Appendix 3

Huntingdonshire Futures

What is Huntingdonshire Futures?

Huntingdonshire Futures is a new Place Strategy that is intended to shape a shared vision for the future of Huntingdonshire for the next 30 years. It will articulate Huntingdonshire's aspirations and ambitions - taking into account its unique features, location, planned future growth, infrastructure requirements and technological advancements.

At the heart of Huntingdonshire Futures is understanding what is most important to residents, communities and stakeholders within our key towns and rural areas and across Huntingdonshire. This insight will enable the strategy to articulate our ambitions and aspirations for our place, people, economy, and the environment.

The current challenges

While Huntingdonshire is endowed with many assets which make it a special place, it also faces a number of challenges. We have heard and collected the key challenges outlined below, which will be essential to address to achieve our aspirations for Huntingdonshire.

People and Communities

1. Unequal access to social infrastructure, education and employment opportunities between areas
2. Isolation and loneliness affecting certain groups particularly in more rural areas
3. Not enough for young people to do
4. Lack of investment in voluntary sector and decreasing trends in volunteering activity
5. Poor collaboration between the public sector, businesses, educators, and residents

Place

1. No distinct identity for Huntingdonshire
2. High car dependency, bus services do not meet needs, particularly in rural areas and pedestrian and cycle networks are not always in place or joined up
3. Rural areas feel left behind
4. Growth of new housing is not matched by sufficient new and/ or improved infrastructure
5. House prices are rising and there is a lack of affordable housing, particularly for young people

Economy

1. The decline of the high street, particularly retail, leisure and evening economy in the market towns
2. Talent and knowledge drain to Cambridge, Peterborough and Bedfordshire, which attract skilled workforce through greater variety and higher paid jobs
3. Changing demographics including shrinking of the working age population and an increasingly ageing population
4. Rising building costs and land values putting pressure on the provision of employment land and space
5. Need for the right training opportunities to match the job market demand

Environment

1. There is a lot of talk about climate change but no action
2. New housing developments planned and delivered not ambitious enough in their environmental performance – including locations in flood risk areas, lack of renewable energy generation or electric vehicle charging
3. Environmentally friendly behaviours can be too expensive and there is a lack of investment and support
4. Huntingdonshire experiences the effects of climate change including flooding and heat waves
5. Increasing demand for water from population growth and agriculture sector, coupled with water scarcity especially in the dry months of summer

Huntingdonshire's Opportunities

People and Communities

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Big Ideas and Aspirations for the Future

People and Communities

What if nobody was lonely here?
What if we guaranteed an opportunity for everyone at every age and stage of peoples lives?
What if there was a way to harness young people's talent?

Big Ideas

- Make the District one of the top 10 places to live in the UK in the happiness index, offering an exceptional quality of life for its residents
- Set up flexible lifelong learning schemes for people of different ages and backgrounds to enable them to integrate into employment opportunities, by collaborating with the industries
- Support existing and new volunteering schemes by providing funding, grants and resources to fulfil their initiatives and encourage people to participate
- Establish better communication with the different communities, engage all groups, especially the most vulnerable, to establish trust and work together to define common priorities
- Encourage shared community responsibility for the upkeep of green and open spaces to foster a sense of ownership and social interaction

Place

What if organisations were incentivized to look after their own patch?
What if we made it easy to not use a car?
What if we build houses with character?

Big Ideas

- Extend the Ting Bus demand-responsive service to rural areas and improve the existing bus service including the Guided Busway to better connect villages and towns
- Establish car free days in the towns to encourage people to explore more sustainable travel options and unlock spaces for people without the dominance of the car
- Create more community and cultural events, particularly for young and older people
- Make all roads and pavements safer for pedestrians and cyclists by ensuring their high standard and reducing the speed limit for cars
- Encourage evenings out in the market towns by encouraging retail and leisure activities to take place later in the day including evening markets

Economy

What if our economy was a green economy?
What if we kept investment local?
What if we became the destination for slow tourism?

Big Ideas

- Make the District a pioneer in the transition to the circular economy where robust infrastructure and systems are in place to support it, drawing from its positioning within the Eastern Powerhouse
- Establish training and upskilling programmes as well as collaborations between businesses and local schools and colleges, in order to create responsive links between the local skill set and local jobs and tap into the diversity of the workforce
- Prioritise digital infrastructure improvements across the District for the best possible digital connectivity, including free public Wi-Fi in town and village centres
- Establish Time Banks where people can exchange their skills with hours as the currency and create reciprocity based work
- Promote the creation of collaborative and flexible spaces for working in the town and village centres

Environment

What if we produced all our energy within the district?
What if all the food we bought was grown fresh and local?
What if good things for the environment were cheaper?

Big Ideas

- Encourage rewilding and biodiversity in both public and private spaces and promote mass tree planting within towns and villages
- Roll out a comprehensive building stock retrofit programme, including insulation and smart water meters installation, to improve its environmental performance
- Ensure that all new development creates carbon neutral housing and the social and physical infrastructure cost Is factored into the price of development
- Roll out an education and behaviour change programme for both people and businesses to underline the urgency for a shift to more sustainable practices
- Grow and harvest reed mace to protect peat soils, store carbon and produce housing insultation