

# Statement of Community Involvement 2023

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# What is the Statement of Community Involvement?

## 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<sup>(1)</sup>. 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](#)<sup>(2)</sup>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](#)<sup>(3)</sup>
- 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.

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."

[Planning Portal](#), 2021

#### 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](#)<sup>(4)</sup>. 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:

<sup>4</sup> 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."<sup>(5)</sup>

- 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](#).

## 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.

# Involving the Community in the Production of Planning Documents

## 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<sup>(6)</sup>:
- 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<sup>(7)</sup>:
- 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](#)



## Involving the Community in the Production of Planning Documents

- 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.

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

- 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 be 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](mailto: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.

## Involving the Community in the Production of Planning Documents

- 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" <sup>(8)</sup> 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<sup>(9)</sup>. 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. <sup>(10)</sup>. 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.

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](#)

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

- 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**

<b>Stage 1: Pre-production and evidence gathering (Regulation 18)</b>
<p><b>Process and Requirements:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>The Council must:</b> Identify and consult on main issues that the document needs to address and consider alternative policy options.</p> <p><b>The Council may:</b> Consult and/or engage the community on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report</li> <li>● 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.</li> <li>● 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.</li> <li>● specific development plan options documents which could present policy and/or growth options to be included within a Development Plan Document.</li> <li>● a full draft Development Plan Document</li> </ul> <p>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 <a href="#">Annual Monitoring Report</a> and by visiting the Council's <a href="#">Planning webpages</a>.</p>
<p><b>How the Council must engage:</b> 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● specific consultation bodies,</li> <li>● general consultation bodies</li> <li>● residents or other persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area whom the local planning authority considers it appropriate</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 2: Pre-Submission (Regulations 19 &amp; 20)</b>
<p><b>Process and Requirements:</b> 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).</p>

## Involving the Community in the Production of Planning Documents

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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.

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

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:**

## Involving the Community in the Production of Planning Documents

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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 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
<p><b>Process and Requirements:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>The Council may:</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>How the Council must engage:</b> There is no legal requirement to consult or engage at this stage.</p> <p><b>How the Council may engage:</b> 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.</p>
Stage 2: Draft SPD (Regulation 13)
<p><b>Process and Requirements:</b> At this stage a final version of the SPD is produced alongside any evidence based documents to support the document as required through regulation.</p> <p><b>The Council may:</b> Publish additional documents that are not required through Regulation for consultation to support the SPD and provide additional context.</p>
<p><b>How the Council must engage:</b> 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the closing date for the consultation and where comments can be sent to</li> </ul>

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

- 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<sup>(11)</sup>

- 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](#).

<sup>11</sup> 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

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- 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.

## 16 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

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**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...	
<b>Getting started</b>	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	
<b>Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan</b>	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	
<b>Getting the Plan in place</b>	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		
<b>Delivering the Neighbourhood Plan</b>	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. <sup>(12)</sup>	

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 are 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<sup>(13)</sup>:
- **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, fascia 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<sup>(14)</sup>, 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 addressed 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

<sup>13</sup> 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

<sup>14</sup> [The Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development\) \(England\) Order 2015](#)

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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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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)</li> <li>• Applications subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA);</li> <li>• Work affecting listed buildings or conservation areas;</li> <li>• Applications affecting public rights of way, bridleways or byways.</li> </ul>	Press Notice  Site Notice  Neighbour Letters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All other developments</li> </ul>	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](mailto: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

## Involving the Community in the Planning Application Process

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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
  - 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<sup>(15)</sup>. Planning appeals are dealt with by the [Planning Inspectorate](#). You can lodge an appeal if<sup>(16)</sup>:
- 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.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> The [Planning Portal](#) provides further details on the types of appeals that can be lodged



## Involving the Community in the Planning Application Process

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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 confidentiality 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](mailto: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."<sup>(17)</sup> 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.

## 26 Brownfield Land Registers

- 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 <sup>(18)</sup>:
- 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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<sup>18</sup> 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.

## 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](#).

## 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<sup>(19)</sup>, 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 carry 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 addressed 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](#)

## 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.