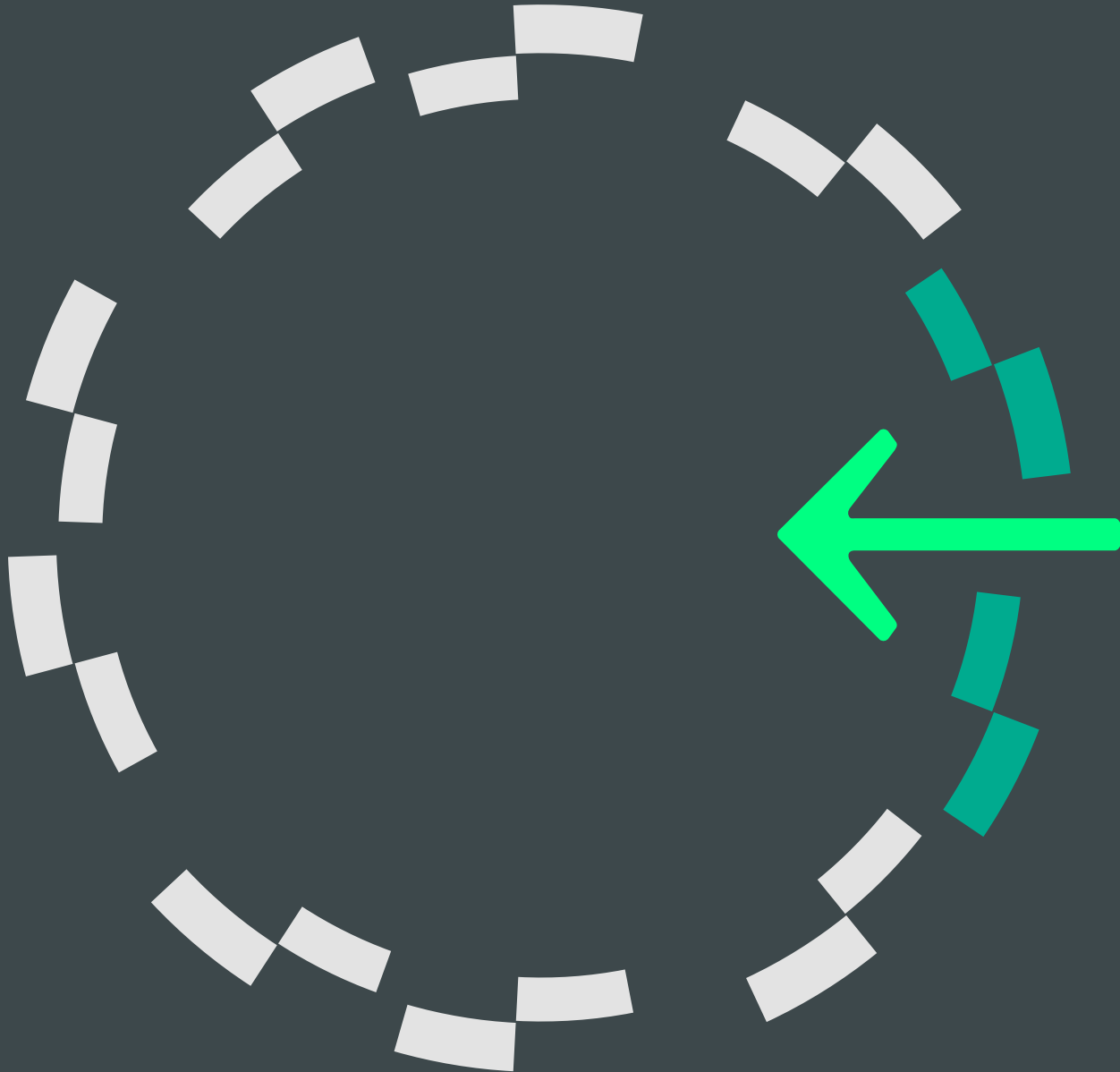
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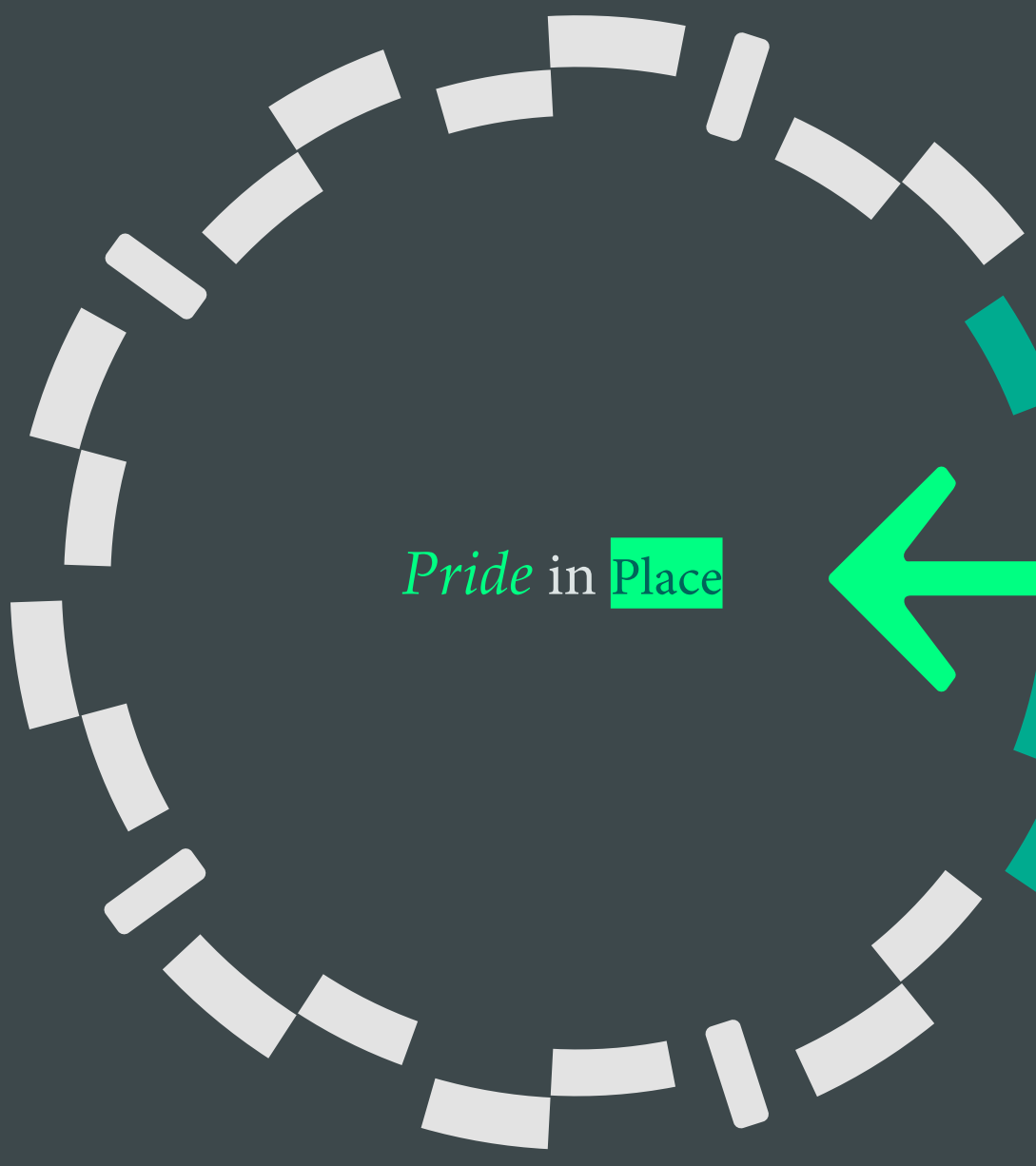
Each Pathway is an articulation of the futures our stakeholders are imagining for Huntingdonshire.



The Pathways







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 **Place**

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

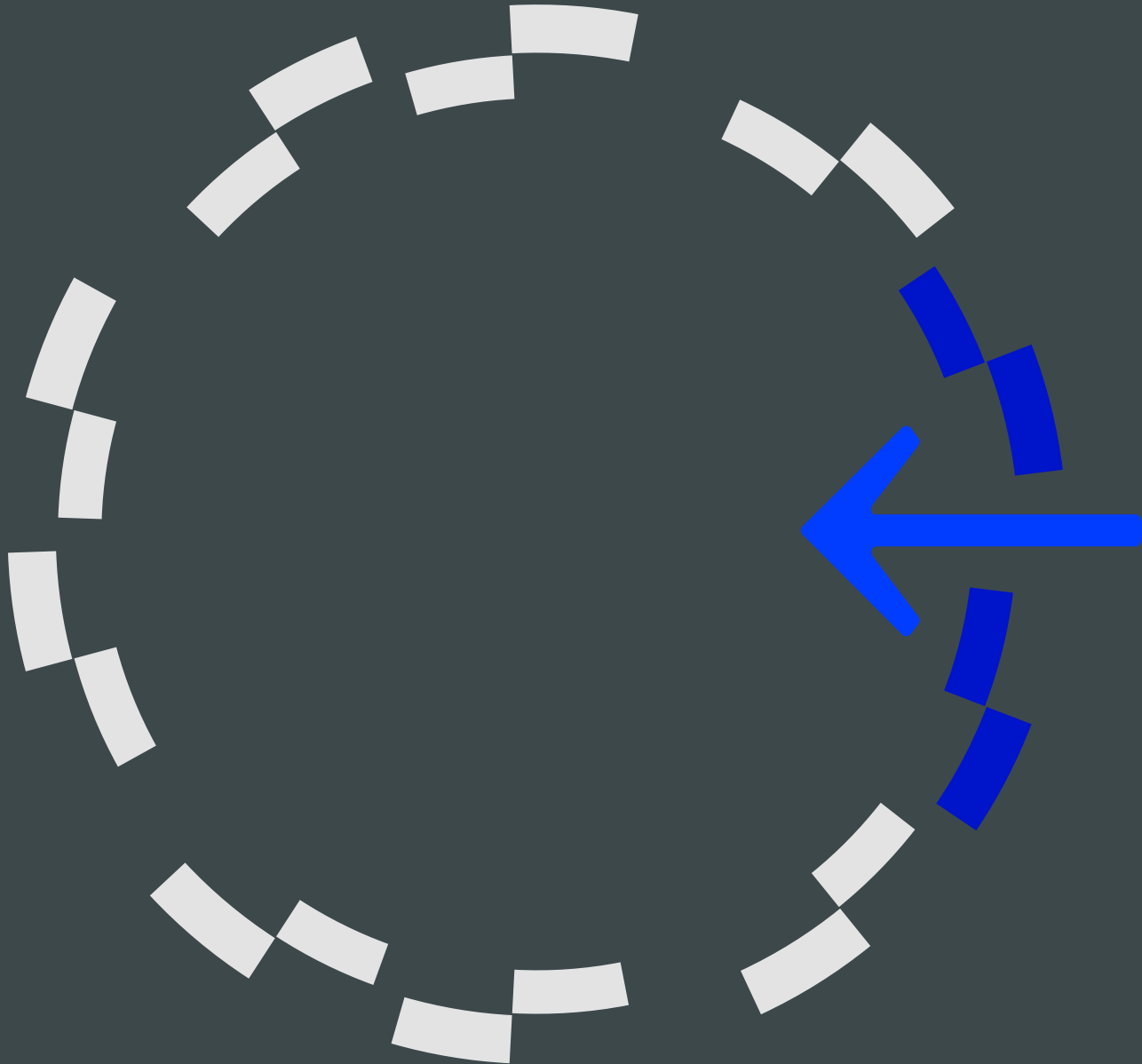
benefits from a cluster of market towns each with its own unique offer, picturesque historic cores and plenty of citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit.

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



equitable economy



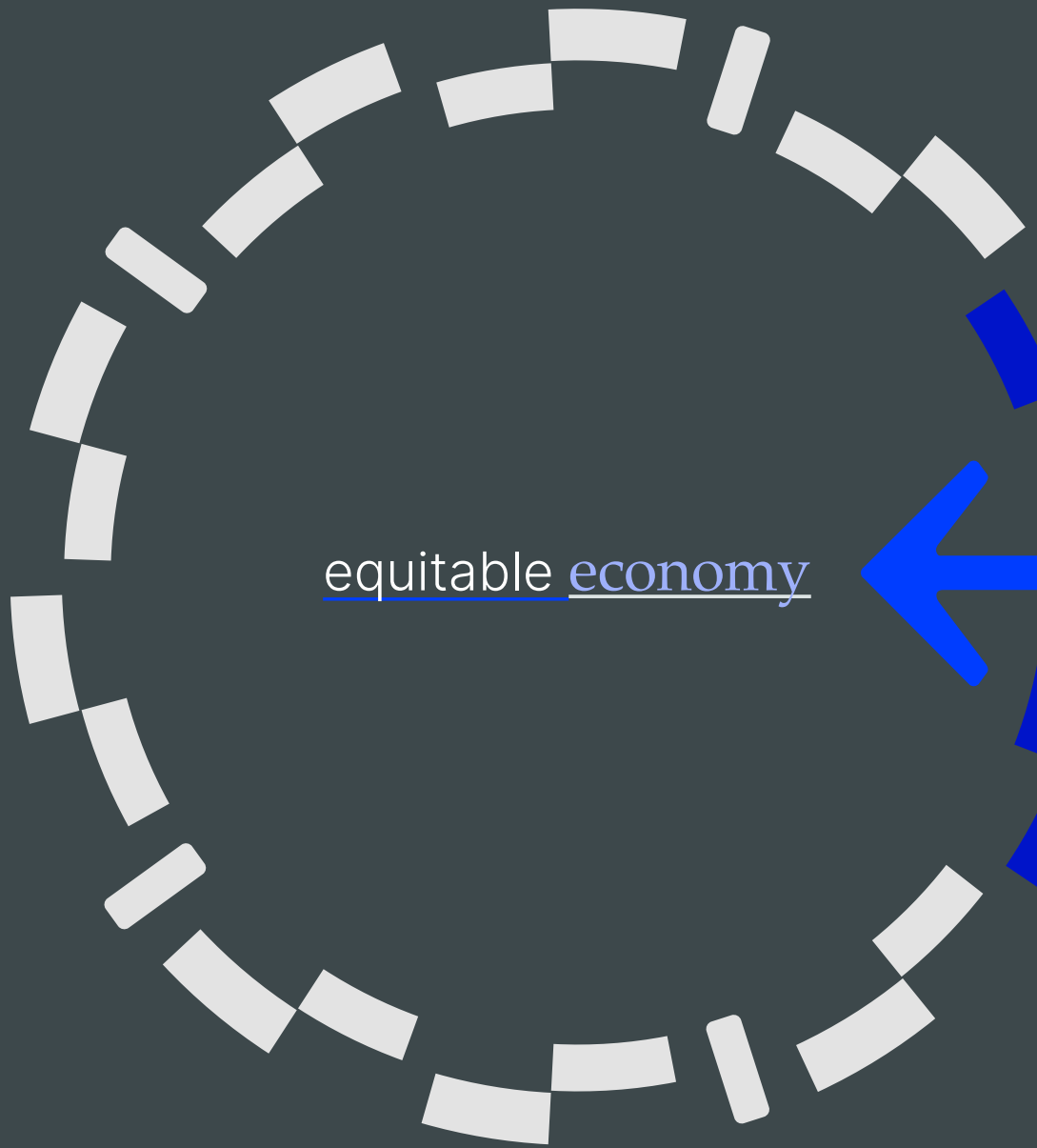
WHAT IF?

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 Hinchingsbrooke 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

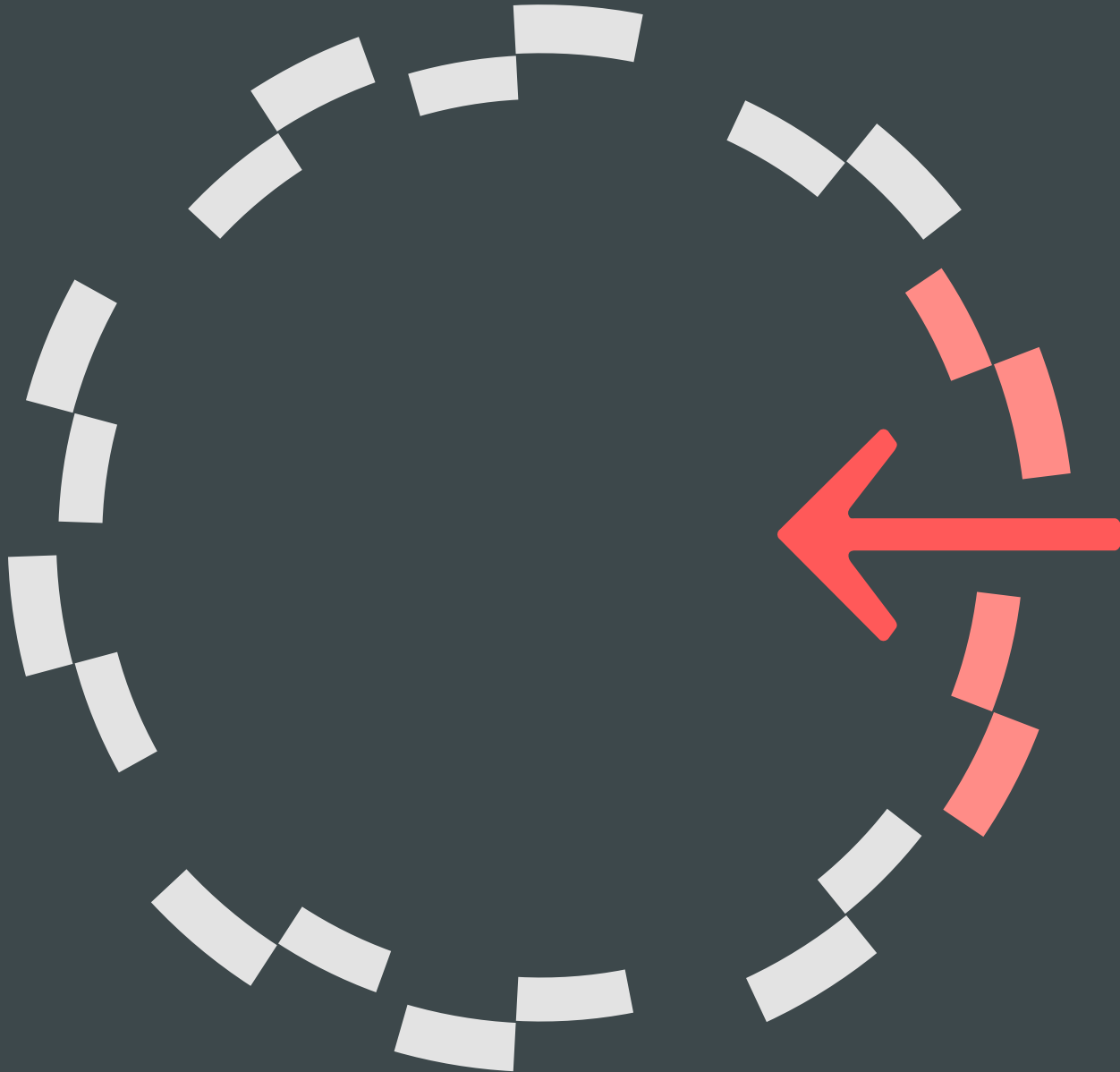
has a truly entrepreneurial spirit with plenty of well connected, affordable workspaces, some which are well established in towns like Huntingdon, others like Alconbury Weald are providing something new. All our employers here can offer their staff a great quality of life.

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.

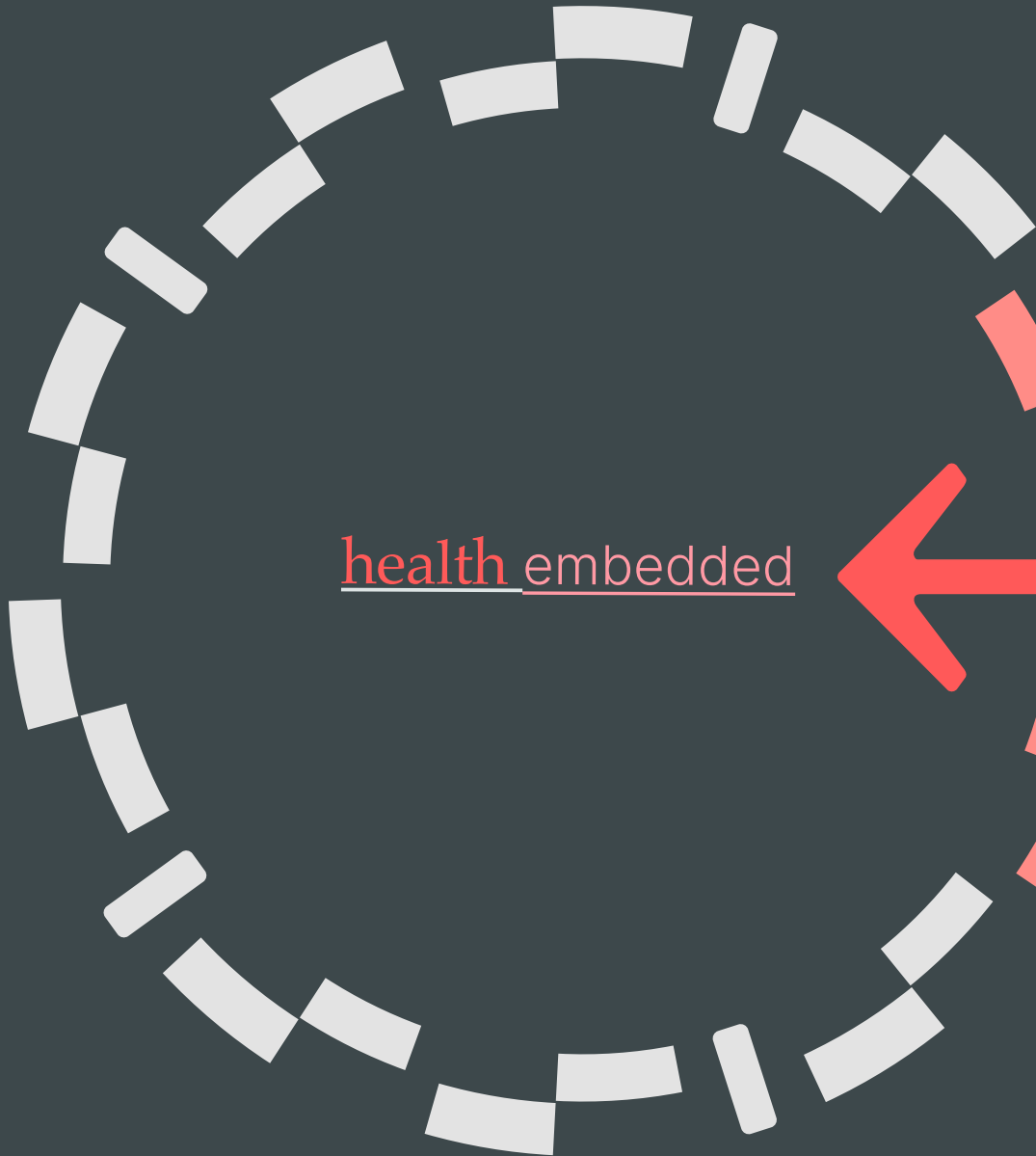


DESTINATION

Health

Embedded





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

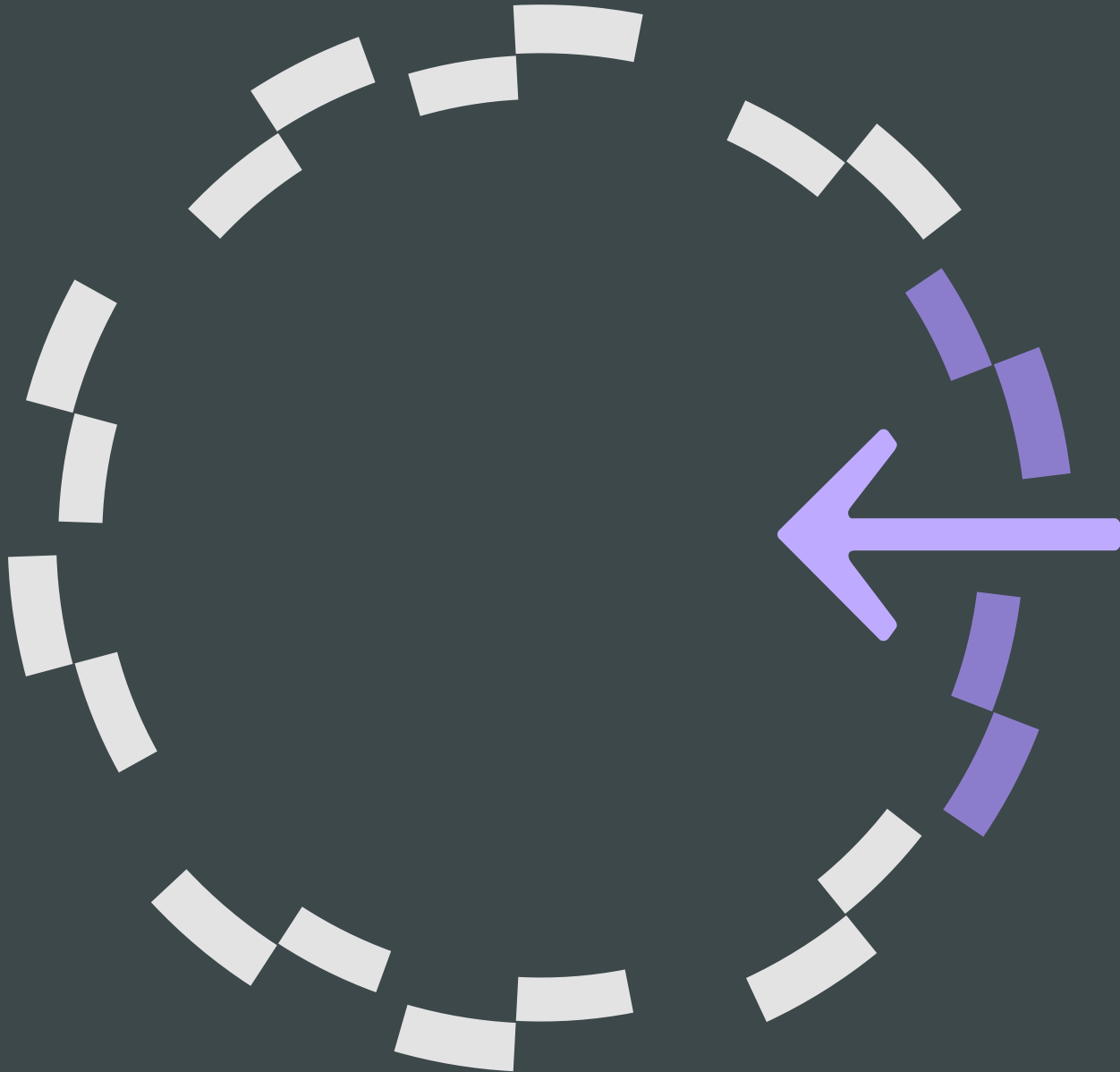
has a strong and stable economy with a robust business network and education providers. This includes good local schools and colleges, independent initiatives like Shift Momentum and strong links to nearby world-class education at Cambridge University.

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.



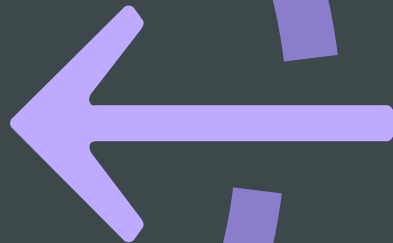
DESTINATION



Travel *Transformed*



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

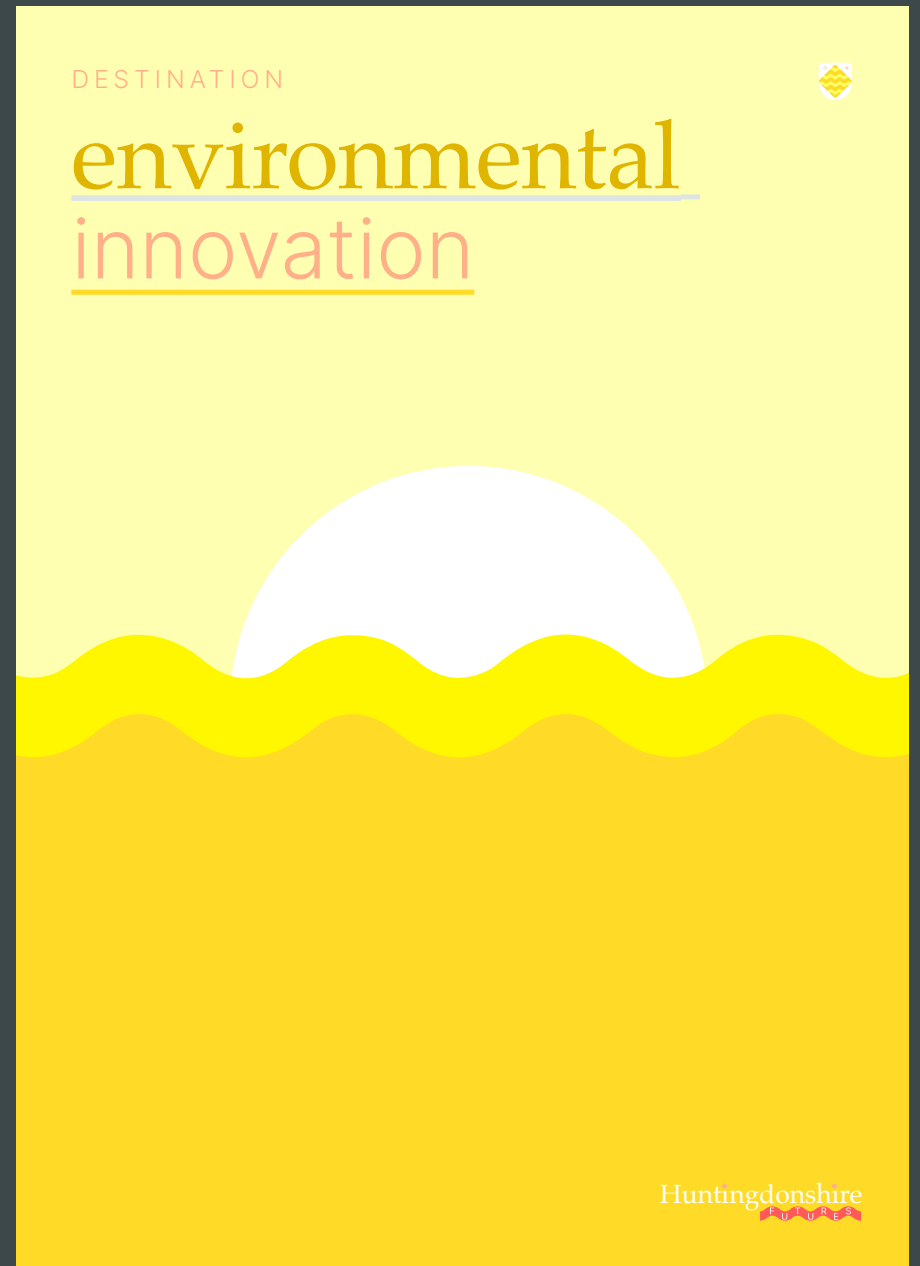
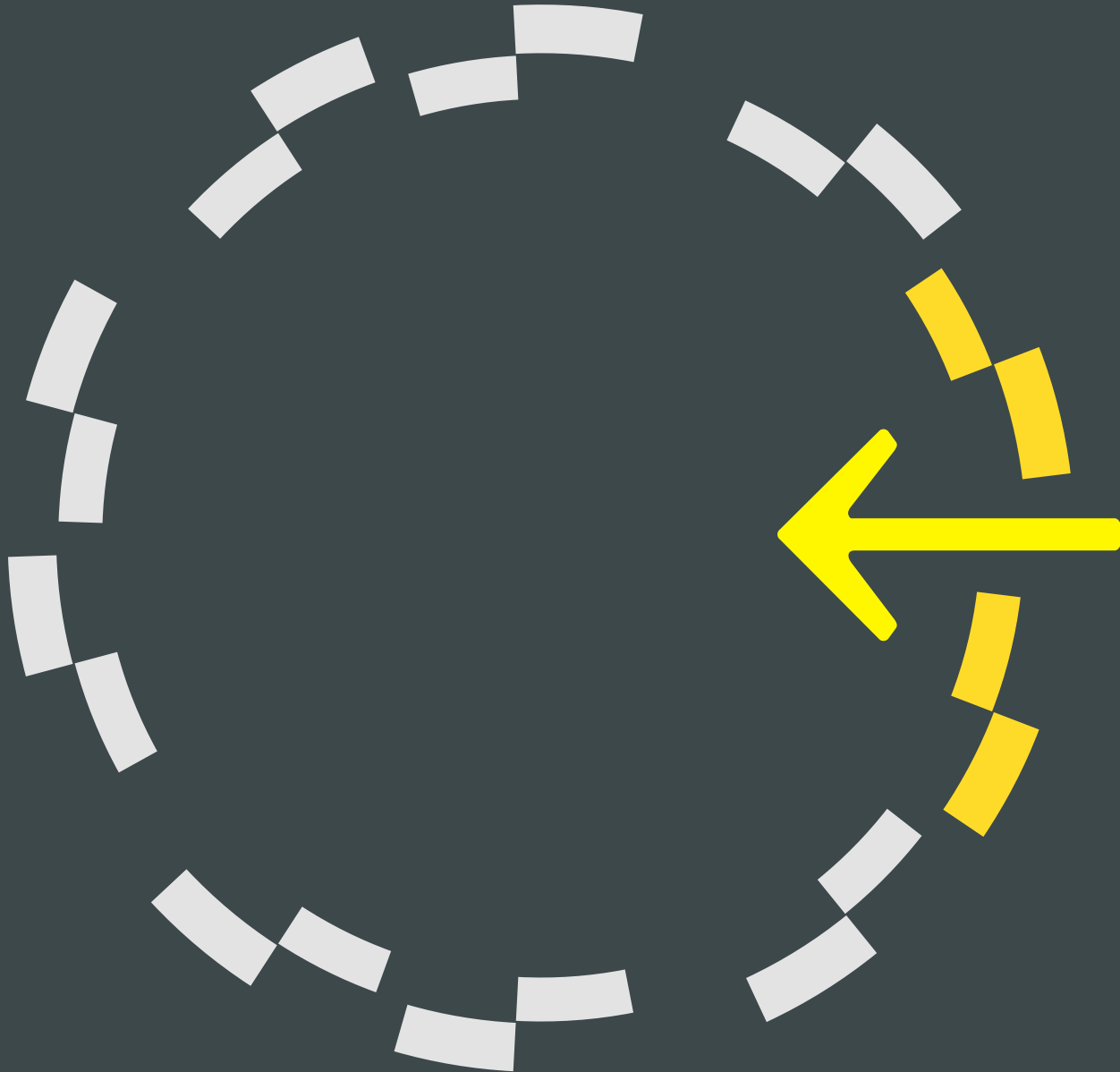
is characterised by its picturesque towns and villages with beautiful landscapes all with a flat topography and expanding network of trails and quietways.

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.



environmental
innovation



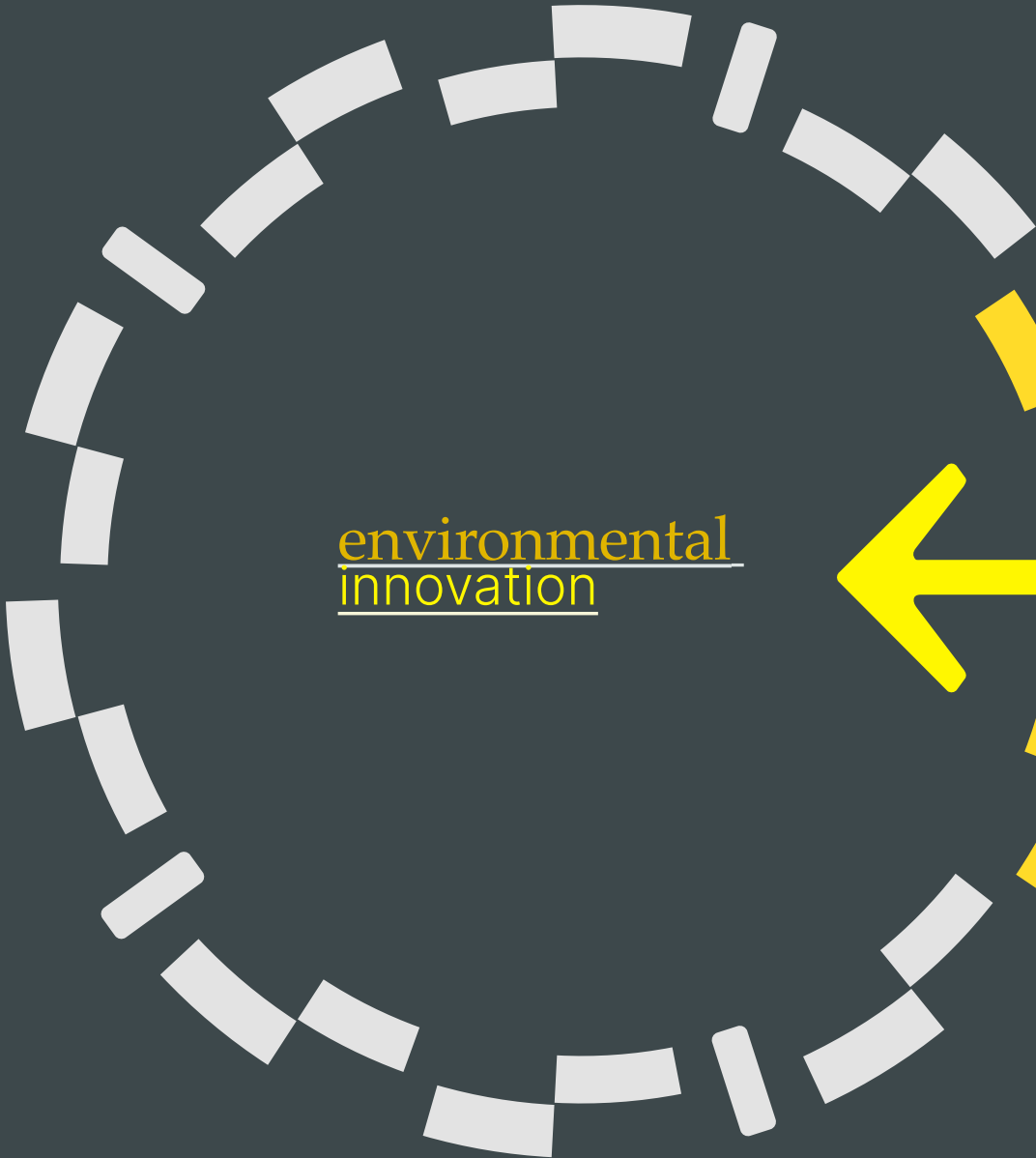
WHAT IF?

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.

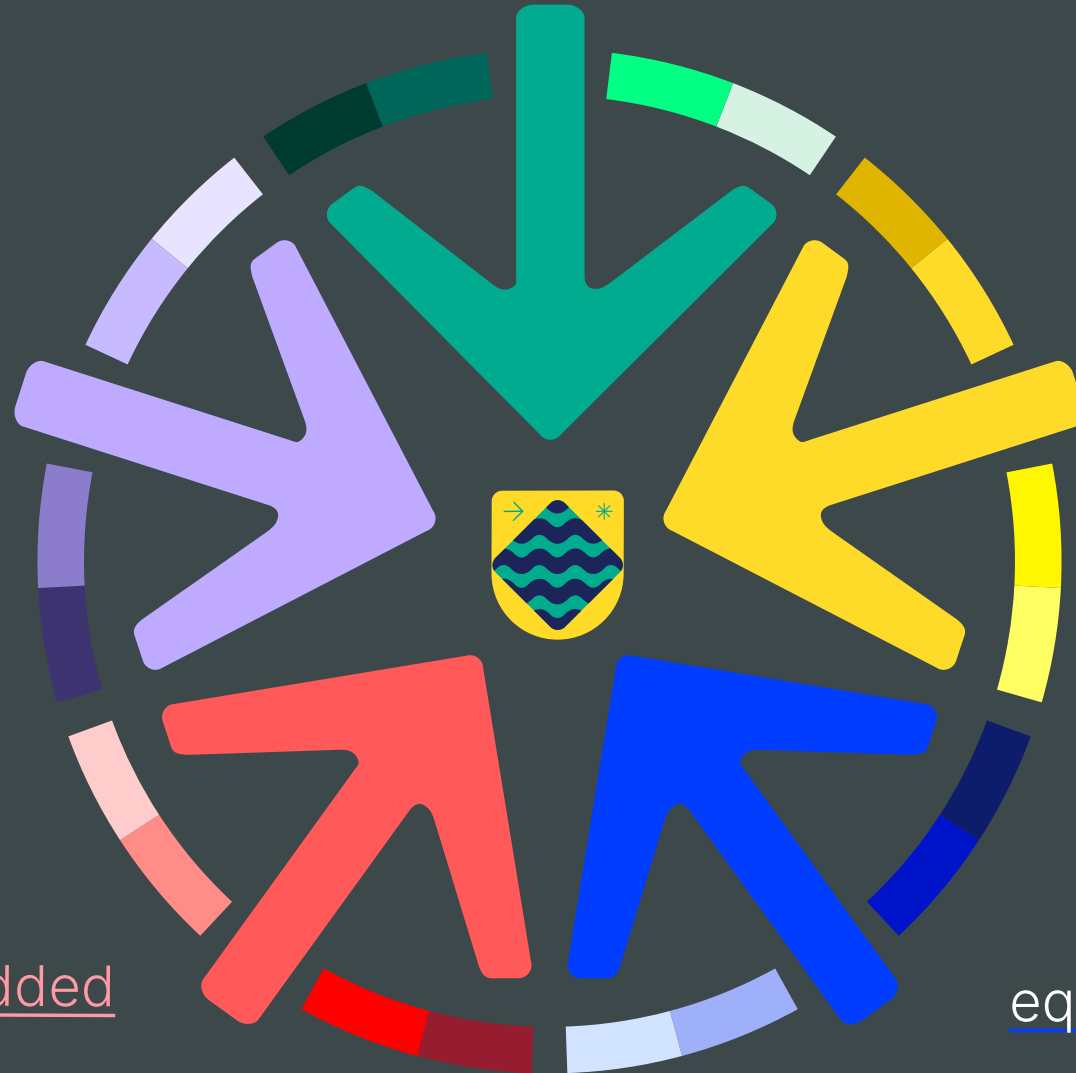
Pride in **Place**

travel
transformed

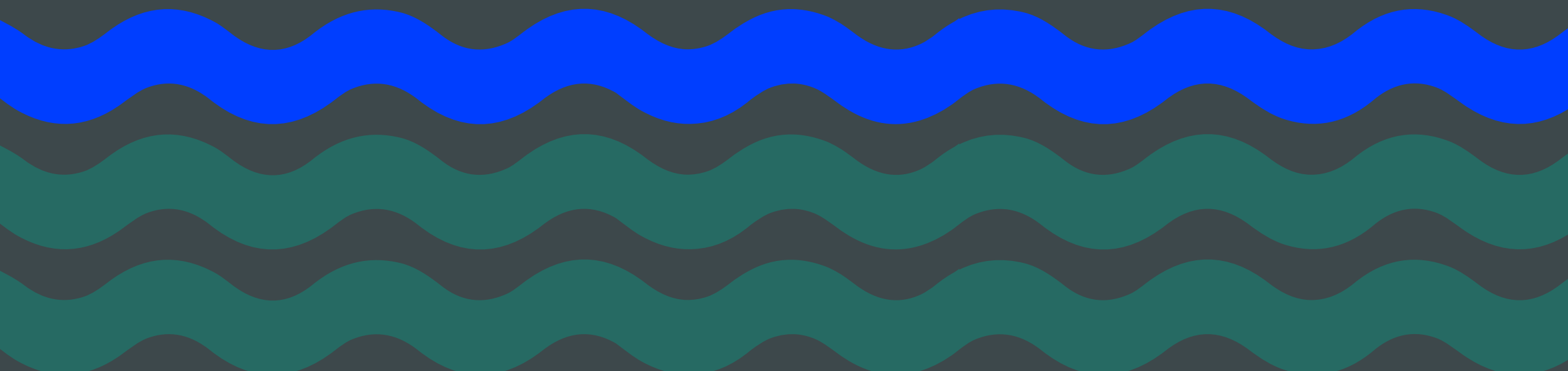
environmental
innovation

health embedded

equitable economy

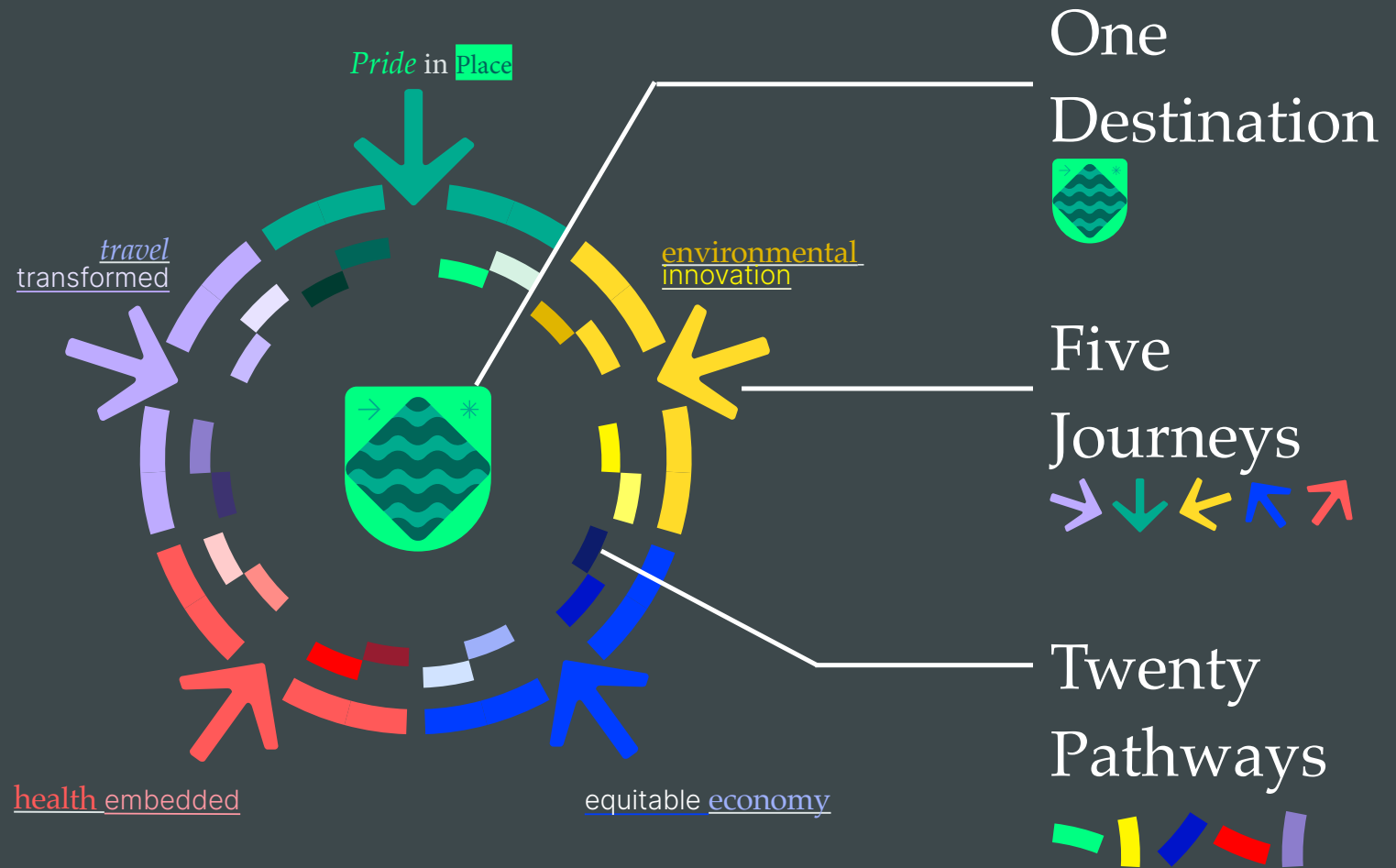


Feedback



Proposed Place Strategy Hierarchy

Does the *hierarchy*
of the Place Strategy
with One Destination,
5 Journeys and Twenty
Pathways provide a
clear logic?



Pathways

Reviewing each Pathway Statement we would like the following questions to guide your feedback.

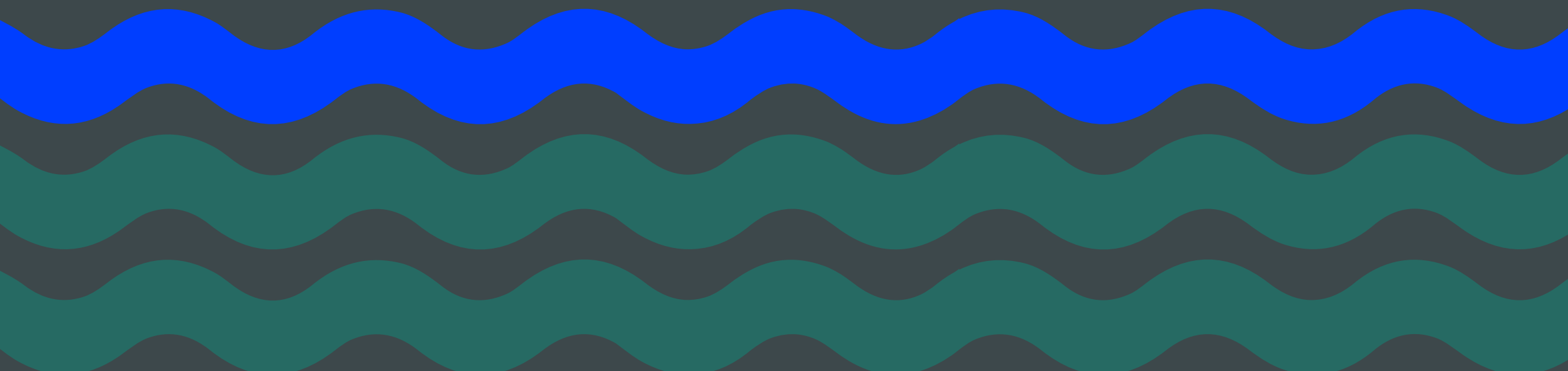
Do the pathway '*What if Statements*' describe a future we want to work towards in Huntingdonshire?

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

