

Local Development Framework

Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report

June 2005

Huntingdonshire
district council

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PART A INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this consultation

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 has introduced new types of plans for shaping and guiding development, and new procedures for preparing them. The **Local Development Framework** (LDF) will replace the Huntingdonshire Local Plan in setting out planning policies and proposals for the area.
- 1.2 The LDF will comprise a number of documents to be produced over a period of time. The **Core Strategy** is the first. It will set out the Council's overall approach to development and the key policies that it (and others) will use when considering individual planning proposals. It will cover the period to 2021, but will be reviewed on a regular basis. Allocations of land for specific purposes will be contained in a separate document, which will be prepared within the framework set by the Core Strategy. The **Local Development Scheme** provides a guide to all the documents that the Council intends to prepare, and can be viewed on our web site.
- 1.3 This preferred options consultation is a key stage in preparing the Core Strategy. The Council has considered the policy options that are available, and identified those that appear most suitable (following consultation with stakeholders and an initial 'sustainability appraisal' – see sections 3 and 4 below). Full public consultation on these preferred options is now taking place, before the Core Strategy is finalised and submitted to the Secretary of State.
- 1.4 In summary, the steps involved in producing the Core Strategy are:
- Initial consultation with key stakeholders
 - **Public consultation on preferred options**
 - Draft Core Strategy submitted to the Secretary of State (expected April 2006), followed by further public consultation on its content
 - Independent examination into the proposals (October 2006)
 - Receipt of Inspector's report (binding upon the Council) and adoption (April 2007)

2. What will the Core Strategy contain?

- 2.1 The Core Strategy will cover the period to 2021, and contain four elements:
- An overall **spatial vision** setting out how the district is expected to change over the plan period (this will be accompanied by a **key diagram**)
 - A set of **spatial objectives** outlining the main policy directions that need to be pursued in order to realise the vision
 - A series of **policies** for addressing the vision and objectives; these will provide a framework for informing and co-ordinating investment, and for making decisions about specific development proposals
 - A set of **indicators and targets** to provide a basis for monitoring the plan's implementation

- 2.2 This preferred options consultation sets out the potential content of each of these elements, except for the indicators and targets (proposals for which will be included in the draft Core Strategy itself). The spatial vision and objectives, together with the over-arching 'key principles' policies (see section 8), will provide an overall **spatial strategy** for the area.
- 2.3 At the time the draft Core Strategy is submitted to the Secretary of State, we will also publish a **Proposals Map**. This will show on an Ordnance Survey map base the precise extent of policies or proposals that affect specific areas. However, this Preferred Options document contains indicative maps illustrating the general areas that will be affected by the Core Strategy (see appendices 2-5).

3. Key issues and influences

- 3.1 The content of the Preferred Options Report reflects a number of important considerations:

National and strategic planning policies

- 3.2 The preferred policy approaches need to take into account national planning policies and guidance, and must also be in 'general conformity' with the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS14 for the East of England, currently in draft form). The sheets setting out each of the preferred approaches indicate the relevant national and regional policy sources that have been drawn upon, including any provisions of the existing Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia (which will be replaced by RSS14 once it is adopted).
- 3.3 RSS14 will also replace most aspects of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan, adopted in 2003. However, because that plan is relatively up-to-date its policies and proposals have been taken into account in preparing the preferred options, and the relevant policy links are indicated in Section 9. Regard has also been had to the planning policies of neighbouring authorities, particularly in relation to the continuing growth of Hampton, to the south of Peterborough.
- 3.4 Draft RSS14 proposes that Huntingdonshire accommodates an average of 560 dwellings per annum between 2001 and 2021, which is the same rate of development as that required by the Structure Plan (though extended for five years beyond the Structure Plan's end date of 2016). The RSS14 figures have yet to be finalised, but the spatial strategy outlined in this Preferred Options Report is designed to be a robust framework that can, if necessary, accommodate some variation around the draft RSS target.

Other plans and strategies

- 3.5 The Core Strategy's vision, objectives and policies will seek to address the spatial implications of a wide range of environmental, social and economic concerns, so that it provides an overall framework for managing the pattern of change in Huntingdonshire. This 'spatial planning' approach demands that a wide range of other plans and programmes are considered during its production. The most significant influences include:
- The **Huntingdonshire Community Strategy** (2004) – produced by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership, this sets out an overall policy framework for maintaining and improving the quality of life in the district. The Core Strategy will play a

key role in delivering those aspects of the Community Strategy that concern the development and use of land.

- The **Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2004-2011** (2003) – produced by the County Council and district councils, this provides a strategy and proposals for improving travel and accessibility.
- The **Housing Strategy for Huntingdonshire 2004-2007** (2003) – prepared by the District Council with inputs from a wide range of stakeholders, this identifies and addresses the district's housing priorities.
- The **Local Economy Strategy** for Huntingdonshire 2002-2007 (2002) – the District Council's objectives and priorities for maintaining sustainable economic growth in the area.
- A series of **visions, action plans** and **urban design frameworks** for Huntingdonshire's market towns which contain proposals for the redevelopment and enhancement of selected areas. These have been produced by the District Council in consultation with local communities (or, in Ramsey, by the coalition of local organisations that form the Ramsey Area Partnership).
- The **50 Year Wildlife Vision** for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (2002) – produced by the County's Biodiversity Partnership, this builds upon a series of Biodiversity Action Plans to articulate a strategic framework for habitat creation and enhancement.

3.6 These strategies have been a particular influence in shaping the spatial vision and objectives proposed in sections 7 and 8, as well as helping to steer the specific policy approaches contained in section 9. The sheets setting out those preferred policies indicate relevant links with the Community Strategy, as well as referring to any wider sources of 'best practice' advice that have been drawn upon.

Analysis of environmental, social and economic issues

3.7 In addition to the research that underpins these other documents, the Core Strategy will be informed by a range of studies being produced by the District Council to support the Local Development Framework. Those of most relevance to the Core Strategy are listed below, and the completed studies can be viewed on the Council's web site:

- Urban Capacity Study (2003)
- Housing Needs Survey (2003)
- New Homes Survey (2003)
- Landscape & Townscape Assessment (2003)
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2004)
- Huntingdonshire Retail Study (2005)
- Local Economy Study (in preparation)

3.8 The Scoping Report which has prepared as a basis for the sustainability appraisal (see section 4) draws together the main findings of this and other relevant research to provide an overall analysis of environmental, social and economic conditions in the district. On this basis it identifies key spatial issues that the Local Development Framework needs to address, and potential policy responses. Those findings have been an important influence

on the proposed content of the Core Strategy, and should be read alongside this document.

- 3.9 A particular role that the Core Strategy will play is that of providing a 'settlement hierarchy' for managing the scale of development in different locations. A background paper which provides a detailed explanation of the basis for the proposed hierarchy (drawing upon relevant research and strategic guidance) has been published alongside this Preferred Options Report.

Public and key stakeholder involvement

- 3.10 The views of local people and organisations have already had a significant bearing upon the proposed content of the Core Strategy. In mid-2003 the Council invited views on a range of issues and options under the banner 'Huntingdonshire twenty16'. A booklet was distributed to homes and businesses throughout the area, and this was supported by a number of seminars and presentations. This exercise generated a wealth of information which helped to shape the initial development of the spatial vision, objectives and policies. A full description and analysis of the twenty16 consultation is available separately¹.
- 3.11 At the start of this year a range of key groups and organisations² was invited to comment in more detail on the policy approaches that might be included in the Core Strategy (including different options where reasonable alternatives were considered to exist). This consultation phase was supported by the findings of an Initial Sustainability Appraisal (see section 4), and helped to refine the proposals contained in this Preferred Options Report. The consultation material and a summary of the responses is available on our web site.

4. The role of sustainability appraisal

- 4.1 One other key influence on the content of the Preferred Options Report has been the process of **sustainability appraisal**. This is a systematic process undertaken during plan production, the purpose of which is to assess the extent to which emerging policies and proposals will help to achieve relevant environmental, social and economic objectives.
- 4.2 A **Scoping Report** was produced as the first step in this process; this identifies relevant issues that need to be addressed and appropriate criteria for appraising policies. It also contains a full explanation of the appraisal process.
- 4.3 Using the baseline information and appraisal framework contained in the scoping report, consultants carried out an '**Initial Sustainability Appraisal**' of the policy options that had been identified by the Council. The results of this initial appraisal were made available to the groups and organisations who were consulted at the start of this year. As well as informing that consultation process, the findings were used by the Council in determining its preferred options and refining the content of individual policy approaches.

¹ *Twenty16: Outcome of the Key Issues Exercise* (HDC, 2004)

² These included statutory agencies and service providers; the County, Town and Parish Councils (for whom special seminars were arranged); neighbouring authorities; and groups representing local business, community and environmental interests.

4.4 Subsequently, the consultants have produced a draft **Final Appraisal Report** to examine the sustainability of the Council's preferred options, and which is being published alongside this Preferred Options Report to inform the consultation process. It is being issued along with an updated version of the Scoping Report, as the two should be read together³.

5. How to respond

5.1 Although the preferred options are the result of a significant amount of research, assessment and consultation, they do not represent the Council's final view on what the Core Strategy will contain. Before that position is reached, there is now an important period during which anyone may comment on the proposed content of the Core Strategy. **We are keen to obtain your views now, to help inform our policy choices before they are finalised.**

5.2 The rest of this report is divided into three sections. Section 6 contains the proposed **spatial vision**, which is supported by a draft **key diagram** illustrating the main geographical implications of the overall strategy. Section 7 lists the proposed **spatial objectives**, while the suggested **policy approaches** are set out in Section 8.

5.3 The appendices contain details of the proposed parking standards and maps indicating the proposed extent of settlement boundaries, areas of strategic greenspace enhancement, established industrial areas and town centres (including the primary shopping areas and primary frontages).

5.4 You can respond to this consultation electronically (using the online version of this document) or use the forms that have been distributed with the printed report. You may wish to comment on:

- The proposed content of the spatial vision
- The range and nature of the suggested spatial objectives
- The range of options identified for each policy area (have we identified all reasonable alternatives in the light of prevailing national and strategic policies?)
- Whether the policy identified as our 'preferred approach' is the one that you would support, or whether you would prefer one of the alternatives
- The suggested content of the policy approach
- The content of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and the findings of the draft Final Appraisal Report (both of which are available to view and comment on via our web site, and for which separate comment forms have been produced)

5.5 Please send any comments to us by **XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX 2005**.

³ When the draft Core Strategy is submitted to the Secretary of State, the Scoping Report and Final Appraisal Report will together satisfy the requirement for a 'Sustainability Appraisal Report' (as required by Section 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004), and for an 'Environmental Report' (as required by European Directive 2001/42/EC).

PART B PROPOSED STRATEGY

6. Spatial vision and key diagram

6.1 The proposed spatial vision draws upon and assimilates policies and proposals from the wide range of plans and strategies described in Section 3 of this report, together with the research and consultation that has been carried out. The vision is central to delivering the land-use aspects of the Community Strategy, and was considered in draft form by the Board of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership (which is responsible for preparing the Community Strategy) in April this year.

6.2 The proposed vision is set out in the following paragraphs:

Introduction

6.3 Huntingdonshire will continue to provide a good quality of life as a place which offers:

- Continued economic success;
- Opportunities for everyone to gain access to suitable homes, jobs and services; and
- An attractive environment which is conserved and enhanced.

6.4 To achieve this, and to make the most of the opportunities that come from growth, we will need to:

- Accommodate development in a sustainable manner;
- Ensure that the nature of development meets local needs;
- Secure developments that respond to the distinctive character of Huntingdonshire's towns, villages and countryside; and
- Achieve major improvements in infrastructure and community facilities

Development pattern

6.5 Much of the housing and business development needed in Huntingdonshire will be accommodated in and around Huntingdon and St Neots (the largest centres in the district and key drivers of the local economy). This will be supported by further regeneration and enhancement of their town centres, including major improvements to retail and leisure facilities.

6.6 Maximum use will be made of previously-developed land in these locations, but some greenfield releases may be required at the edge of Huntingdon, St Neots or adjoining settlements identified as 'key centres' (on the basis of their size and access to facilities). The availability of adequate physical and social infrastructure to support growth will be a key consideration in determining the location and timing of development, as will the potential impact upon the character of each settlement and its surrounding landscape.

6.7 Development at the other market towns of St Ives and Ramsey will be on a lesser scale. In St Ives a priority will be the sympathetic redevelopment of underutilised sites within and adjoining the town centre to strengthen its appeal for shopping, leisure and tourism, and provide opportunities for small-scale residential development. In Ramsey there will be a

particular focus on improving the local economy and community facilities, through the work of the Ramsey Area Partnership.

- 6.8 In rural areas most development will occur in a number of identified key centres (although these will absorb only a limited proportion of the overall growth, as the majority will be directed to the market towns). Elsewhere the emphasis will be on facilitating very limited growth in villages, in a manner that helps to meet local needs. In the north of the district, the growth of Peterborough is expected to be contained within its own boundaries, with physical separation maintained between the city and those Huntingdonshire villages that look towards it for services and facilities.
- 6.9 Alconbury airbase will be redeveloped as a strategic employment site, but opportunities will be sought to secure a range of commercial uses that are of maximum benefit to the local economy.

Transport and accessibility

- 6.10 There will be significant enhancement of transport links between Cambridge and the market towns that surround it. High quality public transport services will be developed in the Cambridge-Huntingdon corridor and along the A428 between Cambridge and St Neots. These measures will be complemented by major road improvements in these corridors, including a new route for the A14 between Ellington and Fen Drayton. This will pass to the south of Brampton and Godmanchester, improving traffic flows and road safety on this key strategic route. Removal of the railway viaduct at Huntingdon as part of the scheme will also enable improved local road access to Huntingdon town centre.
- 6.11 Within each market town packages of integrated highway, public transport, cycling and walking improvements will be implemented through a programme of market town transport strategies. A park & ride site will be developed at St Ives (in association with the proposed guided bus route), which may be followed by a second site serving Huntingdon and Godmanchester. At Yaxley, traffic on the A15 will be relieved through construction of a western peripheral road at Hampton, joining the A15 south of Yaxley with the Fletton Parkway in the north.
- 6.12 Efforts will be made to improve access from villages to the market towns and Peterborough, with better public and community transport services and further development of local and long-distance cycle routes. At the same time, significant improvements in the accessibility of services will be made possible through the increased availability and use of information technology (such as broadband internet access).

Environment

- 6.13 New developments will be designed to reflect the character of their surroundings, but will not necessarily mimic the past: high quality contemporary designs that respect their site and wider setting will be encouraged. Higher standards of construction will be achieved, especially in relation to the environmental performance of buildings.
- 6.14 The Council will work with owners, occupiers and other agencies to conserve the wealth of historic sites and buildings in Huntingdonshire. These assets will play a key role in the

regeneration and enhancement of our town centres (for example, through the restoration and re-use of Huntingdon Town Hall and St Ives Corn Exchange).

- 6.15 Strategic projects to improve habitats, landscape quality and recreation opportunities will be implemented in several areas. As well as the Great Fen and Needingworth Quarry schemes, these will include enhancement of the wider Ouse Valley landscape and a major green park providing a buffer between Hampton and communities in neighbouring parts of Huntingdonshire. A particular focus within the Ouse Valley will be improvements to Huntingdon riverside and the 'green corridor' running through the centre of St Neots, from the A428 in the south to Little Paxton in the north.
- 6.16 As part of the continuing regeneration of the Oxmoor area of Huntingdon, a comprehensive package of greenspace improvements will be implemented, including a major new park at Coneygear.
- 6.17 Huntingdonshire's waterways will remain a key focus for leisure and tourism, and this role will be further enhanced through progressive development of the 'Fens Waterways Link' – a circular network of navigable waterways through the Fens, including the option of a new connection between Chatteris and Earith.

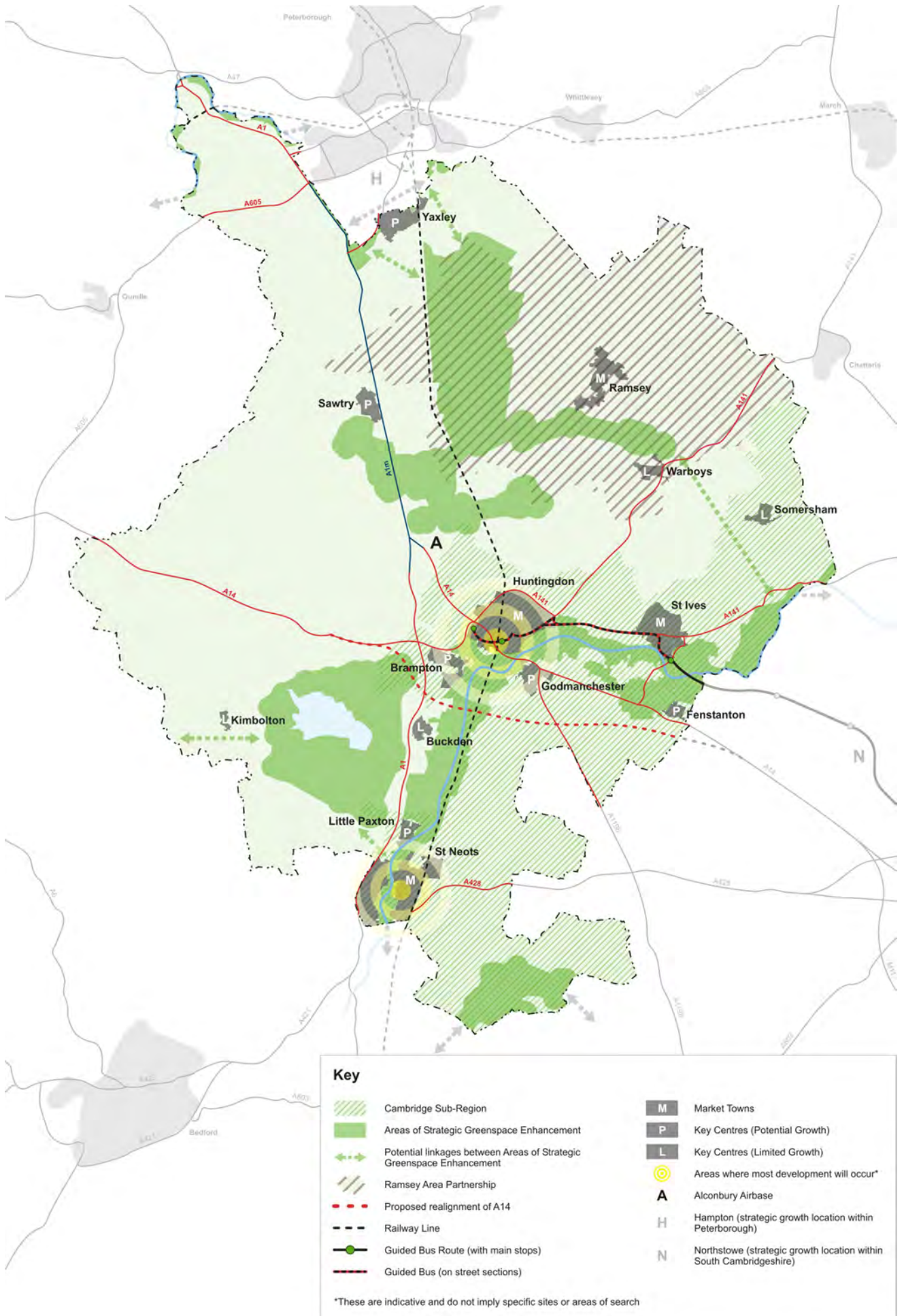
Other measures

- 6.18 In addition to these specific measures, the quality of life across the whole district will be enhanced through a range of initiatives promoted or supported by the District Council and its partners. Among these will be: an increased provision of affordable housing; enhanced education, health care and leisure facilities; skills improvement and increased access to business support; further measures to reduce crime and the fear of crime; and a programme of local environmental and road safety improvements.
- 6.19 The specific requirements of children, young people, the elderly, minority groups and those with special needs will receive special attention in taking forward this vision and planning specific improvements. So too will the particular needs of Huntingdonshire's rural communities, given the particular challenges they face in gaining access to suitable homes, jobs and services.

Key diagram

- 6.20 The diagram overleaf illustrates key elements of the proposed spatial strategy (as expressed in the vision, objectives and policy approaches). At the time the Core Strategy is submitted to the Secretary of State, this be accompanied by the detailed Proposals Map showing the geographical extent of policies on an Ordnance Survey base.

Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report



7. Spatial objectives

7.1 Fourteen spatial objectives are proposed in order to summarise the key policy directions that the Core Strategy will pursue, and to help provide a framework for developing appropriate indicators and targets for monitoring purposes. The justification for the objectives lies in the issues and influences reviewed in Section 3 of this Preferred Options Report, together with the priorities identified in the Spatial Vision:

- (1) To maintain and enhance Huntingdonshire's characteristic landscapes, habitats and species
- (2) To conserve and enhance the special character and separate identities of Huntingdonshire's villages and market towns
- (3) To ensure that the design of new development integrates effectively with its setting and promotes local distinctiveness
- (4) To promote developments that conserve natural resources, minimise greenhouse gas emissions and help to reduce waste
- (5) To secure developments which are accessible to all potential users, and which minimise risks to health as a result of crime (or the fear of crime), flooding or pollution
- (6) To enable required housing growth to be accommodated in locations which limit the need to travel, while also catering for local housing needs
- (7) To ensure that the type of dwellings built is suited to the requirements of the local population, and that an appropriate proportion of units is 'affordable' to those in need
- (8) To enable the specialist housing needs of particular groups to be met in appropriate locations
- (9) To facilitate business development in sectors that have potential to meet local employment needs and limit out-commuting
- (10) To enable business development in rural areas, in locations and on a scale which helps to provide local jobs, limits commuting and avoids adverse environmental impacts
- (11) To maintain and enhance the availability of key services and facilities in villages
- (12) To strengthen the vitality and viability of Huntingdonshire's town centres as places for shopping and leisure
- (13) To increase opportunities for pursuing a healthy lifestyle, by maintaining and enhancing recreation opportunities and encouraging walking and cycling
- (14) To provide a framework for securing adequate land and infrastructure to support business and community needs

8. Preferred policy approaches

8.1 The Council's preferred policy approaches are grouped by subject area, reflecting likely chapter headings in the Core Strategy:

- Key Principles
- Greenspace
- Built Environment
- Housing
- Economy & Tourism
- Transport & Utilities

8.2 Each policy approach is detailed on a separate sheet, with each sheet arranged as follows:

- The **policy area** indicates the general issue to be addressed.
- The **preferred approach** suggests how the issue might be dealt with most appropriately by a policy or policies.
- The **policy sources** indicate links to relevant higher-level guidance, best practice material⁴, the Council's Community Strategy and the existing Huntingdonshire Local Plan (where relevant). It should be noted that a number of policies in the Local Plan are now out of date, so in many cases the policy options being suggested are different from those in the existing plan.
- The **reason for policy approach** sets out the justification for the approach that is being proposed.
- The **alternative approaches** are other options that could reasonably be pursued in dealing with the policy area, but which have not been selected as the Council's preferred approach. In some cases no reasonable alternatives have been identified, usually because the general approach to be followed is set out in national or strategic guidance.

⁴ In addition to the sources of best practice material listed for each policy area, two documents were drawn upon as appropriate throughout the process of identifying policy options. These are:

Policies for Spatial Plans: Consultation Draft (Planning Officers' Society, 2004)

Conservation Issues in Local Plans (Countryside Commission, English Heritage & English Nature, 1996)

KEY PRINCIPLES

Policy area

P1: Sustainable Development

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will:

- Indicate that all development proposals should contribute to the pursuit of sustainable development.
- Set out criteria that will be used to assess a proposal's contribution to this objective, including:
 - making efficient use of land and existing infrastructure
 - minimising the use of non-renewable energy sources and construction materials
 - limiting water consumption, and having no adverse impact on water resources and flood risk
 - minimising greenhouse gas emissions and other forms of pollution (including air, water, soil, noise, vibration and light)
 - encouraging waste reduction and recycling
 - maintaining and enhancing the range and vitality of characteristic habitats and species
 - conserving the diversity and distinctiveness of Huntingdonshire's towns, villages and landscapes
 - conserving buildings, sites and areas of architectural or historic importance
 - creating places that are attractive, appropriate to their surroundings, adaptable, and which are accessible and safe to use for all sections of the community
 - contributing to the social and economic well-being of the local population (e.g. through enhanced access to housing, employment, service and leisure opportunities, and improving public health)
 - limiting the need to travel, and increasing opportunities to make necessary journeys by foot, cycle or public transport

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS1
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG 6 (policies 1, 3); draft RSS14 (policy SS1)
Structure Plan policies	P1/1, P1/2, P1/3, P8/1
Existing LP policies	
Community Strategy	Long-term vision of protecting and improving the environment, promoting opportunity for all and supporting continued economic success
Best practice guidance	<i>Planning for Sustainable Development</i> (DETR, 1998) <i>The Planning Response to Climate Change</i> (ODPM, 2004)
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

Promoting 'sustainable development' is central to what the planning system seeks to achieve: to improve the quality of life, both now and in the future, by managing the way that land is used. It is now a legal requirement that plans be produced with this overarching objective in mind. Sustainable development is defined most commonly as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (*World Commission on Environment & Development, 1987*).

The policy approach signals the importance of this objective for all developments, and sets out the key criteria that will be used to assess proposals against it.

Alternative approaches considered

None. The promotion of sustainable development is required by national and strategic guidance, and criteria are necessary to indicate how this objective will be interpreted in practice.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Policy area
P2 Settlement Hierarchy

Preferred approach
<p>Policies in the plan will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a settlement hierarchy for use in determining the scale of development appropriate in different locations • Identify St Neots, Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey as 'Market Towns' • Identify Yaxley, Godmanchester, Sawtry, Brampton, Little Paxton and Fenstanton as 'Key Centres' (Potential Growth) • Identify Somersham, Warboys, Buckden and Kimbolton as 'Key Centres' (Limited Growth). • List other villages as 'Smaller Settlements' • Indicate that the majority of new development will be directed to the Market Towns (in particular Huntingdon and St Neots) and the Key Centres (Potential Growth)

Policy source(s)	
PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG3; PPS7
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policies 4, 6, 22, 23); draft RSS14 (policies SS1, SS2, SS3, SS9, CSR1, GPSR1)
Structure Plan policies	P1/1, P2/2, P5/5, P9/4, P10/3
Existing LP policies	STR1, STR3, STR4, STR5, STR6
Community Strategy	Specific action of developing policies to promote sustainable communities
Best practice guidance	<i>Reducing Transport Emissions Through Planning</i> (DoE / DoT, 1993) <i>PPG13: A Guide to Better Practice</i> (DoE / DoT, 1995) <i>Sustainable Settlements</i> (University of West of England / LGMB, 1995) <i>Planning for Sustainable Development</i> (DETR, 1998)
Other sources	<i>Are Villages Sustainable?</i> (Countryside Agency, 2001)

Reason for preferred approach	
<p>The settlement hierarchy provides a framework for managing the scale of development in different locations. It steers most new development towards those larger places that offer the best access to services and facilities (both now and for the foreseeable future). This can help reduce the need to travel, as well as making good use of existing infrastructure and previously-developed land in urban areas.</p> <p>The proposed hierarchy reflects a combination of strategic guidance and local circumstances. National and regional policies give priority to urban areas for accommodating growth; an accompanying paper will explain how this approach has been interpreted for Huntingdonshire, but in summary the categories in the hierarchy reflect the following characteristics:</p>	
Market Towns:	The main towns in the district, offering a wide range of shops and services, and a variety of employment opportunities (Huntingdon and St Neots being the strongest centres in this respect)
Key Centres (Potential Growth):	Large settlements with a reasonable range of shops and services, employment opportunities and good access by foot, cycle or public transport to a city or market town

Key Centres (Limited Growth):	Large settlements with a reasonable range of shops and services (and in some cases employment opportunities), and which provide facilities for nearby villages
Smaller Settlements:	Villages which are in general smaller than the Key Centres, and with limited (or no) services and facilities (listed in Appendix 1)

Alternative approaches considered

The hierarchy could be changed in various ways to facilitate a wider distribution of growth: by designating a greater number of places as 'Key Settlements' (whether 'Potential Growth' or 'Limited Growth'); by introducing an intermediate tier of settlements between Key Centres (Limited Growth) and Smaller Settlements; or by indicating that the majority of new development will be directed to all the key centres (effectively, abandoning the distinction between those identified as 'Potential Growth' and 'Limited Growth'). However, the effect of all such changes would be to weaken the link between additional growth and ease of access to shops, services and employment opportunities. This would be contrary to the principle of limiting the need to travel and promoting a more sustainable form of development. There is no evidence that a wider distribution of growth would have any significant impact on retaining or enhancing village facilities (due to the many other influences on commercial decisions, growth would need to occur on a large scale at particular villages to have much effect).

Alternatively, the settlement hierarchy could be based on the physical capacity of different settlements to accommodate growth (taking into account their form, character and land availability), rather than access to services and facilities. However, this would not ensure that national and strategic policies to reduce the need to travel are being addressed most effectively. There are, in any case, policies elsewhere in this DPD to conserve and enhance the character of places, while the settlement hierarchy's emphasis on urban areas will help to safeguard the character of Huntingdonshire's villages (many of which have experienced considerable growth during recent years).

KEY PRINCIPLES

Policy area

P3 Development in the Countryside

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will:

- Indicate that outside the defined limits of the Market Towns and Key Centres (Potential & Limited Growth), and outside the existing built-up framework of the Smaller Settlements, development will be restricted to the following categories:
 - that which is essential to the efficient operation of agriculture, horticulture or forestry, or required for the purposes of outdoor recreation, mineral extraction, waste disposal, infrastructure provision or national defence
 - the alteration, replacement or change of use of existing buildings in accordance with other policies in the plan
 - limited and specific forms of housing or business development, as provided for in the relevant chapters of the plan
 - land allocated for particular purposes in other Development Plan Documents

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS7
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 12)
Structure Plan policies	P1/2
Existing LP policies	En17
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include a high quality built and natural environment
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

It is government policy that development in the countryside should be strictly controlled, in order to conserve its character and natural resources. This policy approach summarises the limited circumstances in which development outside settlements will be allowed. The distinction between settlements and the countryside will be drawn in two ways:

- In the case of the Market Towns and Key Centres, where most development is expected to take place, by drawing 'settlement boundaries' around the existing built-up areas. This will give a clear delineation between urban areas and the countryside. **Maps indicating the proposed boundaries are contained in Appendix 2.**
- In Smaller Settlements, where only limited forms of development will be permitted, policies will refer to the 'built-up framework'; criteria in the supporting text will indicate that this excludes buildings that are clearly detached from the main body of the settlement, and gardens and other undeveloped land within the curtilage of buildings at the edge of the settlement.

Alternative approaches considered

None considered in relation to restricting development in the countryside, as this is a cornerstone of national and strategic policies.

Defined boundaries for smaller settlements were considered. However, boundaries can be misinterpreted as implying that development within them is, in principle, acceptable. Such an interpretation would be incompatible with the policy approach of strict limitation on development away from the Market Towns and Key Centres. In addition, the limited forms of development that will be permissible within Smaller Settlements (such as residential infilling) can be guided appropriately by clear criteria-based policies. Settlement boundaries for Market Towns and Key Centres are considered more appropriate given the wider range of development that may suitably be located there, and the fact that these places will be the focus of development activity.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Policy area

P4 Mixed development

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Development proposals should incorporate a compatible mix of uses, where opportunities exist to foster more sustainable communities
- Particular opportunities for securing mixed development in Huntingdonshire include:
 - the integration of appropriate community facilities and employment opportunities into the development of new neighbourhoods
 - the introduction of more residential accommodation into town centres (including flats over shops)
 - the incorporation of live/work units within residential developments

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS1; PPG3; PPS6; PPS7; PPG13
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 3); draft RSS14 (policy SS16)
Structure Plan policies	P1/3
Existing LP policies	
Community Strategy	
Best practice guidance	<i>Planning for Sustainable Development</i> (DETR, 1998) <i>Urban Design Compendium</i> (English Partnerships / Housing Corporation, 2000) <i>Mixed-Use Development</i> (DTLR, 2002) <i>Shaping Neighbourhoods</i> (Barton, Grant & Guise, 2003)
Other sources	<i>Living at Work</i> (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2000)

Reason for preferred approach

A mix of uses within an area can help to create diverse and interesting places, reduce the need to travel between home, work, and services, and cut the risk of crime (by ensuring that the area is populated at all times of the day). It can be achieved in various ways: by incorporating an appropriate mix of uses in the development of large sites, through the incremental redevelopment of small sites in ways which increase diversity, and by including a mix of compatible uses within individual buildings where suitable opportunities arise (such as utilising vacant space above retail units).

This policy approach indicates the importance of pursuing mixed development where possible, and highlights particular opportunities that exist within Huntingdonshire.

Live/work units are a particular form of mixed use development which combine residential and business uses in one property. They are attractive to people establishing or seeking to expand a business while working from home, and may be appropriate in a variety of locations: for example, as an element within large new residential and mixed-use developments, or within established mixed-use areas such as town centres.

Alternative approaches considered

None. The promotion of a mix of uses is required by national guidance.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Policy area	
P5	Flood Risk

Preferred approach	
<p>Policies in the plan will indicate that development should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not take place in areas at risk from flooding, unless suitable flood protection measures can be agreed and implemented • Not increase the risk of flooding to properties elsewhere (e.g. through a net increase in surface water run-off, or a reduction in the capacity of flood water storage areas) • Make use of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) to manage surface water run-off, where technically feasible • Be informed by a flood risk assessment, unless the site lies within an area where there is little or no risk of flooding (i.e. the annual probability of flooding is less than 0.1%, or 1 in 1,000 years) 	

Policy source(s)	
PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG25
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 44); draft RSS14 (policy SS14)
Structure Plan policies	P1/2, P6/3
Existing LP policies	CS9
Community Strategy	Priority Action to reduce the risk and/or impact of flooding
Best practice guidance	<i>The Planning Response to Climate Change</i> (ODPM, 1994)
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach	
<p>Flooding is an important issue facing the district. Parts of some towns and villages have suffered from serious flooding during recent years, and episodes of heavy rain are forecast to increase as a result of climate change. The damage caused by floods is costly, disruptive and distressing for those affected, so it is essential that new development does not add to the risk of flooding that already exists.</p> <p>While development in areas at some risk of flooding may sometimes be unavoidable (large parts of all the major towns in the district are within such areas), the policy approach requires mitigation measures in such circumstances so that there is no net increase in risk. The use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems to manage surface water flows can be an important tool in minimising flood risk. SUDS can also assist pollution control (through improved filtration) and habitat creation within new developments. In view of these benefits SUDS should be employed where ground conditions permit.</p>	

Alternative approaches considered	
None. This approach is required by national and strategic guidance.	

KEY PRINCIPLES

Policy area

P6 Infrastructure requirements

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Development proposals should contribute towards the cost of providing infrastructure, and of meeting social and environmental requirements, where this is necessary to make a scheme acceptable in planning terms.
- The nature and scale of any planning obligations sought for this purpose will be related to the form of development, its potential impact upon the surrounding area and the need for contributions towards affordable housing requirements.
- Contributions may be necessary for some or all of the following:
 - education
 - health and social care
 - open space and recreation
 - transport infrastructure including footpaths, cycleways, highways and public transport
 - other community facilities (including meeting halls, youth activities, library services, cultural facilities and places of worship)
 - environmental improvements
 - drainage / flood prevention
 - waste recycling facilities
 - affordable and key worker housing
- Contributions may also be required to meet the running costs of services and facilities provided through an obligation, where such costs cannot be met from the public purse in the short-term.
- The appropriate range and level of contributions will be assessed in a comprehensive manner, taking into account strategic infrastructure requirements and using standard charges where appropriate. Standards and formulae for calculating contributions will be set out in separate Development Plan Documents.

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	Circular 1/97; Draft Revised Circular on Planning Obligations (2004)
RPG6 / draft RSS14	Draft RSS14 (policies IMP2 & CSR5)
Structure Plan policies	P6/1; P9/8
Existing LP policies	OB1, OB2
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include improved and sustainable infrastructure for communities.
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

Development can place additional demands upon physical infrastructure and social facilities, as well as having impacts upon the environment. In many cases planning obligations will be required, so that provision is made for the necessary improvements to services and facilities, or to secure compensatory provision for any loss or damage created (e.g. a loss of open space). Obligations may also be necessary for wider planning objectives to be secured – in particular, the provision of affordable and key worker housing where this is justified.

This policy approach highlights the general principle that obligations will be required where necessary in planning terms, and indicates the broad range of matters that may need to be addressed. The detailed framework for calculating and negotiating obligations will be set out in separate Development Plan Documents, which will be updated on a regular basis.

Huntingdonshire forms part of a wider growth area, and some of the items for which contributions will be required will be strategic in nature (such as strategic open space). The formulae will allow for contributions from individual developments to be pooled where appropriate, but in all such cases the nature and scale of contributions sought will be related to the size of scheme and the extent to which it places additional demands upon the area.

Alternative approaches considered

None. Existing national guidance (Circular 1/97) requires development plans to set out policies indicating the circumstances in which planning obligations may be sought. Emerging guidance (in the draft revised Circular) reiterates the need for appropriate policies in Development Plan Documents, and indicates that formulae and standard charges may be used where appropriate.

GREENSPACE

Policy area

G1 Open space and recreational land

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that development proposals should not entail the whole or partial loss of open space within settlements, or of outdoor recreation facilities or allotments, unless all of the following criteria are satisfied:

- There would be no harm to spaces which:
 - contribute to the distinctive form and character of a settlement
 - create focal points within the built-up framework
 - provide the setting for important buildings or monuments
 - allow views into or out of a settlement
 - form part of a 'green corridor' of value for wildlife or recreation
- The loss would not result in (or worsen) a shortfall of land used for informal or formal recreation, when assessed against the standards set out in the Local Development Framework
- Any replacement facility (or enhancement of the remainder of the existing site) provides a net benefit to the community in terms of the quality, availability and accessibility of open space or recreational opportunities

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG17
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 37); draft RSS14 (policy C5)
Structure Plan policies	P4/3
Existing LP policies	En14, En15, En16, R17
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include a high quality built and natural environment, good cultural and leisure opportunities and a healthy population
Best practice guidance	<i>Green Spaces, Better Places</i> (DTLR, 2002) <i>Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17</i> (ODPM, 2002)
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

Many open spaces within Huntingdonshire's towns and villages make a significant contribution to their character and attractiveness. For the purpose of this policy approach 'open space' within settlements includes any undeveloped land such as parks, village greens, play areas, sports pitches, undeveloped plots, semi-natural areas and private gardens. It is important to prevent their loss where this would harm the visual quality of a settlement.

Equally, many such spaces play a vital role in providing opportunities for formal or informal recreation, as do those parks, sports pitches and allotments located outside the built-up areas. The policy approach also safeguards all such sites of recreational value, unless there would be no shortfall of recreation land when assessed against the Council's standards, any replacement facility provides net benefits to the community, and there would be no visual harm as a result of development.

Alternative approaches considered

The approach taken to safeguarding land of recreational value is required by national and strategic guidance. In terms of protecting visually important open space within settlements, individual spaces could be identified and designated to give certainty about the areas covered by the policy approach. However, it would be difficult to do this in a sufficiently exhaustive and consistent manner across the whole district, given Huntingdonshire's size and the variety of spaces involved. As a result, spaces that 'missed' being designated would come under inappropriate pressure for development. The use of a criteria-based approach avoids this risk, and means that the character of spaces will need to be given full and careful consideration if their development is proposed.

GREENSPACE

Policy area

G2 Landscape Character

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will:

- Indicate that development proposals within or adjoining the countryside should respect and respond appropriately to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape
- Set out criteria that will be used to assess a proposal's contribution to this objective, including:
 - avoiding the introduction of incongruous or intrusive elements into views (by virtue of the development's siting, scale, form, colour or use of materials)
 - conserving and enhancing natural or semi-natural vegetation characteristic of the area
 - retaining historic landscape features, such as field patterns, drains and hedgerows
- Require appropriate mitigation measures where harm to local landscape character as a result of necessary development is unavoidable

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS7
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG 6 (policy 37); draft RSS14 (policy ENV2)
Structure Plan policies	P7/4
Existing LP policies	En21
Community Strategy	Long term vision of protecting and improving the environment and promoting healthy lifestyles.
Best practice guidance	<i>Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland</i> (The Countryside Agency / Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002)
Other sources	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (<i>Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Assessment, 2002</i>) <i>Huntingdonshire Landscape & Townscape Assessment</i> (HDC, 2004)

Reason for preferred approach

As a predominantly rural district, Huntingdonshire's landscapes play a major role in shaping the character of our environment, stimulating leisure and tourism and supporting the overall 'quality of life'. The Huntingdonshire Landscape & Townscape Assessment identifies a number of landscape character areas across the district, and it is important that both the quality and distinctive characteristics of these areas are conserved and enhanced when new development occurs.

Alternative approaches considered

The existing 'Area of Best Landscape' designation which covers parts of the district could be retained as an alternative, or in addition to, the preferred criteria-based approach. However, it is government policy that such local designations should be maintained only where criteria-based policies would not provide sufficient protection. The policy approach outlined above requires all proposals within or adjoining the countryside to be assessed carefully for their potential landscape impact, regardless of whether they are in an area that might be regarded as 'best'. Therefore it protects the distinctive character of all Huntingdonshire's landscapes, and provides clear criteria for making appropriate judgements.

GREENSPACE

Policy area

G3 Trees, hedgerows and other environmental features

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Development proposals should minimise the risk of harm to trees, hedgerows or other environmental features of visual, historic or nature conservation value. Where such features lie within a development site, they should wherever possible be incorporated effectively within the landscape scheme.
- Proposals should not damage or destroy any tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order, or lying within a Conservation Area, unless:
 - it is in the interests of good arboricultural practice; or
 - the work would enable development to take place in the public interest, and would bring benefits that outweigh the harm to the trees concerned.
- Where harm to trees, hedgerows or other features of value is unavoidable, provision should be made for appropriate mitigation measures, reinstatement of features and/or compensatory planting, landscaping and habitat creation.

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS7
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 37); draft RSS14 (policy ENV4)
Structure Plan policies	P1/3
Existing LP policies	En18, En19, En20
Community Strategy	Desired outcome of a high quality built and natural environment
Best practice guidance	<i>Tree Preservation Orders: A Guide to the Law and Good Practice</i> (DETR, 2000)
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

Many development sites contain or adjoin features such as trees, small areas of woodland, hedgerows, ponds and old boundary walls. These can be of great importance to the character and quality of the local environment. Often they are attractive in their own right, but they can also provide important habitats, focal points, a link with the past and contribute to the overall 'sense of place'. Old drainage ditches and road verges are particularly significant within Huntingdonshire, and play an important role in providing 'green corridors' for wildlife.

To ensure that these benefits are retained, development proposals will be expected to avoid harm to such features wherever possible, and if necessary incorporate them within an appropriate landscape scheme. Mitigation, replacement or compensatory measures will be required when this cannot be achieved, to ensure that there is no loss of environmental value as a result of development.

Where specific trees or groups of trees are of particular value (such that their removal would have a significant impact upon the local environment and its enjoyment by the public), and are potentially under threat, the Council will make Tree Preservation Orders to protect them. Where trees are covered by TPOs, the policy approach safeguards them from damage or destruction unless there are overriding reasons for the work to go ahead.

Alternative approaches considered

None. A criteria-based approach, coupled with the protection of important trees using TPOs, is the most appropriate means of safeguarding important environmental features. Failure to do so would cause harm to the character of Huntingdonshire's environment.

GREENSPACE

Policy area

G4 Protected habitats and species

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Development proposals should not harm sites of national or international importance for biodiversity or geology
- Proposals that could damage County Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Ancient Woodland or important species¹ should not proceed unless the need for (and benefits of) the development outweigh the potential harm to nature conservation interests
- Where harm to protected habitats or species is unavoidable, provision should be made for appropriate mitigation measures, reinstatement of features and/or compensatory work that will enhance or recreate habitats on or off the site

¹ species protected by legislation, or recognised as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG9; draft PPS9
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policies 38, 39); draft RSS14 (policy ENV3)
Structure Plan policies	P1/2, P7/1, P7/2
Existing LP policies	En23
Community Strategy	
Best practice guidance	<i>Planning for Biodiversity: Good Practice Guide</i> (RTPI, 1999)
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

The range and vitality of habits and species is central to the operation of natural processes and our overall quality of life. The need to consider this in all development proposals is highlighted by the criteria relating to the pursuit of sustainable development (policy area P1). However, while conserving and enhancing habitats and species is of universal concern, Huntingdonshire contains many sites and species that are afforded special protection due to their particular importance.

This policy approach sets out additional criteria designed to ensure that these sites or species are given an additional degree of protection, at a level appropriate to their significance for biodiversity or geology.

Alternative approaches considered

None. This approach is required by national and strategic guidance.

GREENSPACE

Policy area

G5 Historic Parks and Gardens

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that development proposals within or affecting a historic park or garden should:

- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the park/garden's historic importance; and
- Not harm the overall condition of the park/garden or any features that contribute to its special interest; and
- Where appropriate, support the long-term preservation of the park/garden and its setting through sensitive restoration, adaptation and re-use

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG15
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 40); Draft RSS14 (policy ENV5)
Structure Plan policies	P1/2
Existing LP policies	
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include a high quality built and natural environment
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

Huntingdonshire contains several historic parks and gardens registered by English Heritage as being of national significance. Hence, as well as being an important part of our local heritage, these sites merit special protection due to their wider value as key examples of park or garden history. It is essential that the particular qualities of these sites are recognised and respected in any development proposals that might affect them.

Alternative approaches considered

None. This approach is required by national and strategic guidance.

GREENSPACE

Policy area

G6 Areas of Strategic Greenspace Enhancement

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will:

- Define areas of Strategic Greenspace Enhancement, and identify green corridors connecting them
- Indicate that within these areas:
 - co-ordinated action will be taken to improve their biodiversity, landscape and recreational value through appropriate forms of habitat creation and landscape management, and projects to promote quiet enjoyment of the countryside
 - development proposals should be compatible with these objectives, and contribute positively to their achievement (e.g. through additional planting or introducing new rights of way)

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG9; draft PPS9
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 42); draft RSS14 (policy ENV1)
Structure Plan policies	P7/3
Existing LP policies	
Community Strategy	Long term vision of protecting and improving the environment and promoting healthy lifestyles. Specific actions of improving access to the countryside, supporting implementation of the biodiversity action plan, linking key habitats, increasing the biodiversity value of open space and promoting the cultural, environmental and leisure opportunities presented by the Great Fen project
Best practice guidance	<i>Biodiversity By Design: A Guide for Sustainable Communities</i> (TCPA, 2004)
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

Improving the biological, visual and recreational value of the countryside brings obvious environmental and social gains, but can also benefit the local economy through increased visitor spending. It is something that should be addressed by all proposals within or adjoining the countryside (see policy areas P1 & G2), but some particular opportunities for significant enhancement have been identified.

These areas of 'strategic greenspace enhancement' reflect the target areas for habitat creation identified in the Structure Plan and the Biodiversity Partnership for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's 50 Year Wildlife Vision, together with similar opportunities that have been identified.

They include:

- the Nene Valley (wet grassland and hay meadows creation)
- South Peterborough Green Parks (woodland, hedgerow and wet grassland creation)
- the Great Fen Project area (wetland habitat creation)
- the Fen Edge Woodland (woodland and hedgerow creation)
- the Grafham – Brampton Woodlands (woodland and hedgerow creation)
- the Great Ouse Valley (wet grassland and hay meadows creation)
- the South Cambridgeshire Boulder Clay Woodlands (woodland and hedgerow creation)

Indicative maps are contained in Appendix 3. Focusing countryside enhancement efforts on these areas will give maximum scope for consolidating and linking important habitats, and enable complementary access improvements to be pursued. Within the defined areas, it will be important to ensure that development proposals do not conflict with this vision, and – when development does occur – that the design, landscaping and any community benefits contribute to its realisation.

Alternative approaches considered

None. The identification of areas for large-scale habitat enhancement is required by strategic guidance, while ensuring that development proposals are compatible with this objective (and contribute positively to its achievement) is necessary if the objective is to be achieved.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Policy area

B1 Design quality

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will:

- Indicate that development proposals should demonstrate a high quality of design in terms of their layout, form and contribution to the character of the area.
- Set out criteria that will be used to assess a proposal's contribution to this objective, including:
 - responding appropriately to the particular qualities of the site and its surroundings, through the size and arrangement of development plots, the position, orientation, scale and massing of buildings, and the use of appropriate materials and architectural features
 - incorporating a clear network of routes that provide a good level of connectivity with the wider settlement and assist navigation through the scheme
 - using building frontages to define streets, squares and green spaces and help distinguish between public and private areas
 - ensuring that motor vehicles do not dominate the urban form, by using the arrangement of buildings to shape the spaces occupied by roads, and limiting the amount of on-street parking
 - achieving an appropriate degree of enclosure to streets and spaces through the grouping, positioning and height of buildings and landscape features
 - creating variety and interest within a unified design, by using a coherent palette of materials and design features, making use of landmarks and focal points, and enabling views into and out of the scheme
 - incorporating (and/or connecting to) a network of open spaces and green corridors that provide opportunities for recreation and biodiversity
 - accommodating servicing and recycling requirements in ways which minimise visual intrusion
- Indicate that planning applications should be accompanied by sufficient supporting information to demonstrate how design-related considerations have been addressed; for major developments, or those affecting listed buildings or conservation areas, this should be communicated through a formal design statement.

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS1; PPG3; PPS6; PPS12
RPG6 / draft RSS14	Draft RSS14 (policy SS16)
Structure Plan policies	P1/3
Existing LP policies	En25
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include a high quality built and natural environment
Best practice guidance	<i>Places, Streets & Movement</i> (DETR, 1998) <i>Urban Design Compendium</i> (English Partnerships / Housing Corporation, 2000) <i>By Design – Urban Design in the Planning System</i> (DETR / CABE, 2000) <i>Better Places to Live – A Companion Guide to PPG3</i> (DTLR / CABE, 2001) <i>From Design Policy to Design Quality</i> (RTPI, 2002) <i>Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and Implementation Tools</i> (ODPM, 2005)
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

A high standard of design is essential for the creation of attractive and successful places. The planning system has a key role to play in encouraging schemes that will make a positive contribution to the area, by promoting an understanding and application of key design considerations.

This policy approach sets out basic principles that need to be addressed if developments are to display character, complement their surroundings, and provide attractive and sustainable environments for users. As well as being of critical importance for all new projects, many of the criteria will also be relevant when considering alterations and extensions to existing buildings.

If the criteria are to be applied successfully, it is essential that design proposals emerge from an understanding of the site and its context, rather than relying on the unimaginative use of standard site layouts and building types. In order to show how the design has evolved and considered these points, it is important that all schemes are accompanied by suitable illustrative and/or written material.

More detailed guidance on the design process and principles is provided by the *Huntingdonshire Design Guide* (2004).

Alternative approaches considered

None. This approach is required by national and strategic guidance.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Policy area	
B2	Street scene

Preferred approach	
<p>Policies in the plan will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate that development proposals should make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of streets and public spaces. • Set out criteria that will be used to assess a proposal's contribution to this objective, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – creating interesting and active frontages, with building entrances and windows facing streets and other public spaces – retaining traditional shop fronts wherever possible, particularly within conservation areas – ensuring that any new shop fronts use high quality materials and respect the character and proportions of the building and its neighbours – minimising the visual impact of security equipment through careful positioning and design (including the use of internal security grills rather than external roller shutters) – using external lighting in a way that gives adequate illumination for its intended purpose, while avoiding harsh or unnecessarily widespread impacts upon buildings and public spaces – ensuring that street furniture, paving materials and soft landscape works are of high quality, appropriate to the character of the scheme and its surroundings, and designed to minimise visual clutter and obstructions for users – using works of art to provide focal points and contribute to the character and interest of public spaces – keeping signage and advertisements to a level and design which respects the character and appearance of buildings, streets and public spaces, and does not endanger public safety 	

Policy source(s)	
PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS1; PPS6; PPS12; PPG19
RPG6 / draft RSS14	Draft RSS14 (policy SS16)
Structure Plan policies	P1/3
Existing LP policies	En25, En27, En28, En30, En32
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include a high quality built and natural environment
Best practice guidance	<i>Lighting in the Countryside</i> (DoE / Countryside Commission, 1997) <i>Places, Streets & Movement</i> (DETR, 1998) <i>Urban Design Compendium</i> (English Partnerships / Housing Corporation, 2000) <i>From Design Policy to Design Quality</i> (RTPI, 2002) <i>Safer Places</i> (ODPM / Home Office, 2004) <i>Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and Implementation Tools</i> (ODPM, 2005)
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach	
<p>The character of streets and other public spaces has a major impact upon the quality of our environment. It derives from many factors: the basic design criteria listed in policy area B1 are fundamental, but so too is a range of other influences such as the nature of shop fronts, street furniture, lighting and signage.</p>	

This policy approach addresses these issues together, so that they can be considered in a comprehensive and coherent manner when formulating development proposals or enhancement schemes.

Shop fronts are important visual components of both individual buildings and the street scene. Many are changed or renewed frequently, and it is essential that the design and materials relate effectively to the scale and character of the premises and their neighbours. Solid security shutters can harm the vitality of town and village centres outside opening hours by obscuring shop displays, attracting graffiti and creating a 'fortress' effect. Hence it is important to promote the use of more subtle security measures wherever possible.

Similarly, careful thought needs to be given to the scale, position and potential impact of signage, lighting and street furniture: the objective should be to minimise visual 'clutter' whilst also ensuring that places are safe, convenient and comfortable to use.

Alternative approaches considered

None. The promotion of good design is required by national and strategic guidance, and this must include clear criteria designed to ensure that appropriate regard is paid to the quality of the 'public realm'.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Policy area

B3 Accessibility and security

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that the location and design of development proposals should:

- Enable ease of access to, around and within the scheme for all potential users, including those with disabilities and young children
- Incorporate appropriate and conveniently located facilities that address the needs of potential user groups
- Minimise the extent to which users feel at risk from crime by:
 - enabling passive surveillance of public spaces and parking areas
 - distinguishing clearly between public and private spaces, and maximising the extent to which spaces are controlled (or perceived to be controlled) by occupiers
 - incorporating appropriate security measures, such as lighting and hard and soft landscape treatments

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS1; PPS6; PPS12; Circular 5/94
RPG6 / draft RSS14	
Structure Plan policies	P1/3
Existing LP policies	En24
Community Strategy	Long-term vision of promoting opportunity for all. Desired outcomes include easy and affordable access to services and facilities, and low crime / fear of crime.
Best practice guidance	<i>Planning and Access for Disabled People</i> (ODPM, 1993) <i>Gender Equality and Plan Making</i> (RTPI, 2002) <i>Safer Places</i> (ODPM / Home Office, 2004) <i>Diversity and Equality in Planning</i> (ODPM, 2005) <i>Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and Implementation Tools</i> (ODPM, 2005)
Other sources	<i>Planning and Diversity: Research into Policies & Procedures</i> (ODPM, 2004)

Reason for preferred approach

A key aspect of planning for sustainable development is ensuring that places are accessible and safe to use for all groups in society. Criteria are required to help guide and assess proposals in relation to this objective. In part it requires measures to minimise the risk of crime (and the fear of crime) for all users, but developments must also address any specific requirements of potential user groups, such as disabled people, women, the young, the elderly and minority ethnic communities.

Consideration of access and appropriate facilities in relation to such groups should include the mix of uses in larger schemes (such as the availability of local shops and child care facilities) as well as the design of individual buildings and the layout of external areas. All such decisions will need to be informed by early consultation with potential users.

Alternative approaches considered

None. Local planning authorities are required to include policies on access, while national guidance (draft PPS1) indicates that community cohesion and the needs of all groups in society should be addressed. A criteria-based policy provides the most appropriate way of indicating how these matters can be considered in the development process.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Policy area

B4 Amenity

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that development proposals should not have an unreasonable impact upon the living conditions of existing or future occupiers, within or adjoining the site, in terms of:

- Access to daylight and sunlight
- Privacy
- Noise and disturbance
- Fumes, light spillage and other forms of pollution
- Safety and security

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS23; PPG24
RPG6 / draft RSS14	Draft RSS14 (policy SS16)
Structure Plan policies	P1/3
Existing LP policies	H30, H31, H34, H37, H38
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include a healthy population and low crime / fear of crime
Best practice guidance	<i>Safer Places</i> (ODPM / Home Office, 2004)
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

An important role of the planning system is to protect the public interest by preventing harm to the 'amenity' of those affected by development. This policy sets out the key criteria that will be used to judge whether a proposal could have an unreasonable impact upon amenity.

Alternative approaches considered

None. Safeguarding amenity is an important planning function, and one which needs clear criteria to articulate the key matters that will need to be assessed.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Policy area

B5 Energy use

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- All development proposals should aim to maximise the level of energy efficiency achieved through sustainable design and construction, with appropriate consideration given to siting, massing, orientation, internal design, use of materials, insulation and heat recovery (combined heat and power)
- All major developments¹ should wherever possible:
 - provide at least 10% of their predicted energy requirement from on-site renewable energy technology; or
 - achieve an energy efficiency level equivalent to at least a 10% reduction in CO₂ emissions over and above the Building Regulations target CO₂ emissions rate

¹ 10 or more dwellings, or for non-residential development any scheme of at least 500m² or 0.5ha

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS22
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 59); draft RSS14 (policy ENV8)
Structure Plan policies	P1/3
Existing LP policies	
Community Strategy	Specific action to promote the use of renewable energy (target of 12.5% reduction in CO ₂ emissions locally by 2010, over 2000 levels)
Best practice guidance	<i>Sustainable Settlements</i> (University of West of England / LGMB, 1995) <i>Planning for Renewable Energy: A Companion Guide to PPS22</i> (ODPM, 2004)
Other sources	<i>Our Energy Future – Creating a Low Carbon Economy</i> (HM Government, 2003)

Reason for preferred approach

The Government is committed to a 20% reduction in CO₂ emissions (over 1990 levels) by 2010, and a 60% reduction by 2050. The design and construction of new development can make an important contribution to this objective, both in terms of using energy efficiently and by making appropriate use of renewable energy technology. In this context, it is appropriate to ask that all development schemes incorporate measures to maximise energy efficiency, **so far as scheme viability and proven available technology permit.**

The specific requirement for a 10% reduction in CO₂ emissions (beyond that required by Building Regulations) reflects the fact that reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and cutting CO₂ emissions can be addressed most straightforwardly by energy efficiency measures. However, the policy approach also gives the option for 10% of energy needs in major schemes to be met from on-site renewable energy technologies, reflecting the range of opportunities that now exist (such as photovoltaic panels, geothermal heating and micro-scale wind power systems).

Alternative approaches considered

The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy requires DPDs to include policies seeking energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy technology in new developments. For the latter, it sets a threshold of 50 dwellings rather than 10 (and for non-residential schemes a threshold of 1,000m²). These higher thresholds could be adopted, but would limit the number of schemes required to utilise renewable technologies. Moreover, the alternative option of a specific level of energy efficiency offered by the policy approach gives flexibility to developers, and should ensure that an unreasonable (and unviable) burden is not being imposed, particularly where residential schemes involve fewer than 50 units and non-residential schemes are below 1,000m².

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Policy area	
B6	Listed Buildings

Preferred approach	
<p>Policies in the plan will indicate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development proposals affecting the fabric or setting of a listed building should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – demonstrate a clear understanding of the building’s architectural and historic importance; and – not harm the overall condition of the building or any features that contribute to its special interest; and – where appropriate, support the long-term preservation of the building and its setting through sensitive restoration, adaptation and re-use • Proposals for the total or partial demolition of a listed building should not be permitted unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the building is structurally unsound (for reasons other than deliberate damage or neglect) and is beyond reasonable repair; or – it cannot continue in its present use, no viable alternative uses exist, and redevelopment would bring wider public benefits; and, in all cases: – detailed proposals for reconstruction or redevelopment have received planning consent 	

Policy source(s)	
PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG15
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 40); draft RSS14 (policy ENV5)
Structure Plan policies	P7/6
Existing LP policies	En1, En2, En3, En4,
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include a high quality built and natural environment
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach	
<p>Listed buildings are of national importance, representing the best of our historic and architectural built heritage. Huntingdonshire contains nearly 2,800 listed structures, and it is vital that any works affecting them are guided by an appreciation of both their importance and the planning controls that apply. There is a presumption in favour of preserving listed buildings and their features of architectural or historic interest, although the best way of securing their upkeep is usually to keep them in active use.</p> <p>There is rarely a good reason for allowing the demolition of a listed building, but the policy approach recognises the very limited circumstances in which total or partial demolition may be necessary. The criteria will ensure that demolition is allowed only as a last resort (and that wilful neglect cannot be used to justify the loss of listed structures). The requirement that detailed plans for reconstruction/ redevelopment are agreed is appropriate to make certain that a suitable replacement will be erected.</p>	

Alternative approaches considered	
None. This approach is required by national and strategic guidance.	

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Policy area

B7 Conservation Areas

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Development proposals within or affecting a Conservation Area should:
 - use building forms, materials and details that are characteristic of the area’s historic or architectural quality, or which provide a successful contrast with it
 - retain, and where possible restore, traditional features such as original fenestration, boundary walls, street furniture and paving materials
 - re-use existing structures of historic or visual value wherever possible, in preference to demolition
- Proposals to demolish buildings within conservation areas should be assessed against the same criteria as apply to the demolition of listed buildings

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG15
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 40); draft RSS14 (policy ENV5)
Structure Plan policies	P7/6
Existing LP policies	En5, En6, En7, En8, En9
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include a high quality built and natural environment
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	<i>Building in Context</i> (English Heritage / CABE, 2001)

Reason for preferred approach

Conservation areas exist to assist the preservation and enhancement of areas of particular architectural or historic interest. The law requires that special attention is paid to this objective in exercising planning control. The character of conservation areas is often the product of various elements such as the mixture and style of buildings, the extent and form of open spaces and the amount of tree cover.

It is particularly important that traditional features that contribute to their overall character are recognised and respected in development proposals. At the same time, new development does not have to mimic the past: carefully considered, high quality designs that provide a successful contrast with their surroundings can conserve and enhance character, as well as schemes that employ authentic historical forms and features.

The demolition of buildings within conservation areas can have a damaging effect by removing structures that contribute to their character or leaving unsightly gaps in the built-up area. Hence, as with listed buildings, it is appropriate to employ a presumption in favour of retention. Where a building makes little or no contribution to the street scene, demolition will not be agreed unless detailed plans for the site’s redevelopment have been approved, to ensure that the scheme will conserve and enhance the character of the area.

Alternative approaches considered

None. This approach is required by national and strategic guidance.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Policy area

B8 Sites of archaeological interest

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that development proposals that could affect a site or area of archaeological interest should:

- Be accompanied by a suitable assessment of the nature and significance of any remains, so that their implications for the scheme can be considered
- Not cause harm to remains or their settings which are recognised or identified as being of national importance, and allow for their preservation in situ
- Make satisfactory arrangements for the physical preservation, recording or removal of other remains, as appropriate to their condition and significance, prior to development taking place

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG16
RPG6 / draft RPG14	RPG6 (policy 40); draft RPG14 (policy ENV5)
Structure Plan policies	P7/6
Existing LP policies	En11, En12, En13
Community Strategy	Specific action to improve access to the countryside and archaeological sites
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

Archaeological remains constitute an important part of the area's heritage. They are a finite resource, and easily damaged or destroyed when development takes place, unless steps are taken to identify and protect them. Known sites of national importance are designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments, but the majority of sites do not enjoy this degree of protection. Indeed, most archaeological remains exist below ground, so their extent and significance may not be known in advance.

This policy approach puts appropriate safeguards in place where development affects a site or area where archaeological remains may exist (such areas can be identified using the sites and monuments record maintained by the County Archaeology Service). Any assessment or evaluation will need to be undertaken by a suitably qualified person(s) and in consultation with the County Archaeology Service. There is a presumption that nationally important remains will be preserved in situ, but this may also be justified where landscapes, monuments or artefacts of local or regional significance are revealed.

Alternative approaches considered

None. This approach is required by national and strategic guidance.

HOUSING

Policy area

H1 Location of housing development

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Housing development on unallocated sites should be limited to the following:
 - within the defined limits of Market Towns and Key Centres (Potential Growth): major and minor housing schemes, and residential infilling
 - within the defined limits of Key Centres (Limited Growth): minor housing schemes and residential infilling
 - within the built-up framework of Smaller Settlements: residential infilling
 - within the countryside: limited and specific forms of housing development, as provided for elsewhere in the plan
- The scale of housing development of different types is defined as:
 - Major schemes: 10 or more dwellings
 - Minor schemes: up to 9 dwellings
 - Residential infilling: development of a small plot within the built-up framework (or defined limits) by up to two dwellings, or by up to three dwellings in smaller settlements provided an appropriate mix of unit sizes is secured.

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG3; PPS7
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policies 4, 22); draft RSS14 (policies SS1, SS9, CSR1, GPSR1)
Structure Plan policies	P1/1, P5/5, P9/4, P10/3
Existing LP policies	STR1, STR2, HL8, HL9
Community Strategy	Specific actions of developing policies to promote sustainable communities and achieve targets to meet housing need in a sustainable manner
Best practice guidance	<i>Reducing Transport Emissions Through Planning</i> (DoE / DoT, 1993) <i>PPG13: A Guide to Better Practice</i> (DoE / DoT, 1995) <i>Sustainable Settlements</i> (University of West of England / LGMB, 1995) <i>Planning for Sustainable Development</i> (DETR, 1998)
Other sources	<i>Are Villages Sustainable?</i> (Countryside Agency, 2001)

Reason for preferred approach

This policy approach allows an appropriate scale of residential development in settlements of different types, in line with the settlement hierarchy and national / strategic guidance. It enables the widest range of housing development to occur in the Market Towns and Key Centres (Potential Growth), these being the places that offer the best access to shops, services and employment opportunities.

The allowance for 'infilling' in smaller settlements to comprise up to three dwellings reflects that fact that schemes for just two dwellings on infill sites may not always make the best use of land or sit comfortably within the surrounding built form. However, it is subject to the important condition that an appropriate mix of housing units is provided. This reflects the particular need for smaller units in villages, and the fact that such units are more likely to make good use of the land (and suit the character of the surroundings) on small infill sites.

The policy approach does not cover housing intended specifically for agricultural and related workers, the elderly, those in need of institutional accommodation, gypsies and travelling showpeople; policies covering these groups will be included elsewhere in the Housing chapter.

Alternative approaches considered

A greater amount of development could be permitted in Key Centres (Limited Growth) and Smaller Settlements by allowing major housing schemes in the former, and minor housing schemes in some or all of the latter. Alternatively, the definitions of major and minor housing development could be changed to increase the quantity of development permissible in these locations.

Either approach would lead to a more dispersed form of development contrary to strategic policies which require most new housing to be located in larger settlements. There is no evidence that greater dispersal would have a significant effect in retaining village facilities, and it would be likely to increase the need to travel. The definitions of major and minor housing development proposed above are consistent with those employed nationally by ODPM.

HOUSING

Policy area

H2 Affordable housing

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will:

- Define affordable housing as that available at a significant discount below market values, so as to be affordable to households who cannot either rent or purchase property that meets their needs on the open market
- Set out the types of housing that may contribute towards the provision of affordable properties, as follows:
 - social rented housing: housing provided, normally by Registered Social Landlords, at below market rents and at levels controlled by the Housing Corporation
 - intermediate housing: housing for people who may not qualify for social rented properties but whose incomes are insufficient to enable them to access market priced housing. This includes:
 - a) intermediate rented housing, where rents should not exceed 30% of net median household incomes in Huntingdonshire (except where provided specifically for key workers, in which case rents should not exceed 30% of the net median household income for the target group)
 - b) low cost home ownership, where housing costs (mortgage and rent) should not exceed 30% of gross median household incomes in Huntingdonshire (except where the properties are provided specifically for key workers, in which case costs should not exceed 30% of the gross median household income of the target group). Low cost home ownership includes both shared equity and discounted market housing
- Indicate that the type of affordable housing most needed within Huntingdonshire is social rented housing

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG3; Circular 6/98; consultation paper on Planning for Mixed Communities (ODPM, 2005)
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 10); draft RSS14 (policy H2)
Structure Plan policies	P5/4, P9/1
Existing LP policies	AH1, AH2
Community Strategy	Priority action to promote social inclusion by ensuring everyone has access to a decent home
Best practice guidance	<i>Local Housing Needs Assessment: A Guide to Good Practice</i> (DETR, 2000)
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

It has become increasingly difficult for local people on low to modest incomes to gain access to suitable housing. A growing gap between average earnings and housing costs, a limited supply of new affordable properties and the loss of existing social housing through 'right to buy' / 'right to acquire' provisions have all contributed to this problem. The planning system has a key role to play in making more affordable properties available, through securing contributions from market housing schemes and by enabling rural 'exceptions' sites to come forward.

The purpose of this policy approach is to define the scope of what constitutes 'affordable housing' in Huntingdonshire. Housing needs surveys have shown that the primary requirement in this area is for social rented housing. However, there is a growing number of households who are not eligible for such properties (as their needs are not sufficiently acute), but at the same time cannot afford housing on the open market. Hence the policy approach also allows for 'intermediate' housing, suitable for this group, to contribute to the supply of affordable properties. This will allow a wider range of needs to be addressed in the interest of creating balanced and sustainable communities, and will also maximise the viability of providing affordable housing (given the limited funds available for supporting the provision of social rented properties).

It is important to set cost ceilings for intermediate housing to ensure that it is accessible to those in need. In principle, it is also reasonable to expect those purchasing such properties to pay slightly more than those who will be renting, as purchasers stand to gain over time from any appreciation in property values. For this reason the cost ceiling for intermediate rented housing is based on net incomes, whereas that for low cost home ownership is based on gross earnings. In both cases the threshold level of 30% is in line with that suggested in the DETR's good practice guidance.

Alternative approaches considered

None in terms of the broad approach to defining affordable housing: national guidance requires that plans define what constitutes 'affordable housing' within a local authority's area, while proposed changes to PPG3 (issued in 2003) indicate that this should be expressed in terms of the relationship between local income levels and house prices.

An alternative approach to the definition itself would be to make no distinction between net and gross household incomes in relation to intermediate housing for rent or purchase. Indeed, the proposed changes to PPG3 also suggest that affordable housing should not normally be defined in terms of tenure, unless this allows a need to be met that could not be addressed in other ways. However, this would not allow recognition of the fact that some tenures offer the prospect of long-term capital accumulation through increases in the value of the property.

A further variation would be to set the 30% threshold at a higher level, but this would limit the number of households able to access intermediate housing, and not accord with best practice guidance.

HOUSING

Policy area

H3 Housing density

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that housing schemes should:

- Have a minimum net density of 30 dwellings per hectare
- On sites within or close to the town centres, or in locations with good access to high quality public transport, have a minimum net density of 40 dwellings per hectare
- On all sites, achieve the maximum density possible consistent with:
 - the settlement hierarchy
 - the character of the site and its surroundings
 - the need to accommodate other uses and residential amenities (such as open space and parking areas)

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG3
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 3); draft RSS14 (policy SS16)
Structure Plan policies	P5/3
Existing LP policies	HL6
Community Strategy	Priority action of producing guidance and promoting good practice in support of sustainable communities
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

Building at moderate to high densities enables best use to be made of development sites, and helps safeguard the countryside from unnecessary development. Where building occurs on a large scale, dense forms of development can also support the 'critical mass' of people that may be needed to support local facilities.

Relatively high minimum densities are appropriate in locations that have good access to a range of services, facilities and employment opportunities, as this will help to limit the need to travel (by maximising the amount of housing in relatively sustainable locations).

However, there may be instances where applying the minimum density requirement is not appropriate due to the character of the site and its surroundings; this is a material consideration but would need to be justified through a design statement submitted with a planning application.

Alternative approaches considered

None. This approach is required by national and strategic guidance.

HOUSING

Policy area

H4 Mix of property sizes

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Housing developments should incorporate a range of unit types to reflect the economic and social needs of the district, and taking into consideration the changing composition of households
- On major and minor housing schemes (of 3 units or more), at least 40% of the market housing should comprise 1 or 2 bedroom units, and at least 60% of the market housing should comprise units of no more than 3 bedrooms
- Where market housing is proposed on residential infill sites within smaller settlements, schemes for 2 dwellings should include at least 1 unit of no more than 3 bedrooms; and schemes for 3 dwellings should include at least 2 units of no more than 3 bedrooms

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG3; consultation paper on Planning for Mixed Communities (ODPM, 2005)
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 10); draft RSS14 (policy H2)
Structure Plan policies	P5/4
Existing LP policies	HL5, HL10
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include a balanced housing market. Priority action to promote social inclusion by ensuring that everyone has access to a decent home
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

To ensure the private housing market meets the needs of as wide a section of the community as possible, it is important that new development begins to address a significant undersupply of smaller properties within the available the housing stock. One and two-bed units have on average comprised fewer than a quarter of completions during recent years; this contrasts with a general trend towards decreasing average household size, and the identified requirements of local people who wish to move house.

This problem is particularly acute in the Smaller Settlements, and for this reason infill sites in such locations will be expected to make a contribution towards improving housing mix. In Market Towns and Key Centres, schemes of three units or more will be required to include some smaller units.

Alternative approaches considered

The mix of housing provided could be left to the market, or an appropriate mix could be 'encouraged' by policies. However, experience to date has shown that a lack of intervention, or mere 'encouragement', will be insufficient to secure a significant increase in the supply of smaller units in line with local requirements.

Lower percentage targets for smaller unit provision, or higher site thresholds (e.g. limiting the requirement to major sites only) could be employed. However, these alternatives would not secure the degree of change required to address the identified imbalance in supply: the 40% and 60% targets are well below the requirements identified by the Council's Housing Needs Survey, while many minor and infill housing schemes will occur in rural locations where the need for smaller units is particularly acute.

HOUSING

Policy area

H5 Alteration or replacement of existing dwellings in the countryside

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that proposals to alter, extend or replace an existing dwelling in the countryside should:

- Not result in a significant increase in the height or massing of the existing dwelling
- Not entail development where only the site of a previous dwelling remains

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS7
RPG6 / draft RSS14	
Structure Plan	
Existing LP policies	H26, H27, H28
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include a high quality built and natural environment
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

To help conserve the character of the countryside, limits need to be placed upon the extent to which existing dwellings may be enlarged. Otherwise, the ability to create much larger properties on existing plots could increase the intrusiveness of built development in countryside locations. For the same reason, new dwellings will be resisted where a previous residential use has in effect been abandoned, such that only the site of the previous dwelling remains.

Alternative approaches considered

Significant increases in the height or massing of existing dwellings in the countryside could be permitted, as could residential development on plots where a house once stood (but has since been demolished or has collapsed). However, either approach would enable a greater degree of residential development in the countryside; this would be contrary to national guidance (in PPS7) that development in such locations should be strictly controlled, so as to protect the character of the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty.

HOUSING

Policy area

H6 Re-use of buildings in the countryside

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that proposals to re-use existing buildings in the countryside for housing should:

- Be limited to situations where a business use would either not be viable, or would generate a significantly greater number of vehicular movements in a location remote from existing settlements
- Not necessitate the substantial reconstruction of the building concerned
- Conserve the character of any buildings of historic or visual interest
- Employ landscape and boundary treatments that minimise the impact of domestic use upon the building's setting

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS7
RPG6 / draft RSS14	
Structure Plan policies	
Existing LP policies	H29
Community Strategy	
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

Huntingdonshire contains large numbers of buildings in the open countryside associated with agriculture and related industries. Changing farming and commercial practices have made some of these buildings redundant, while there is considerable demand for converting the more attractive structures to housing. In general a re-use for business purposes is preferable, as residential conversions can cause more harm to the character of historic structures, conflict with the objective of limiting residential development in the countryside and utilise premises that might otherwise provide local employment opportunities.

Nevertheless, there are limited circumstances in which converting a building in the countryside for business purposes is not possible, or is undesirable due to the volume of traffic that might be generated. This policy approach sets out appropriate criteria for judging proposals in those limited circumstances where a residential re-use may be acceptable.

Applicants will be required to demonstrate that re-use or redevelopment for business purposes is not viable or would generate significantly more vehicle movements than a residential use. Where a building is in a ruinous condition, or only its site remains, rebuilding for residential purposes will not be permitted (as this would be tantamount to constructing a new house in the open countryside).

Alternative approaches considered

The plan could make no allowance for converting buildings in the countryside to residential use, but this could inhibit the productive re-use of buildings that are worthy of retention (where a business use is not viable), or result in an undesirable level of vehicle movements in some situations.

Conversely, re-use for residential purposes could be allowed without restriction, but this would be more likely to harm the character of historic buildings and their setting, and increase the amount of residential development in locations that are remote from employment and services. It would also restrict the supply of premises potentially available for business use in rural areas.

HOUSING

Policy area

H7 Housing for agricultural and related workers

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will:

- Indicate that development in the countryside to meet the accommodation needs of full-time workers in agriculture, horticulture, forestry or equestrian activities may be allowed, where an essential need for a dwelling to support the business is demonstrated
- Set out the criteria that will be used to assess such proposals, including the requirements that:
 - provision on-site (or in the immediate vicinity) is necessary for the operation of the business
 - no suitable accommodation exists (or could be made available) in established buildings on the site or in the immediate vicinity
 - the proposal does not involve replacing a dwelling disposed of recently as general market housing
 - the dwelling is no larger than that required to meet the operational needs of the business
 - the siting and landscaping of the new dwelling ensure that any impact upon the character and appearance of the countryside is minimised
- Indicate that a temporary dwelling may be permitted where these circumstances apply, but the activity has been established recently and needs time to demonstrate that it is financially sound.

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS7
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 10)
Structure Plan policies	
Existing LP policies	H23, H24
Community Strategy	
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

The construction of new dwellings in the countryside to meet the housing needs of workers in agriculture and related land-based occupations requires special justification; it is important to avoid sporadic development in the countryside, and often it will be possible for such workers to live in a nearby town or village.

This policy approach sets out the criteria to be employed where a new dwelling in the countryside is claimed as being necessary. The requirements for clear evidence of need and an appropriate size of dwelling are there to prevent possible abuse of the policy, and comply with national guidance in PPS7. Annex A of the latter gives additional information on how the criteria should be applied.

Alternative approaches considered

None. This approach is required by national guidance.

HOUSING

Policy area

H8 Rural exception sites

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will:

- Indicate that development to meet a local need for affordable housing may be permitted in locations, or on a scale, that would not otherwise be allowed by the plan.
- Set out the criteria that will be used to assess such proposals, including the requirements that:
 - the site is within, adjoining or well-related to a Key Village (Limited Growth) or a Smaller Settlement
 - the village concerned offers at least a basic range of services appropriate to the form of housing to be provided
 - the impact on adjoining countryside is minimised through careful siting, design and landscaping
 - a local need for the scale and nature of development proposed is demonstrated
 - occupation of the affordable dwellings is controlled to ensure that the benefits of affordable housing are enjoyed by subsequent as well as initial occupiers

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG3
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 10); draft RSS14 (policy H2)
Structure Plan policies	P5/5
Existing LP policies	AH5
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include a balanced housing market. Priority action to promote social inclusion by ensuring that everyone has access to a decent home
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

Although the settlement hierarchy steers most new housing towards the Market Towns and Key Centres (Potential Growth), it is important to have a mechanism for addressing affordable housing needs that arise within the district's rural areas. Consequently this policy approach allows exceptions to be made to the normal limits on development in such locations.

The criteria to be applied will ensure that sporadic development in the countryside is prevented, that occupants of the new properties have access to at least a basic level of facilities appropriate to their needs (helping to limit the need to travel), and that the properties remain as part of the 'affordable' housing stock. The supporting text will make clear that a 'basic range of services' should include a food shop in all cases, and also a primary school where the houses will be occupied by families.

Alternative approaches considered

No allowance could be made for rural exception sites, but this would not enable identified needs for affordable housing in rural areas to be addressed.

Exception sites could be allowed at all rural settlements, regardless of the level of facilities available within them. However, this would mean that some residents of the new properties would not have easy access to a basic level of services and facilities, increasing their need to travel (and contrary to the need to promote a more 'sustainable' pattern of development).

HOUSING

Policy area

H9 Retirement housing

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that proposals for retirement housing should:

- Be located in accordance with the settlement hierarchy (see Policy Area H1), except that schemes of 10 or more dwellings will be permitted within Key Centres (Limited Growth)
- Enable at least a basic range of services (including a food shop, public house, community hall and place of worship) can be reached on foot along routes that are reasonably level and safe to use
- Allow primary care services to be reached easily for those without access to a car

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG3
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 10)
Structure Plan policies	P5/4
Existing LP policies	H43
Community Strategy	Priority actions to promote social inclusion by ensuring that everyone has access to a decent home, and to support initiatives which support older people at home. Specific action to ensure that older people and those with disabilities have access to facilities that promote an active, healthy life
Best practice guidance	<i>Planning for Retirement Housing</i> (POS / Retirement Housing Group, 2003)
Other sources	<i>Planning and Diversity: Research into Policies & Procedures</i> (ODPM, 2004)

Reason for preferred approach

The number of elderly people is expected to increase significantly in the period to 2021, and provision needs to be made to help meet their particular housing needs. This policy approach concerns housing for those elderly people who continue to live independently. Most commonly this involves:

- Developments designed for the 'early retired', and intended to appeal to reasonably active people of 55 years and over
- Sheltered housing designed for less active elderly people, who live as individual households but benefit from some communal facilities and a resident warden

It is important that such developments are located so that elderly households can have access to a suitable range of facilities. The policy approach allows retirement housing in Key Centres (Limited Growth) on a scale that would not otherwise be allowed for general housing. This recognises that residents of such developments are more likely to shop locally (and are less likely to travel by car) than other occupiers.

Allowing such schemes in all the Key Centres will give opportunities for elderly people to maintain a relatively rural lifestyle, while benefiting from access to a range of essential services and limiting the likely number of car-borne trips. It is also recognised that the provision of communal facilities and support services requires development on a sufficient scale to be viable, so the lack of restriction on unit numbers in the Key Villages (Limited Growth) will enable appropriate provision in these locations.

Communal accommodation for the elderly (such as care homes) is covered by policy area H10.

Alternative approaches considered

Retirement schemes of 10 units or more could be restricted to the Market Towns and Key Centres (Potential Growth), in accordance with the scale of development permitted for general housing under the settlement hierarchy. However, not extending this provision to the Key Centres (Limited Growth) would limit unnecessarily the scope for meeting the housing needs of elderly people wishing to retain a relatively rural lifestyle (given the relatively 'sustainable' nature of retirement and sheltered housing schemes).

Conversely, major retirement housing developments could be allowed in all settlements with at least a basic level of services and facilities. However this would not give residents access to as wide a range of facilities as are available in the Key Centres, increasing the likelihood that they would need to travel elsewhere to meet their needs. The scale of development required to ensure that communal / support services are viable could also be incompatible with the form and character of many Smaller Settlements.

HOUSING

Policy area

H10 Nursing and care homes

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that proposals for nursing and care homes should:

- Be located within the defined limits of the Market Towns and Key Centres, or within the existing built-up areas of the Smaller Settlements
- Enable shopping, community and medical facilities to be reached easily for those without access to a car, as appropriate to the needs and level of mobility of potential residents

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG3
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 10)
Structure Plan policies	P5/4
Existing LP policies	H43
Community Strategy	Priority action to promote social inclusion by ensuring that everyone has access to a decent home. Specific action to ensure that older people and those with disabilities have access to facilities that promote an active, healthy life
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	<i>Planning and Diversity: Research into Policies & Procedures</i> (ODPM, 2004)

Reason for preferred approach

Nursing and care homes entail the provision of specialist residential accommodation and care to people in need. This can cover a range of uses such as **care homes for the elderly**, centres for those with severe disabilities and hostels for social rehabilitation purposes. The nature and mobility of occupiers varies greatly, so it is inappropriate to specify in any detail the level of access to facilities that may be required. Nonetheless, it is important that nursing and care homes are directed towards locations that are **relatively** 'sustainable', enabling access by non-car modes to relevant facilities and contributing to the best possible quality of life for **their** residents.

The policy allows for nursing and care homes to be developed in Key Centres (Limited Growth) and Smaller Settlements on a scale that would not otherwise be allowed for general housing. This recognises that specialist accommodation often requires a minimum number of units to be viable, and that a rural location may sometimes be appropriate in addressing the care needs of residents.

Alternative approaches considered

Nursing and care homes could be restricted to the Market Towns and Key Centres (Potential Growth and Limited Growth). However, this would not enable appropriate forms of development where a rural location is required, and would not necessarily have much impact upon the need to travel by car (given that many residents will have limited mobility or not be drivers). Hence it would limit unnecessarily the scope for meeting these specialised housing needs in suitable locations.

HOUSING

Policy area

H11 Accommodation for gypsies and travelling showpeople

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will:

- Indicate that development in the countryside to meet the accommodation needs of gypsies or travelling showpeople may be allowed, where a local need for the scale and nature of development proposed is demonstrated
- Set out the criteria that will be used to assess such proposals, including the requirements that:
 - the intended occupants pursue (or have pursued) a travelling lifestyle for a significant portion of the year, for the purpose of making their living
 - adequate schools, shops and other community facilities are within reasonable travelling distance, and can be reached by foot, cycle or public transport
 - the site is served (or can be served) by adequate water and sewerage connections
 - there would be no significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents or operations of adjoining land uses
 - the siting and landscaping ensure that any impact upon the character and appearance of the countryside is minimised, and the development can be assimilated into its surroundings

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	Circulars 22/91 & 1/94; draft Circular on Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites (2004)
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 10)
Structure Plan policies	P5/4
Existing LP policies	H44
Community Strategy	Priority action to ensure everyone has access to a decent home.
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	<i>Local Authority Gypsy / Traveller Sites in England</i> (ODPM, 2003)

Reason for preferred approach

National guidance indicates that authorities should allocate sites to meet the identified accommodation needs of gypsies, as well as setting out appropriate criteria for making decisions about sites where allocations have not been made. The need for allocations will be considered in the context of preparing an allocations DPD; the policy approach outlined above provides the necessary criteria for dealing with any proposals in the meantime.

The criteria reflect those suggested by Circular 1/94, including the test that applicants must be pursuing (or have pursued) a nomadic way of life to qualify for gypsy status. It is recognised that gypsy sites may have to be located in the countryside, but decisions about the acceptability of particular locations need to take into account access to essential services, the impact on the settled community in the vicinity and the need to minimise visual intrusion.

Organised groups of travelling showpeople are specifically excluded from the definition of 'gypsies' used by Circular 1/94, but their way of life and accommodation requirements are similar. Hence it is appropriate to address their requirements within the same policy approach.

Alternative approaches considered

None. The approach to meeting gypsies' accommodation needs is required by national and strategic guidance, and it would be unreasonable not to make any similar allowance for the needs of travelling showpeople.

ECONOMY & TOURISM

Policy area

E1 Location of office development

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Proposals for large office developments (of at least 500m² gross floorspace, or a site area of 0.5ha+) on unallocated land should be:
 - limited to sites within the defined limits of the market towns; and
 - situated within the town centres where capacity exists, provided the scale of development is consistent with the function and character of the centre
- Where large office developments cannot be accommodated within a town centre, it should be demonstrated that:
 - no sequentially preferable site is suitable or available (starting with edge of centre sites¹ and locations with good access to high quality public transport, then out-of-centre locations); and
 - the site offers potential to maximise accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport
- Proposals for minor office developments (of less than 500m² gross floorspace, or a site area of less than 0.5ha) will be allowed within the defined limits of the Market Towns and Key Centres (Potential & Limited Growth), and within the existing built-up framework of smaller settlements.

¹ For the purpose of this policy approach, this means sites within 300 metres of the edge of the town centre

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG4; PPS6; PPS7, PPG13
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policies 6, 12, 23); draft RSS14 (policies SS1, SS9, GPSR1, E3)
Structure Plan	P1/1, P2/2, P2/6
Existing LP policies	E6, E7, E8, E11
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include a sustainable, buoyant and balanced local economy. Specific action to ensure that the plan provides sufficient land to meet the needs of existing business and for sustainable business growth.
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	<i>Planning for Economic Development</i> (ODPM, 2004)

Reason for preferred approach

Office buildings tend to be used more intensively than other types of business premises (in terms of the number of workers per given area of floorspace). Hence to help reduce the need for travel by private car, it is important to locate large office developments where there is relatively good access by public transport. National guidance suggests that such proposals are most appropriately located in town centres wherever possible; as well as being accessible locations, this can help to support the vitality and viability of other town centre uses such as shops and restaurants. Where a suitable town centre site is not available, the policy approach steers office proposals to the next most accessible locations. The extent of town centre boundaries is indicated in Appendix 4.

The requirement to follow this sequential approach is not applied to small office schemes, as it is recognised that modest employment-generating uses can help to provide jobs in rural areas, and do not have the same potential impact as larger schemes in terms of trip generation. Nonetheless, it will be important to ensure that any increase in traffic that may be generated does not have an adverse impact upon the rural road network (see policy area T1).

Alternative approaches considered

The requirement to adopt a sequential approach to locating office developments is required by national guidance (PPS6).

A higher threshold could be employed for the scale of development to which the sequential approach applies (such as 1ha or 1,000m², in line with the ODPM definition of major development), but this would limit its approach only to very large developments (of which there are comparatively few in Huntingdonshire, given the relatively small size of its market towns); hence a lower threshold is appropriate in the local context, given the need to steer high-density forms of employment towards the most sustainable locations.

ECONOMY & TOURISM

Policy area

E2 Location of industrial and warehouse development

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Proposals for large industrial or warehouse developments (of at least 500m² gross floorspace, or a site area of 0.5ha +) on unallocated land should be limited to:
 - sites within the defined limits of the Market Towns and Key Centres (Potential & Limited Growth)
 - sites within established industrial estates, distribution and business parks
 - situations where an existing firm requires additional space in order to expand
 - the conversion or redevelopment of suitable existing buildings in the countryside, as provided for elsewhere in the plan
- Proposals for minor industrial or warehouse developments (of less than 500m² gross floorspace, or a site area of less than 0.5ha) will be allowed in the same locations, and additionally:
 - within the existing built-up framework of Smaller Settlements
 - as part of farm diversification schemes provided for elsewhere in the plan
- Within the established industrial estate at Little Staughton Airfield, proposals for industrial or warehouse development should not give rise to a net increase in floorspace on the site

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG4, PPS7, PPG13
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policies 6, 12, 23); draft RSS14 (policies SS1, SS9, GPSR1, E3)
Structure Plan	P1/1, P2/2, P2/6
Existing LP policies	E7, E8, E11, E15
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include a sustainable, buoyant and balanced local economy. Specific action to ensure that the plan provides sufficient land to meet the needs of existing business and for sustainable business growth.
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	<i>Planning for Economic Development</i> (ODPM, 2004)

Reason for preferred approach

As well as being occupied less intensively than office buildings, industrial and warehouse developments are much more likely to generate heavy vehicle movements, making them less appropriate for town centre locations. Nonetheless, in order to prevent inappropriate building in rural areas and limit the loss of undeveloped land, it is important to site major industrial or warehouse schemes in urban locations or in places where similar development already exists. In all cases regard will also need to be had to the importance of limiting the need to travel, and increasing opportunities to make journeys by foot, cycle or public transport (policy area P1).

As with office developments, a more flexible approach is appropriate in relation to small industrial and warehouse schemes, which can also help to provide jobs in rural areas. However, given their potential to generate heavy vehicle movements, it will be important to ensure that even small schemes will not have an adverse impact upon the rural road network (policy area T1).

Established industrial estates, distribution and business parks are listed and mapped in Appendix 4. Little Staughton Airfield Industrial Estate is subject to additional controls to limit the amount of development on the site, due to its isolated rural location and the poor quality of the surrounding road network.

Alternative approaches considered

None in relation to the basic approach to large developments: national and strategic guidance indicate the importance of focusing such schemes on urban areas and previously-developed sites, and taking into account opportunities for access by non-car modes.

A higher threshold could be employed for the scale of development to which the criteria for large schemes apply (such as 1ha or 1,000m², in line with the ODPM definition of major development), but this would limit its approach only to very large proposals. Industrial and warehouse developments of greater than 500m² / 0.5ha in Smaller Settlements or in the countryside (as part of farm diversification schemes) would be more likely to harm the character of rural areas.

ECONOMY & TOURISM

Policy area

E3 Redevelopment of office, industrial and warehouse sites

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that development proposals should not entail the loss of **established** industrial estates, distribution and business parks, or of other large sites used (or last used) for such purposes, unless it can be demonstrated that:

- Continued use of site for B1, B2 or B8 purposes is no longer feasible, taking into account the site's characteristics and existing / potential market demand; or
- Use of the site for B1, B2 or B8 purposes gives rise to unacceptable environmental or traffic problems; or
- An alternative use or mix of uses offers greater potential benefits to the community in meeting local business and employment needs

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG3, PPG4
RPG6 / draft RSS14	Draft RSS14 (policies E3, E5)
Structure Plan policies	
Existing LP policies	
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include a sustainable, buoyant and balanced local economy. Specific action to ensure that the plan provides sufficient land to meet the needs of existing business and for sustainable business growth
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	<i>Planning for Economic Development</i> (ODPM, 2004)

Reason for preferred approach

Government guidance encourages the re-use of industrial and commercial land for housing and mixed-use development, in circumstances where an oversupply of land for business purposes exists, or sites are no longer appropriate for business use. At the same time, the priority given to previously-developed land within larger settlements in finding sites for housing can lead to pressure for re-using industrial and commercial sites even when they are in active use. The premature loss of business land can harm local firms (who may find it difficult to find suitable replacement sites), lead to a loss of local employment, create pressure for development at the edge of settlements, and increase the need to travel to work. The availability of local employment that is suited to the skills of the local workforce is particularly important given high levels of net out-commuting from Huntingdonshire.

This policy approach puts reasonable checks in place to ensure that industrial and commercial sites are not lost prematurely. As well as applying to **established** industrial estates, distribution and business parks, it also covers other large employment sites and buildings (where the site area exceeds 0.5ha or the floorspace is greater than 500m²). Where the continued viability of the site for B1, B2 or B8 use is in question, applicants will be required to demonstrate that the site has been marketed at a realistic price for a period of time, or show that physical / operational constraints make it no longer suitable for business use.

Alternative approaches considered

No restrictions could be placed on the re-use of industrial and commercial land for other purposes, but this could be harmful to local firms and employment opportunities, increase the pressure for development outside urban areas, and increase the need to travel to work.

A higher size threshold for 'other large employment sites and buildings' (such as 1ha or 1,000m², in line with the ODPM definition of major development) could be employed, but this would lessen the extent to which the need for employment sites' retention could be checked prior to their conversion to other uses.

ECONOMY & TOURISM

Policy area

E4 Location of tourist facilities

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Proposals for large tourist facilities (of at least 500m² of floorspace, or a site area of 0.5ha +) on unallocated land should be limited to:
 - sites within the defined limits of the Market Towns and Key Centres (Potential & Limited Growth)
 - situations where an existing business requires additional space in order to expand
 - the conversion or redevelopment of suitable existing buildings in the countryside, as provided for elsewhere in the plan
- Proposals for minor tourist facilities below this threshold will be allowed in the same locations, and additionally:
 - within the existing built-up framework of Smaller Settlements
 - as part of farm diversification schemes provided for elsewhere in the plan
 - in association with strategic greenspace enhancement projects
 - in association with navigable waterways, provided the location adjoins or is well-related to an existing settlement
- Proposals for touring caravan and camp sites should be limited to locations that:
 - adjoin or are well-related to an existing settlement
 - enable the visual impact of development on the surrounding landscape to be minimised
- Visitor attractions that could attract large numbers of people should be accessible by a choice of means of transport, and offer good access by non-car modes
- Self-catering tourist accommodation should be restricted to holiday and seasonal occupation, to prevent permanent residential use becoming established

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS7; PPG13; PPG21
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 62); draft RSS14 (policy E13)
Structure Plan policies	P4/1
Existing LP policies	To2; To8; To9
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include a sustainable, buoyant and balanced local economy. Specific actions to promote the local economy through our rivers and waterways, and promote the cultural, environmental and leisure opportunities presented by the Great Fen project.
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	<i>Planning for Tourism</i> (National Planning Forum, 1998)

Reason for preferred approach

This policy approach applies to both accommodation for visitors and to attractions. Tourism and leisure are important contributors to the local economy, although there is scope for further growth of the sector, drawing particularly upon the district's environmental assets. It is important that tourism-related development takes place in a sustainable manner, and in particular to conserve the countryside and promote schemes in locations accessible by non-car modes.

Directing most tourist-related development to the Market Towns and Key Centres will help to achieve these ends, although the policy approach recognises that benefits can accrue from allowing existing facilities to expand, or through the conversion or redevelopment of existing buildings. Greater flexibility is also appropriate for small developments, which can help provide jobs in rural areas; as well as enabling such schemes within smaller settlements, the policy approach allows for limited development in the countryside if associated with farm diversification, strategic greenspace enhancement projects or waterways (these last two categories offering particular scope for broadening visits to Huntingdonshire).

The policy approach also recognises that touring caravan and camp sites are likely to be located outside urban areas, but includes necessary safeguards to ensure that the visual impact is minimised.

Alternative approaches considered

None in relation to the overall approach to locating tourist facilities, as national and strategic guidance makes clear that most tourism-related development should be focused on towns and key centres (to help minimise the need for car-borne travel), and that developments in the countryside should make use of existing buildings where possible. National guidance also indicates that the visual impact of touring caravan sites should be minimised.

A higher size threshold for 'large tourist facilities' (such as 1ha or 1,000m², in line with the ODPM definition of major development) could be employed, but this would give greater scope for substantial tourist-related facilities in Smaller Settlements and the countryside, contrary to the objectives of limiting car-borne travel and protecting the character of the countryside.

ECONOMY & TOURISM

Policy area

E5 Re-use and redevelopment of rural buildings

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Proposals to re-use existing buildings in the countryside for business purposes (including tourist accommodation and retailing) should conserve the character of any buildings of historic or visual interest
- Proposals to redevelop existing buildings in the countryside for business purposes (including tourist accommodation and retailing) should:
 - be limited to situations where the existing building is substantially intact
 - not involve a significant increase in the scale of built development
 - not entail the loss of a building of historic or visual interest
- Any proposals to re-use or redevelop an existing building in the countryside for retail purposes should be limited to projects forming part of a farm diversification scheme, and should not exceed 500m² of floorspace

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS7
RPG6 / draft RSS14	
Structure Plan policies	P2/6
Existing LP policies	E10, To3
Community Strategy	
Best practice guidance	<i>Planning for Rural Diversification – A Good Practice Guide (DoE, 1995)</i>
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

Many buildings in the countryside used for farming and other activities can be re-employed for a variety of purposes, but it is important to ensure that any proposal is appropriate both for the building itself and for the area in which it lies. Huntingdonshire contains large numbers of old farm buildings, mills and other structures that are of historic or visual interest and make an important contribution to the character of the area; any schemes for their re-use should ensure that these qualities are conserved, whether the building is listed or not.

Many proposals for the conversion of modern farm buildings are also received. In such cases particular regard will be had to other policies in the plan concerning the impact of development on its surroundings, including the scale and nature of traffic generated. These considerations apply to all proposals, but are particularly relevant to the re-use of modern buildings in the countryside, as most are large and of utilitarian appearance.

The redevelopment of existing buildings in the countryside may also be permitted – this can range from partial reconstruction to their complete replacement. Given the need to protect the character of the countryside, additional safeguards are needed to ensure that this does not result in an increased scale of development or the loss of buildings that should be retained. Nor will redevelopment be permitted where a building is in a ruinous condition or only its site remains, as this would mean allowing building in locations where the previous structure has, in effect, disappeared (or is in the process of doing so).

Strict limits on re-use or redevelopment for retail purposes are appropriate, given the need to limit unnecessary car-borne trips and sustain the vitality and viability of existing village services. However, farm shops can make a useful contribution to farm diversification schemes and will be permitted provided their scale is limited and there is no conflict with other policies in the plan.

Alternative approaches considered

None. The re-use or redevelopment of existing buildings in the countryside for business purposes is encouraged by national guidance, subject to appropriate criteria being included in plans or supplementary guidance. The criteria suggested above are appropriate given the need to avoid adverse impacts upon buildings of historic or visual importance, or upon the wider character of Huntingdonshire's rural areas.

ECONOMY & TOURISM

Policy area

E6 Farm Diversification

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that developments forming part of farm diversification schemes should:

- Make an ongoing contribution to sustaining the farm business as a whole
- Not involve built development on previously undeveloped sites unless:
 - the re-use or redevelopment of existing buildings on the holding for the intended use is not feasible, or an opportunity exists to demolish an existing structure and re-build in a more appropriate location; and
 - the proposed floorspace does not exceed 500m²; and
 - the siting and landscaping ensure that any impact upon the character and appearance of the countryside is minimised, and the development can be assimilated into its surroundings
- Not involve residential development unless it complies with all other policies in the plan

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS7
RPG6 / draft RSS14	Draft RSS14 (policy E5)
Structure Plan policies	P2/6
Existing LP policies	E10, To11
Community Strategy	
Best practice guidance	<i>Planning for Rural Diversification – A Good Practice Guide</i> (DoE, 1995)
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

There is a need to facilitate the diversification of farm-based operations in order to support agricultural businesses and sustain the rural economy. Farm diversification can entail various types of enterprise, such as food processing, farm shops, tourist accommodation, creating workshops for letting to local firms and providing recreation facilities. It is important to ensure that diversification schemes bring long-term and genuine benefits to individual farm operations and the wider rural area.

Diversification will in most cases involve changing the use of land and/or re-using (or redeveloping) existing buildings. Development on new sites will be discouraged unless it is the only feasible option, or enables the clearance and replacement of a badly-sited structure. The policy approach outlined above sets out necessary criteria to ensure that any building on previously undeveloped sites is small in scale and carried out in the most environmentally sensitive manner.

Alternative approaches considered

Any building on previously undeveloped land in association with farm diversification schemes could be prohibited in order to maximise protection of the countryside from further development. However, this would place a more stringent limitation on the ability of farm businesses to diversify, which in itself could harm the character of the countryside (as healthy farm businesses are necessary if farmers are to be able to maintain their holdings).

Conversely, a more flexible approach to the siting and/or scale of new development could be employed (for example, by removing the presumption that existing buildings should be re-used where possible, or by increasing the maximum size of buildings allowed). However, this would increase the likelihood that new buildings would be erected in preference to using re-using existing structures, thereby increasing the amount of built development in the countryside. If a retail use were involved (such as a farm shop), allowing a greater scale of development would in addition be likely to attract a greater volume of car-borne trips, contrary to government guidance.

ECONOMY & TOURISM

Policy area

E7 Town centres, primary shopping areas and primary frontages

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will:

- Identify town centres, primary shopping areas and primary frontages within the Market Towns of St Neots, Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey.
- Define the town centres as areas where retail, service, leisure, cultural and office uses predominate (although these may be interspersed with limited areas of high-density housing)
- Define the primary shopping areas as those parts of the town centre where retail uses are focused
- Define the primary shopping frontages as those parts of the town centre where A1 retail uses predominate (in general, occupying at least 70% of ground floor units)
- Indicate that within primary shopping frontages development proposals should:
 - not result in more than 30% of ground floor units in the primary frontage being in other (non-A1) uses
 - not create an over-concentration of other uses within a particular section of the frontage (measured as a continuous frontage of three or more units in non-retail use)

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS6
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 13); draft RSS14 (policies SS5, E9)
Structure Plan policies	P3/1
Existing LP policies	S1, S12, S13
Community Strategy	Priority action to improve the collective benefits of the town centres (their facilities, competitiveness and appeal)
Best practice guidance	<i>Vital and Viable Town Centres: Meeting the Challenge</i> (DoE, 1994)
Other sources	<i>Huntingdonshire Retail Study</i> (HDC, 2001) <i>Producing Boundaries and Statistics for Town Centres: Interim Report</i> (ODPM, 2004)

Reason for preferred approach

Huntingdonshire's town centres perform a variety of functions. As well as providing a wide range of shops and services, they are centres of employment, entertainment and tourism, and a focus for public transport routes. They also offer opportunities for providing housing in locations where the need to travel is minimised. Maintaining the vitality and viability of these centres is important if these functions are to be retained and enhanced.

Defining the town centres and primary shopping areas provides a clear basis for the operation of policies to guide the location of retail, leisure and business development, and to promote higher residential densities in places with good access to facilities. Identifying primary shopping frontages within the town centres is an important tool in maintaining their attractiveness as shopping destinations, as a concentration of retail facilities contributes strongly to the vitality and viability of a centre. It also helps to ensure the continued availability of a wide range of shops that can be accessed by a choice of transport modes.

A concentration of non-retail uses in primary frontages can have an adverse impact upon their appearance and role as core shopping areas. However, the policy approach does allow for a limited amount of non-retail use within primary frontages, in recognition of the fact that complementary activities (such as food and drink outlets and financial services) can support the attractiveness of these areas so long as they do not come to dominate them.

Maps indicating the proposed extent of the town centres, primary shopping areas and primary frontages are contained in Appendix 5.

Alternative approaches considered

None. The identification of town centres, primary shopping areas and primary frontages is required by national and strategic guidance.

ECONOMY & TOURISM

Policy area

E8 Location of retail and leisure development

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Proposals for large retail or leisure developments (of at least 500m² gross floorspace, or a site area of 0.5 ha+) on unallocated sites should be:
 - limited to land within the defined limits of the market towns
 - situated within the town centres where capacity exists, provided the scale and nature of development is consistent with the function and character of the centre
- Where large retail or leisure developments cannot be accommodated within a town centre, it should be demonstrated that:
 - a need exists for the scale and nature of development proposed
 - no sequentially preferable site is suitable or available (starting with edge of centre sites¹, then out-of-centre locations)
 - the proposal will not have a significant adverse impact upon the vitality and viability of existing town centre retail or leisure facilities
 - the site offers potential to maximise accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport
- Proposals for minor retail or leisure developments (of less than 500m² gross floorspace, or a site area of less than 0.5 ha) will be allowed within the defined limits of the Market Towns and Key Centres, and within the existing built-up framework of Smaller Settlements, provided:
 - the development would not have an adverse impact upon the range of shopping or leisure facilities within the settlement
 - the site offers potential to maximise accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport

¹ For the purpose of this policy approach, this means sites within easy walking distance (up to 300 metres) of the primary shopping area

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS6, PPG17
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 13); draft RSS14 (policies SS5, E10)
Structure Plan	P3/1, P3/2
Existing LP policies	S1, S3, S4, S7, S9, S16
Community Strategy	Priority action to improve the collective benefits of the town centres (their facilities, competitiveness and appeal). Specific action to promote each of the market towns, including the provision of suitable premises for larger retailers and enhancing the choice and variety of evening activities
Best practice guidance	<i>Vital and Viable Town Centres: Meeting the Challenge</i> (DoE, 1994)
Other sources	<i>Huntingdonshire Retail Study</i> (HDC, 2001)

Reason for preferred approach

Directing large retail and leisure developments to the town centres helps to underpin their vitality and viability, limits the need to travel by car, and means that services and facilities are accessible to those who do not have access to private transport. Where suitable sites within the town centres do not exist, and there is a need for the development, the policy approach requires schemes to be located in the most sustainable locations possible in terms of accessibility. The requirement that any such proposals should not have an adverse impact upon town centre facilities is an important safeguard against harm to the centres of Huntingdonshire's market towns.

Greater flexibility can be allowed in locating smaller retail and leisure developments that are unlikely to have a detrimental impact upon the town centres, will attract fewer numbers of people, and which will in some cases provide for neighbourhood or village shopping needs. Nevertheless, it is still important to locate these facilities where the best opportunities exist to reach them by non-car modes.

Alternative approaches considered

None. This approach is required by national and strategic guidance.

ECONOMY & TOURISM

Policy area

E9 Retention of local services and facilities

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Development proposals should not result in an unacceptable reduction in the availability of key services and facilities in a settlement, unless it can be demonstrated that:
 - there is no reasonable prospect of the established use being retained or resurrected
 - there is little evidence of public support for the retention of the facility
- When considering whether an unacceptable reduction would occur, consideration will be given to:
 - whether the facility is the last of its type within the settlement (or within an individual neighbourhood within one of the Market Towns)
 - whether the loss of the facility would have a detrimental impact upon the overall vitality and viability of a Key Centre (Potential Growth or Limited Growth)
- For the purpose of this policy, key services and facilities include local shops, post offices, public houses, filling stations, public halls and health care facilities

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS6; PPS7
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 12); draft RSS14 (policy SS9)
Structure Plan policies	P3/3, P3/4
Existing LP policies	S17
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include easy and affordable access to services and facilities.
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

The loss of the last remaining shop, public house or other key facility in a village or neighbourhood can have a serious impact upon access to services (particularly for those without the use of a car), as well as increasing the need to travel and harming the overall vitality of the local community.

In Key Centres, proposals that would result in a significant loss of facilities (even though this may not involve the last shop or service of a particular type) could also have a serious impact. This is due to the role these settlements play in providing a range of facilities for the local area – a role which could be undermined should significant losses occur.

This policy approach contains safeguards to prevent the premature loss of such uses where a demand for them still exists, in order to maintain the availability of important local facilities wherever possible.

Alternative approaches considered

None. National guidance (PPS6, PPS7) requires local planning authorities to have policies that support the retention of key local facilities.

TRANSPORT & UTILITIES

Policy area

T1 **Transport impacts**

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that development proposals should:

- Be capable of being served by safe and convenient access to the highway network
- Not give rise to traffic volumes that exceed the capacity of the local or strategic highway network
- Not cause harm to the character of the surrounding area as a result of the amount or type of traffic generated
- Be accompanied by a transport assessment (or transport statement, depending upon the size of scheme and its potential impact), together with a travel plan for any non-residential schemes that could have significant implications for movement

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG13; PPS23
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 31); draft RSS14 (policies T1, T11)
Structure Plan policies	P8/1, P8/2
Existing LP policies	T18
Community Strategy	
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

It is important that development does not have an unacceptable impact on the transport network, and that opportunities are taken to promote relatively sustainable forms of travel. The ability to achieve a suitable connection to the highway is a basic planning consideration: it is essential that access is planned and designed to be safe for vehicle users, cyclists and pedestrians, both on and off-site. Equally, applicants should demonstrate that proposals will not overload the surrounding road network.

Road traffic can have a significant effect on the environment of both rural and urban areas, and this will also need to be considered in assessing the appropriateness of development. Particular attention will need to be paid to proposals that could generate a large net increase in trips, or to movements of heavy vehicles, or to high levels of on-street parking in the surrounding area.

Where a proposal could have significant transport implications a full transport assessment will be required; this will identify potential impacts and propose suitable mitigation measures. In the case of minor developments a simpler 'transport statement' which identifies potential trip levels and addresses any localised transport issues will be more appropriate.

For non-residential schemes that could have significant transport impacts, the preparation of a travel plan enables options for promoting sustainable forms of movement to be explored, including measures to promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

Alternative approaches considered

The requirement for safe access to the highway, and for the traffic volumes generated to be within the capacity of the highway network, is required by national and strategic guidance (as are the requirements for transport assessments and travel plans). The additional safeguard that traffic should not cause harm to the character of the surrounding area could be omitted, but this would weaken the ability to prevent harm to the environment as a result of the qualitative nature of the traffic generated.

TRANSPORT & UTILITIES

Policy area

T2 Car and cycle parking

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Development proposals should limit the amount of car parking provided to the levels set out in the Council's parking standards
- Indicate that those maximum standards will **be based upon** the interim standards that accompany the existing Huntingdonshire Local Plan
- Developments requiring public car parking should share facilities where their location and patterns of use permit
- Minimum levels of cycle parking and car parking for people with impaired mobility will be required

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG3; PPG13
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 28); draft RSS14 (policy T16)
Structure Plan policies	P8/5
Existing LP policies	T28
Community Strategy	
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

The availability of car parking can have a significant impact on people's choice of transport. Limiting car parking spaces in new developments, alongside encouraging the use of more sustainable transport modes, can help to reduce car use and associated fuel consumption, pollution and congestion. Car parking can also occupy a great deal of space, affecting both the appearance and the density of new development. The one exception to the use of maximum standards is the provision of spaces for disabled people, for whom adequate parking in convenient locations is essential.

It is important to set minimum bicycle parking standards because the availability of a secure place to park cycles is a key determinant in whether people choose to use this method of transport.

Encouraging the shared use of car parking spaces, particularly in town centres, by taking advantage of activities where the peak demands do not coincide, will help reduce the overall number of spaces required and hence the amount of land-take involved.

Proposed standards for car and cycle parking are contained in Appendix 6.

Alternative approaches considered

None. This approach is required by national and strategic guidance.

TRANSPORT & UTILITIES

Policy area

T3 Rights of way and other public routes

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that development proposals should:

- Maintain the existing network of rights of way and other routes with established public access
- Exploit opportunities to extend, link or improve the quality of existing routes where this enables one or more of the following:
 - improved access to the countryside
 - new circular routes and connections between local and long-distance footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes
 - the provision of safe and convenient links to services and facilities
 - improved connections with public transport interchanges

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG13
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 27); draft RSS14 (policy T12)
Structure Plan policies	P4/2, P8/1, P8/2, P8/8, P8/9
Existing LP policies	R15, T19, T20
Community Strategy	Specific actions of maintaining, improving and expanding routes for pedestrians, cyclists and those with mobility difficulties; improving access to the countryside; and promoting exercise in schools and our communities
Best practice guidance	<i>Bikeframe: A Model Cycling Policy</i> (Cyclists Public Affairs Group, 1997)
Other sources	<i>Encouraging Walking: Advice to Local Authorities</i> (DETR, 2000)

Reason for preferred approach

Rights of Way and other routes with established public access (such as permissive paths and the national cycle network) are key assets, linking residential areas to services, facilities and places of employment, and providing a wide range of informal recreation opportunities. There is considerable scope for their use to increase. Within Huntingdonshire, 72% of all trips are fewer than five miles in length, and 50% fewer than two miles in length, suggesting that car-borne trips could be reduced if the quality and convenience of routes is improved (along with improvements to associated facilities such as secure cycle parking). In addition, the growing interest in healthier lifestyles and outdoor pursuits places increasing demands upon the existing network, especially in popular parts of the countryside.

Against this background it is important to prevent any adverse impact upon the existing Rights of Way network, or upon other routes with established public access, unless very good reasons exist for closure or diversion (and suitable alternative routes are provided). Equally, opportunities should be taken to link, extend or improve the quality of footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes where possible.

Alternative approaches considered

None. The safeguarding and creation of convenient routes for pedestrians and cyclists is required by national and strategic guidance.

TRANSPORT & UTILITIES

Policy area

T4 Telecommunications

Preferred approach

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Proposals for telecommunications development should:
 - ensure that any impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape or townscape is minimised through careful siting and design
 - demonstrate that reasonable steps have been taken to minimise the amount of apparatus to be erected (e.g. by sharing a mast or other existing installation)
- Conditions will be imposed requiring the removal of any mast/apparatus and reinstatement of the site to its former condition when it becomes redundant

Policy source(s)

PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPG8
RPG6 / draft RSS14	
Structure Plan policies	P6/5
Existing LP policies	
Community Strategy	Desired outcomes include improved and sustainable infrastructure for communities, easy and affordable access to services and facilities, and a high quality built and natural environment
Best practice guidance	
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach

Modern telecommunications are an important part of life for local communities and make a significant contribution to the national economy. They have a specific role in promoting sustainable communities, by helping to counteract the effects of relative remoteness in rural areas, and limiting the need to travel for work, information/learning and shopping. It is government policy to facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. This policy approach reflects this advice by setting out appropriate criteria to guide the location and design of necessary development.

As telecommunications technology changes rapidly, it is likely that some equipment will become redundant over time. Hence it is reasonable to impose conditions requiring its removal should this occur, in order to prevent unnecessary environmental intrusion (especially where masts and associated equipment are situated in the open countryside).

Alternative approaches considered

None. This approach is required by national guidance.

TRANSPORT & UTILITIES

Policy area	
T5	Renewable Energy

Preferred approach	
<p>Policies in the plan will indicate that proposals for generating energy from renewable sources such as wind, biomass and solar systems will be supported in principle, but should (whether individually or cumulatively with other schemes):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise any adverse impacts upon the environment and amenity through careful siting and design • Not cause harm to sites or areas of national importance for conservation¹, unless it can be shown that the overall value of the site/area would not be compromised, and that any significant harm is outweighed by the wider social, economic and environmental benefits of the scheme • Not cause harm to sites of international importance for conservation², unless no alternative sites exist and development is imperative in the public interest • Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, make provision for appropriate mitigation and compensation measures, such as landscape works and habitat enhancement or relocation • Make provision for the removal of any apparatus and reinstatement of the site to its former condition should it become redundant <p>¹ In Huntingdonshire, these include Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings</p> <p>² In Huntingdonshire, these include Special Areas of Conservation and RAMSAR sites</p>	

Policy source(s)	
PPGs / PPSs / Circulars	PPS 22
RPG6 / draft RSS14	RPG6 (policy 60); draft RSS14 (policy ENV8)
Structure Plan policies	P7/7
Existing LP policies	
Community Strategy	Specific actions to investigate sites and sources for renewable energy through the preparation of Local Development Documents, and to promote opportunities for local renewable energy projects.
Best practice guidance	<i>Planning for Renewable Energy: A Companion Guide to PPS22</i> (ODPM, 2004)
Other sources	

Reason for preferred approach	
<p>Together with energy conservation measures, the exploitation of renewable energy sources is central to efforts to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and achieve reductions in CO₂ emissions. Research has demonstrated significant potential for renewable energy generation in the area, especially in relation to biomass, wind energy and solar power.</p> <p>Government policy encourages renewable energy schemes unless the environmental impacts would outweigh the wider social, economic and environmental advantages that stem from making greater use of renewable energy potential. This policy approach indicates the key safeguards that will be applied to ensure that the risk of adverse impacts is minimised. A range of issues will need to be considered, including the effects upon amenity such as noise generation, shadow flicker and electromagnetic disturbance, as well as the impact upon the natural and built environment.</p>	

As with telecommunications, renewable energy technology can change rapidly. Hence it is reasonable to require arrangements for the removal of any equipment should it cease to be operational, in order to prevent unnecessary environmental intrusion (especially where masts and associated structures are situated in the open countryside). Appropriate conditions will be imposed where feasible.

Alternative approaches considered

None. This approach is required by national and strategic guidance.

APPENDIX 1 LIST OF SMALLER SETTLEMENTS

The places proposed for designation as Smaller Settlements are listed below. They comprise those villages whose size and access to facilities do not support their designation as a Key Centre (see the Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper), but which contain at least 30 dwellings forming a cohesive and distinct group:

Abbotsley	Great Paxton	Ramsey Forty Foot
Abbots Ripton	Great Raveley	Ramsey Heights
Alconbury	Great Staughton	Ramsey Mereside
Alconbury Weston	Great Stukeley	Ramsey St Mary's
Alwalton	Hail Weston	Southoe
Bluntisham	Hamerton	Spaldwick
Brington	Hemingford Abbots	Stibbington
Broughton	Hemingford Grey	Stilton
Buckworth	Hilton	Stonely
Bythorn	Holme	Stow Longa
Catworth	Holywell	Tilbrook
Chesterton	Houghton	Toseland
Colne	Keyston	Upton
Conington	Kings Ripton	Upwood
Covington	Leighton Bromswold	Wansford (part) ²
Diddington	Little Stukeley	Waresley
Earith	London Road (St Ives) ¹	Water Newton
Easton	Molesworth	Winwick
Ellington	Needingworth	Wistow
Elton	Offord Cluny	Woodhurst
Farcet	Offord D'Arcy	Woodwalton
Folksworth	Oldhurst	Wyton
Glatton	Old Weston	Wyton-on-the-Hill
Grafham	Perry	Yelling
Great Gidding	Pidley	
Great Gransden	Pondersbridge (part) ²	

¹ The built-up area adjoining London Road to the south of St Ives, and lying within the parishes of Fenstanton and Hemingford Grey

² The greater part of these settlements lies within neighbouring authorities: in Fenland (Pondersbridge) and Peterborough (Wansford)

APPENDIX 2 INDICATIVE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES

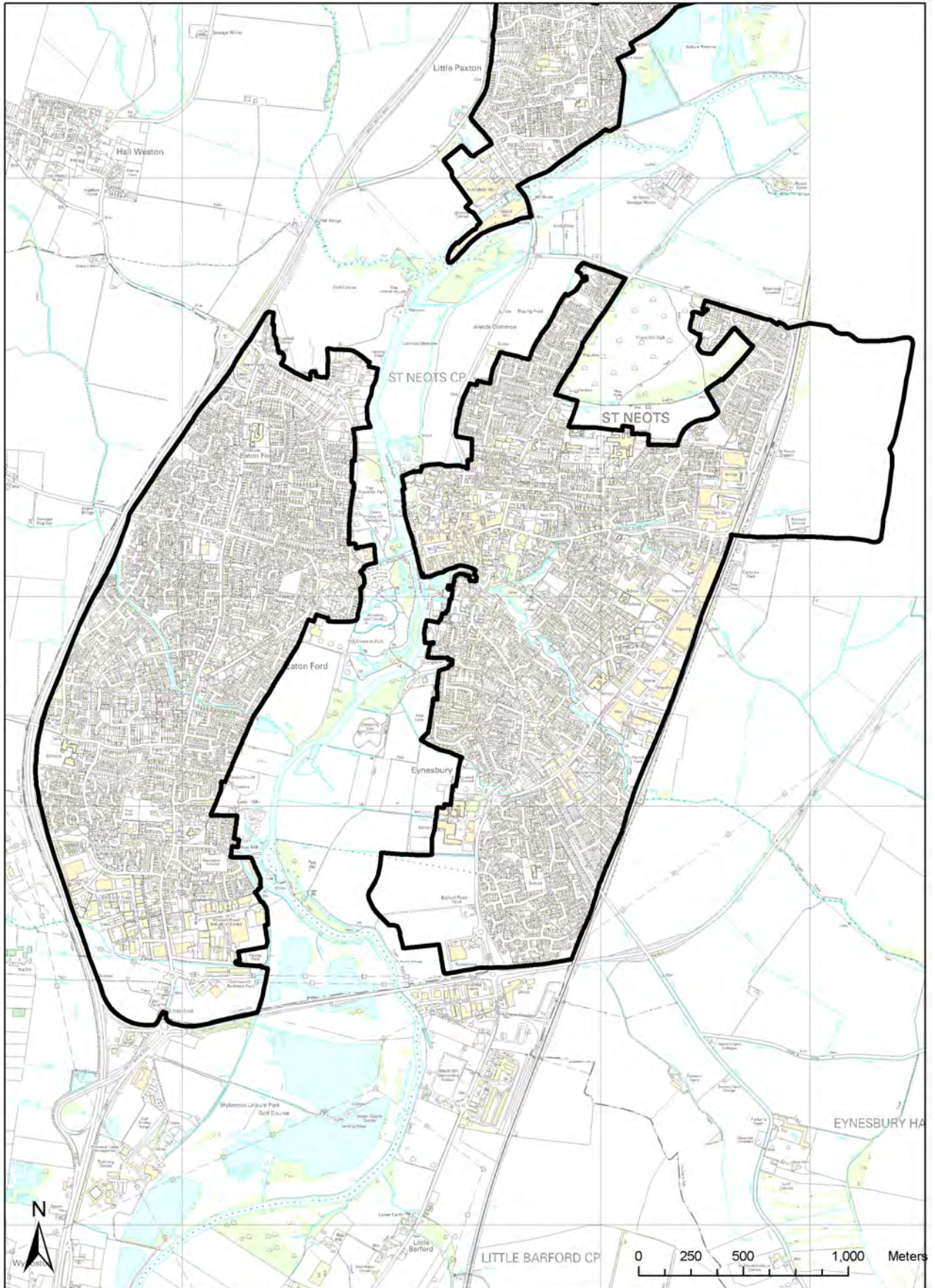
The maps on the following pages illustrate the general extent of the settlement boundaries proposed for the Market Towns and Key Centres (Potential Growth and Limited Growth) – see Policy Area P3.

In general the boundaries follow the edge of each settlement, but in places include marginally more land than the 'built-up framework' would imply. This reflects the following factors:

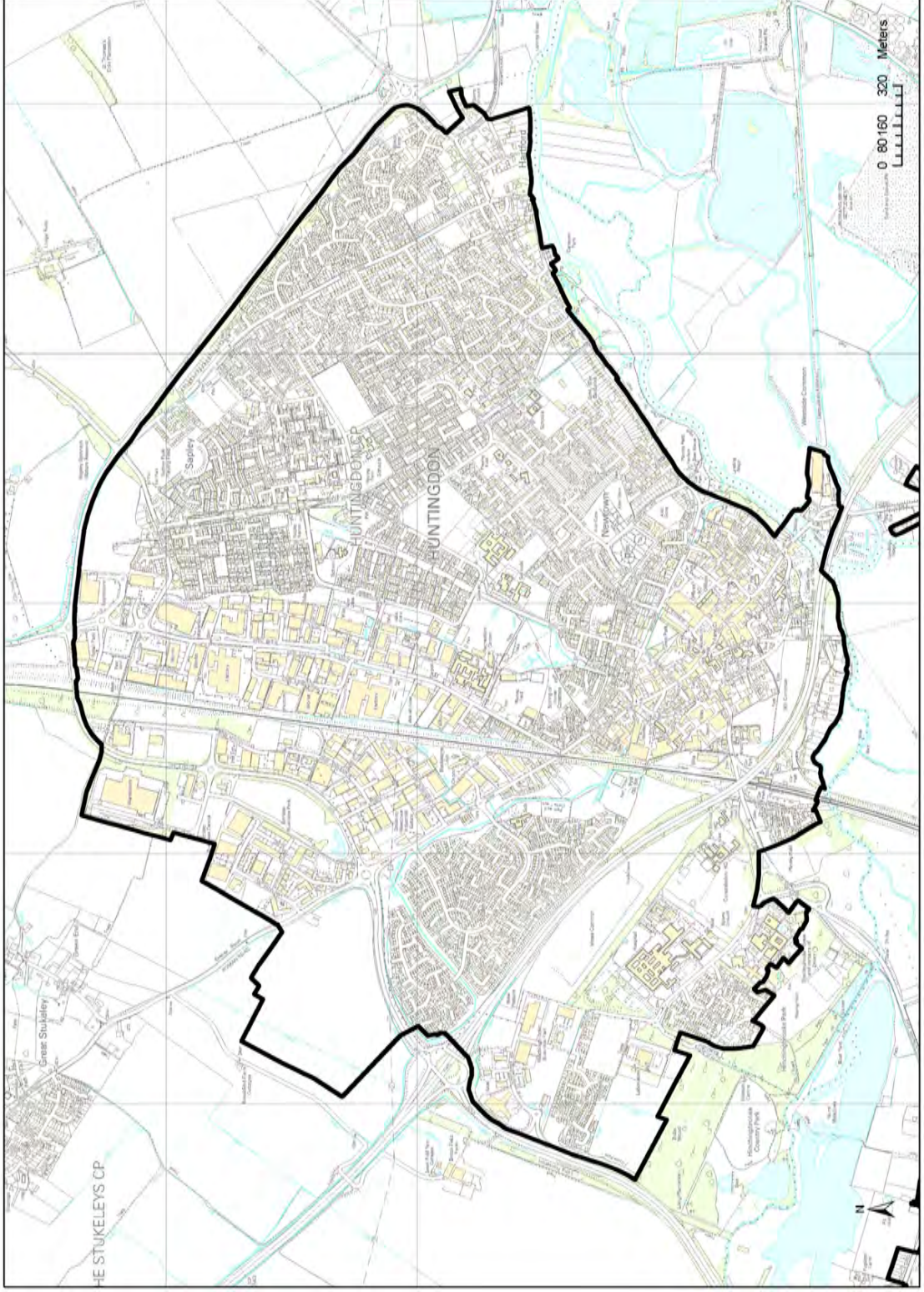
- Undeveloped land within the curtilage of buildings at the periphery (e.g. back gardens) has been included where it does not extend significantly into the countryside and a clear edge to the properties can be discerned.
- Where a major physical feature (such as a railway or major road) lies close to the edge of the built-up framework and forms a clear limit to the settlement, the boundary has been drawn to follow this feature.
- The settlement hierarchy provides for a less restrictive approach to development in the Market Towns and Key Centres than in the Smaller Settlements (where the built-up framework will be used to differentiate between the village and the countryside beyond). Hence it is appropriate to apply a more stringent approach in determining the extent of the Smaller Settlements.

Small areas of built development that lie close to the boundary of a Market Town or Key Centre, but do not adjoin it, have been excluded and will be regarded as 'countryside' for policy purposes (unless identified as a Smaller Settlement in their own right).

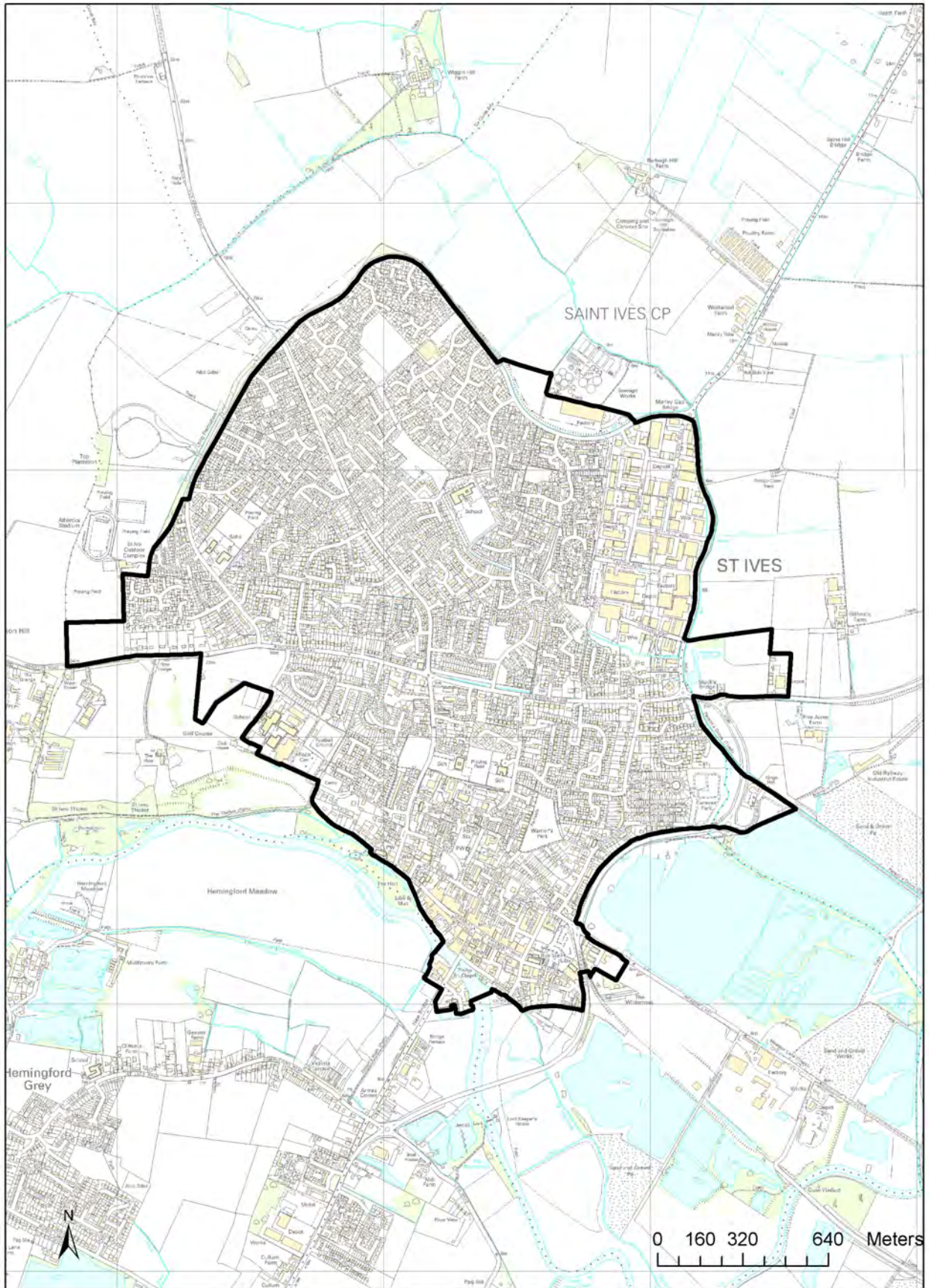
ST NEOTS: INDICATIVE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY



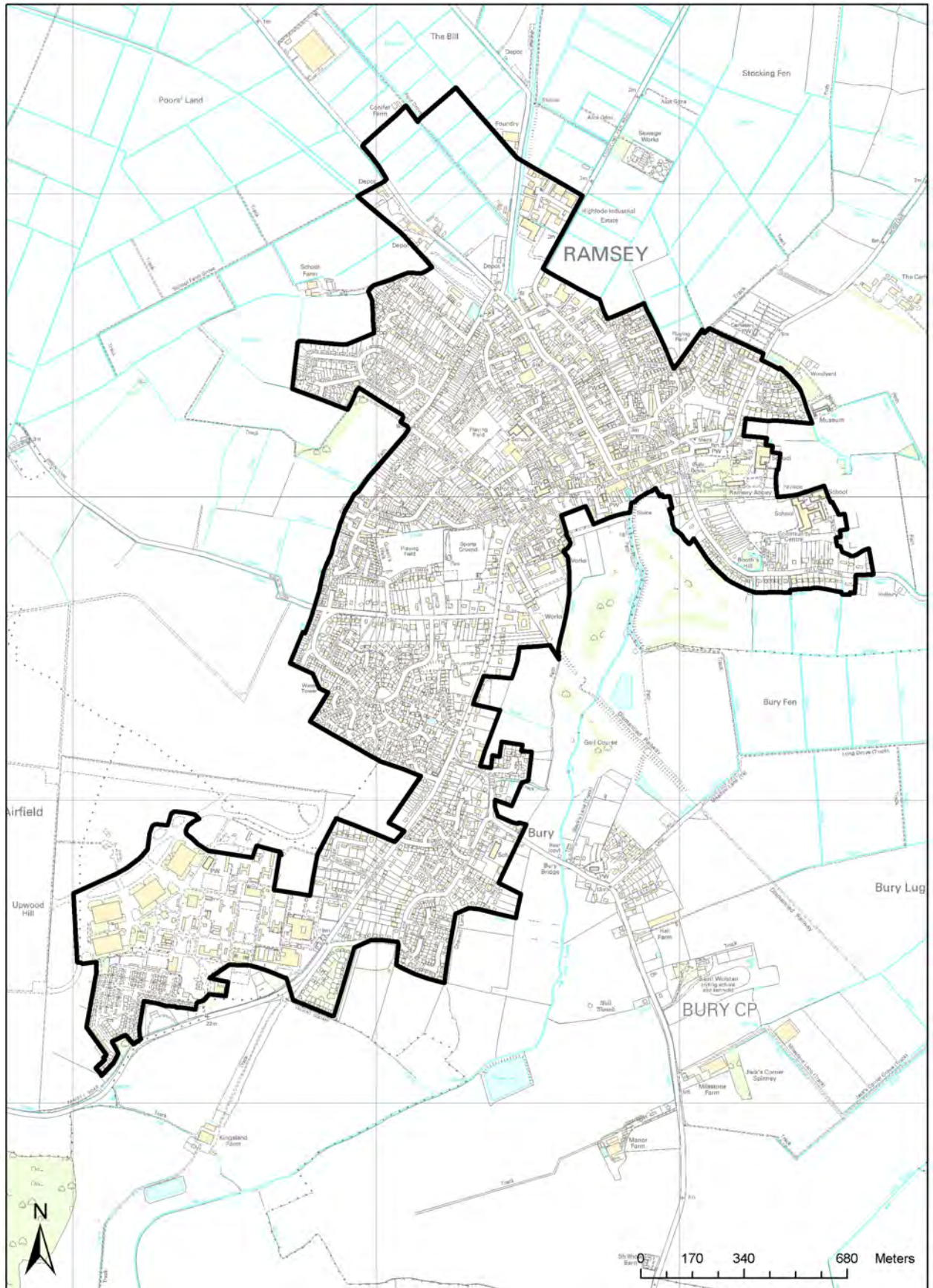
HUNTINGDON: INDICATIVE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY



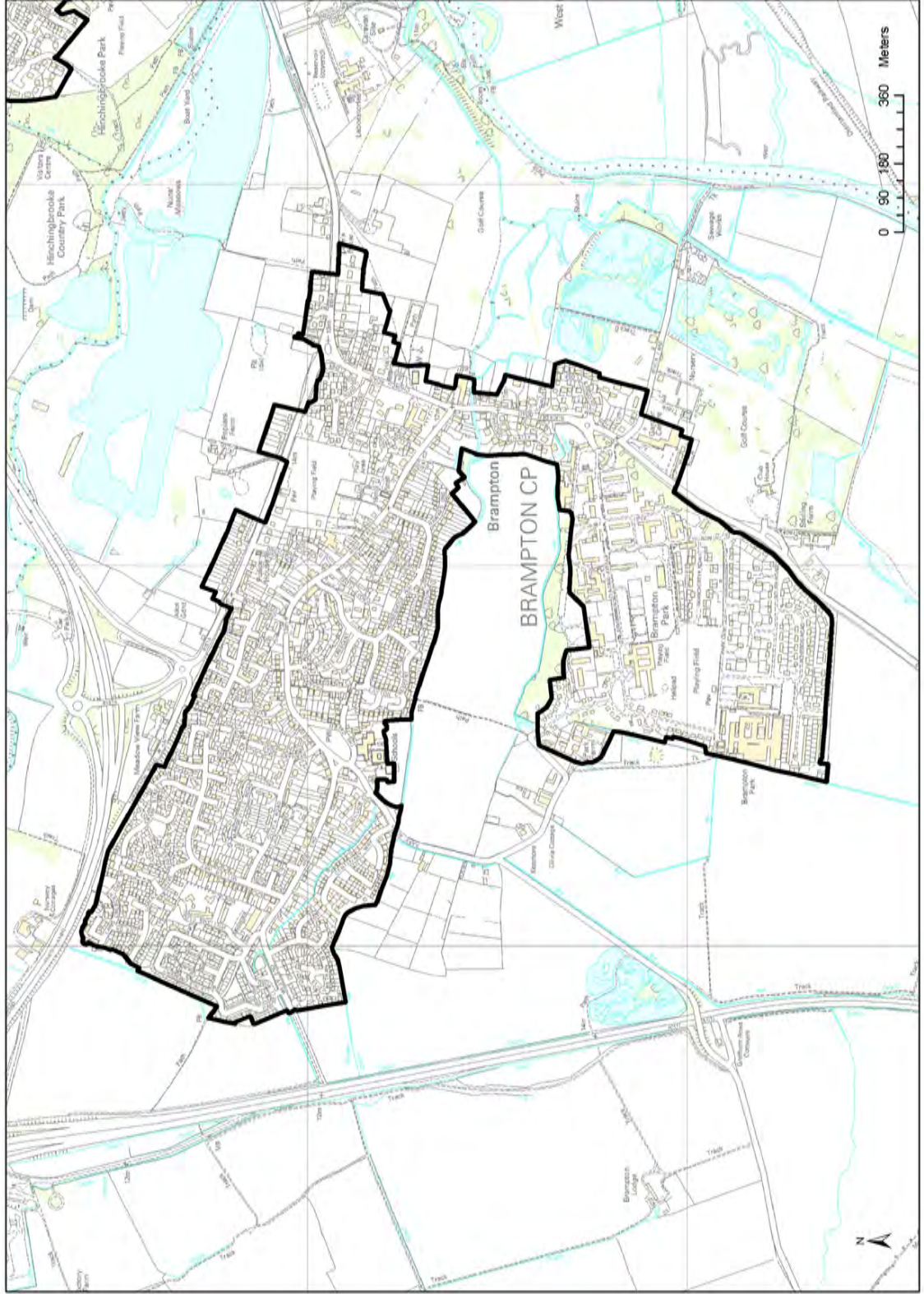
ST IVES: INDICATIVE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY



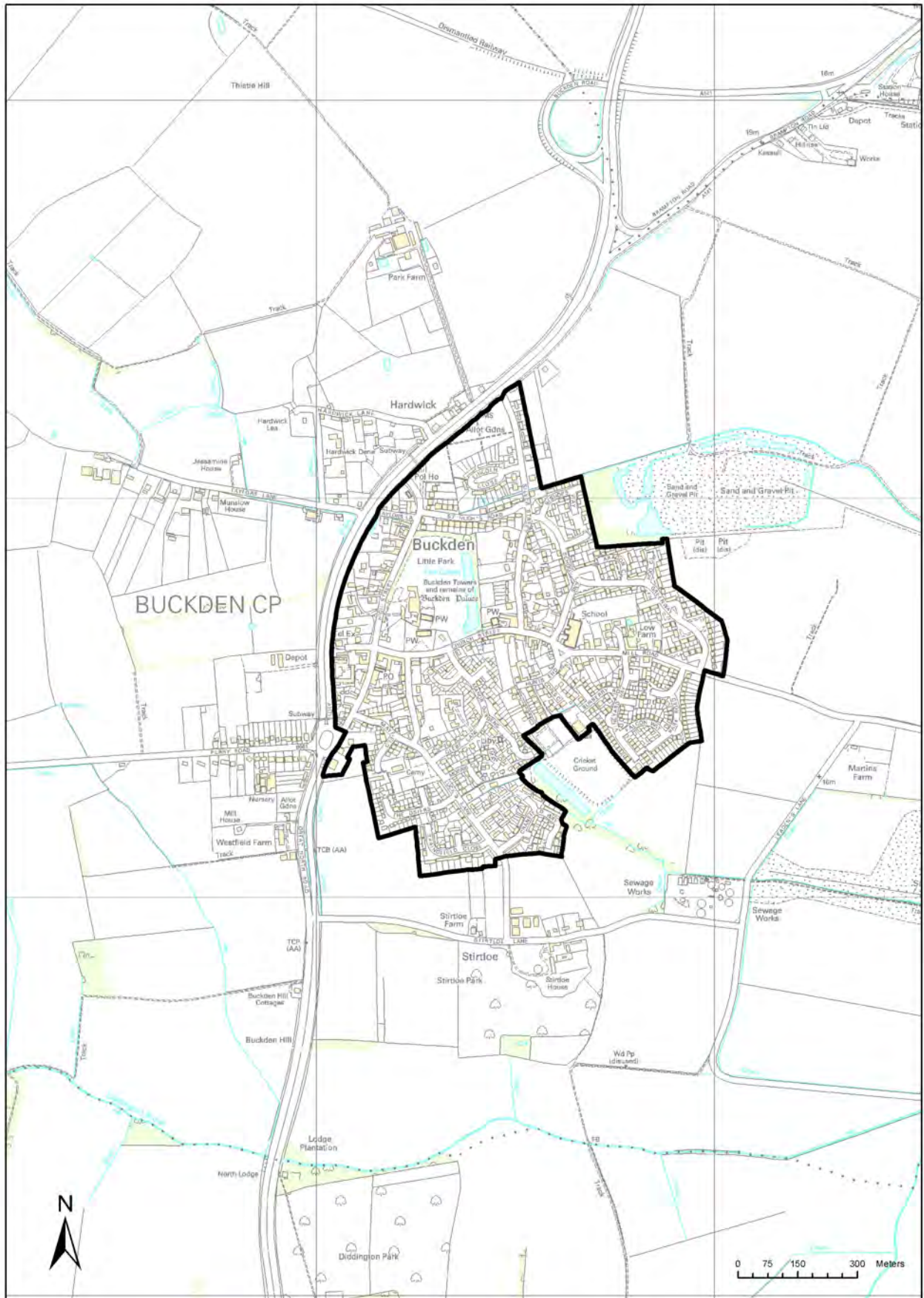
RAMSEY & BURY: INDICATIVE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY



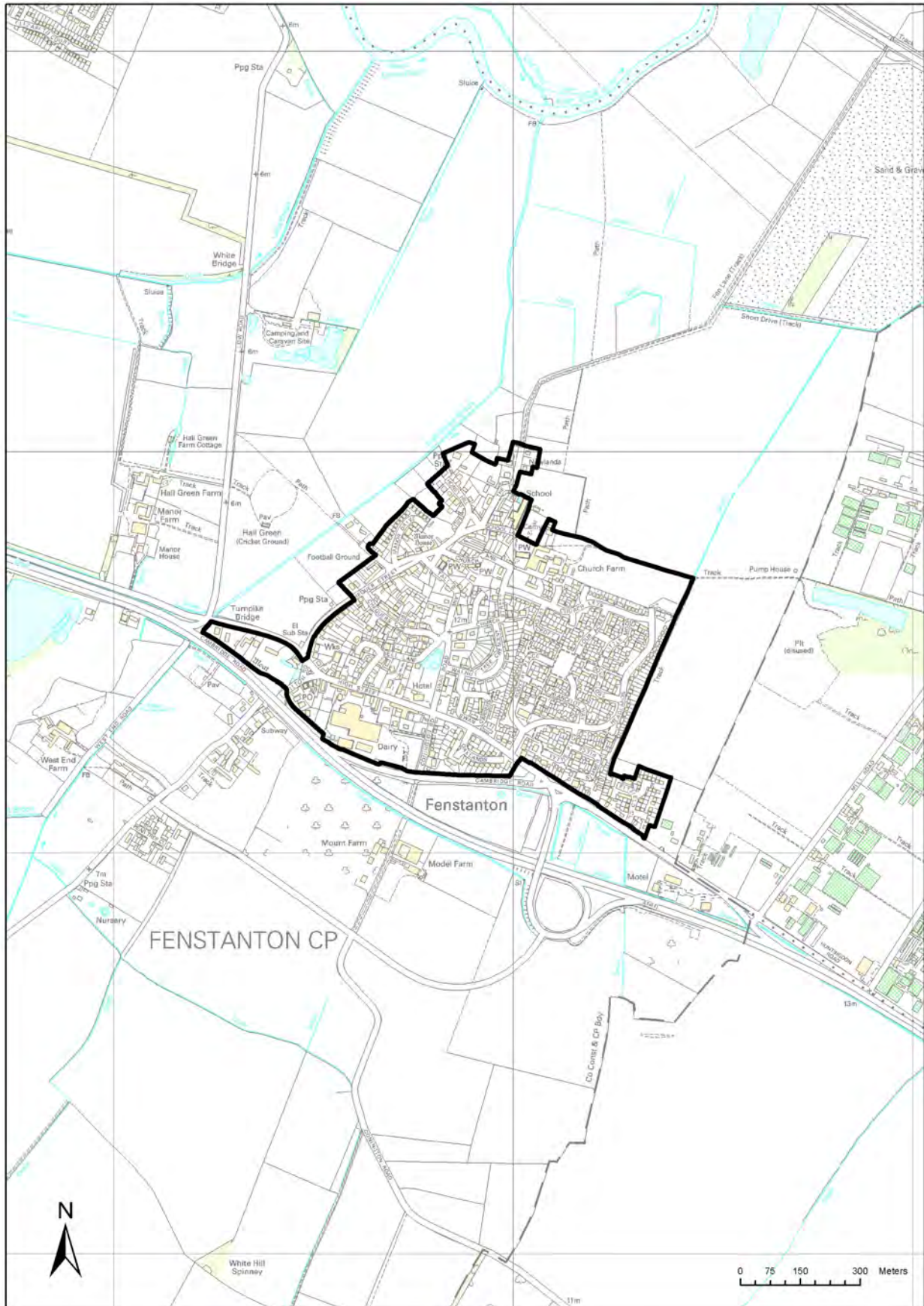
BRAMPTON: INDICATIVE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY



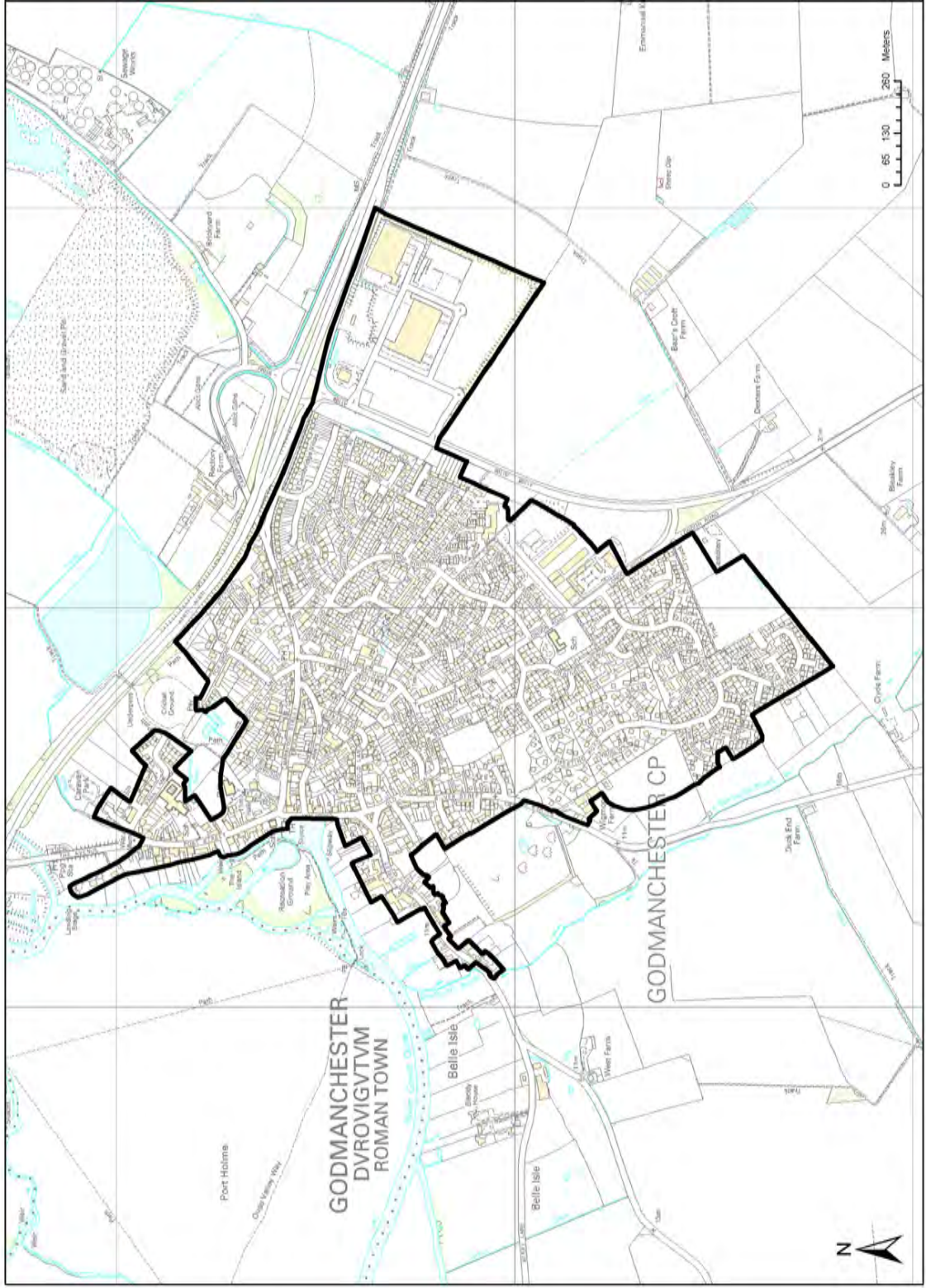
BUCKDEN: INDICATIVE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY



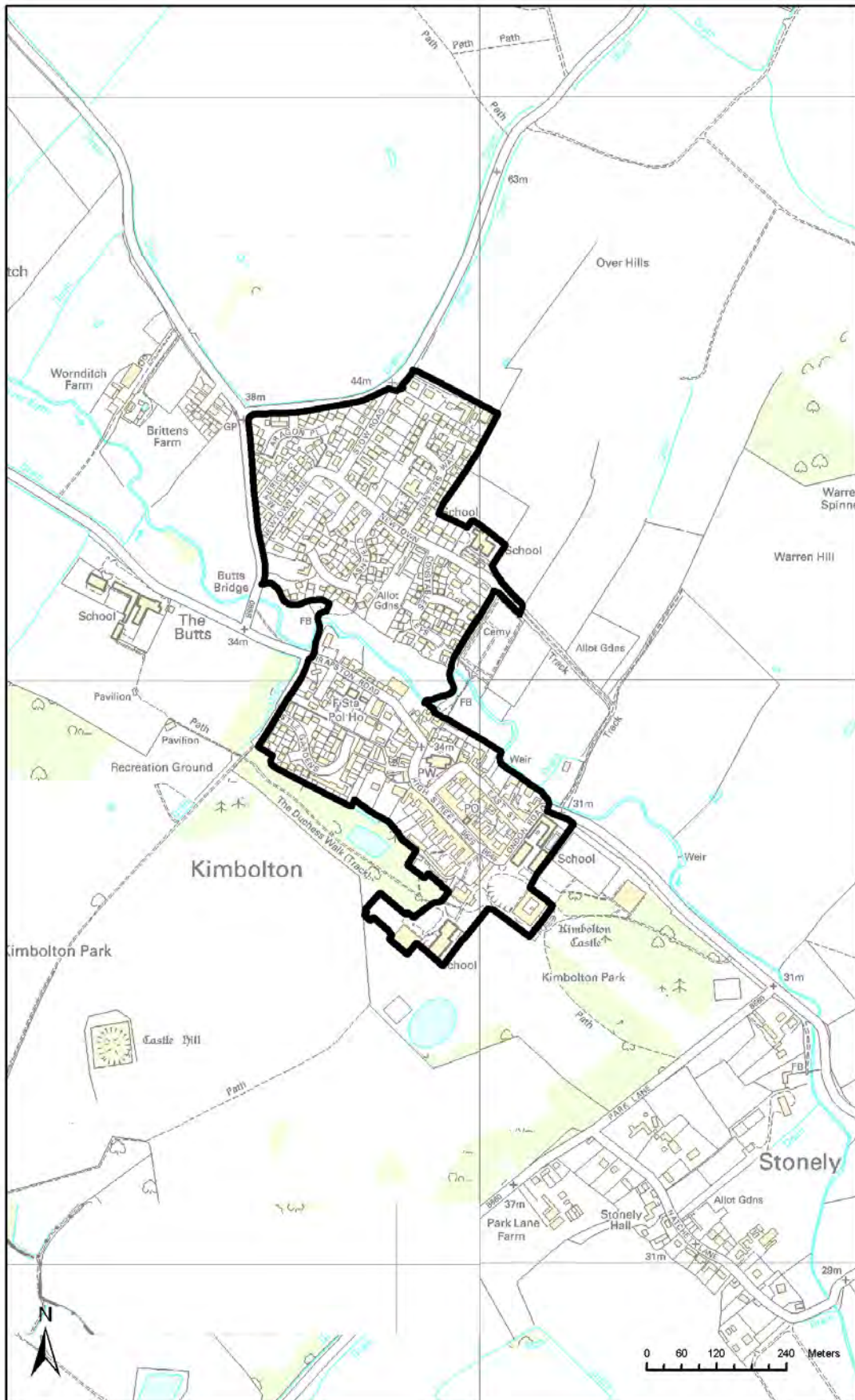
FENSTANTON: INDICATIVE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY



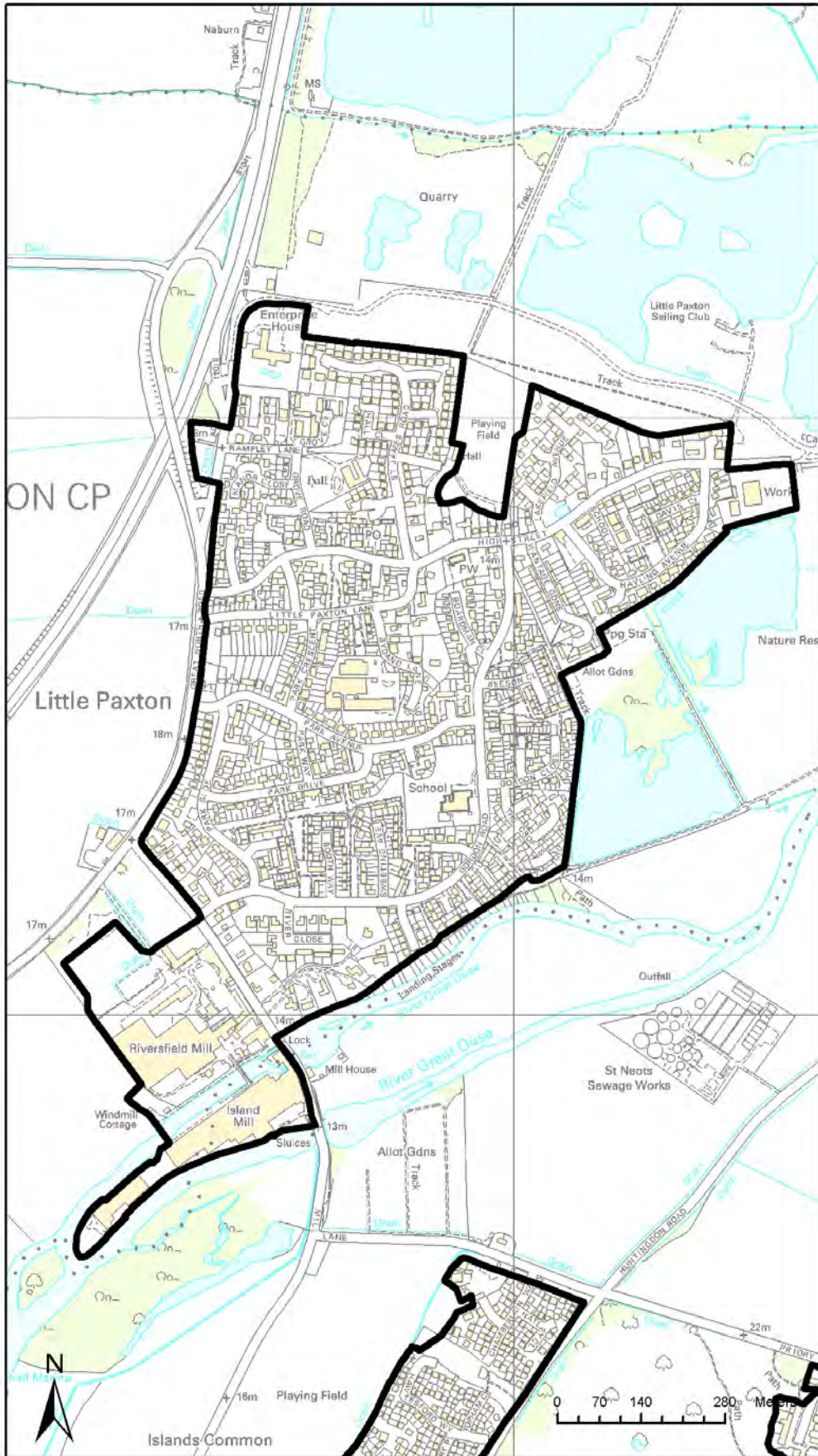
GODMANCHESTER: INDICATIVE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY



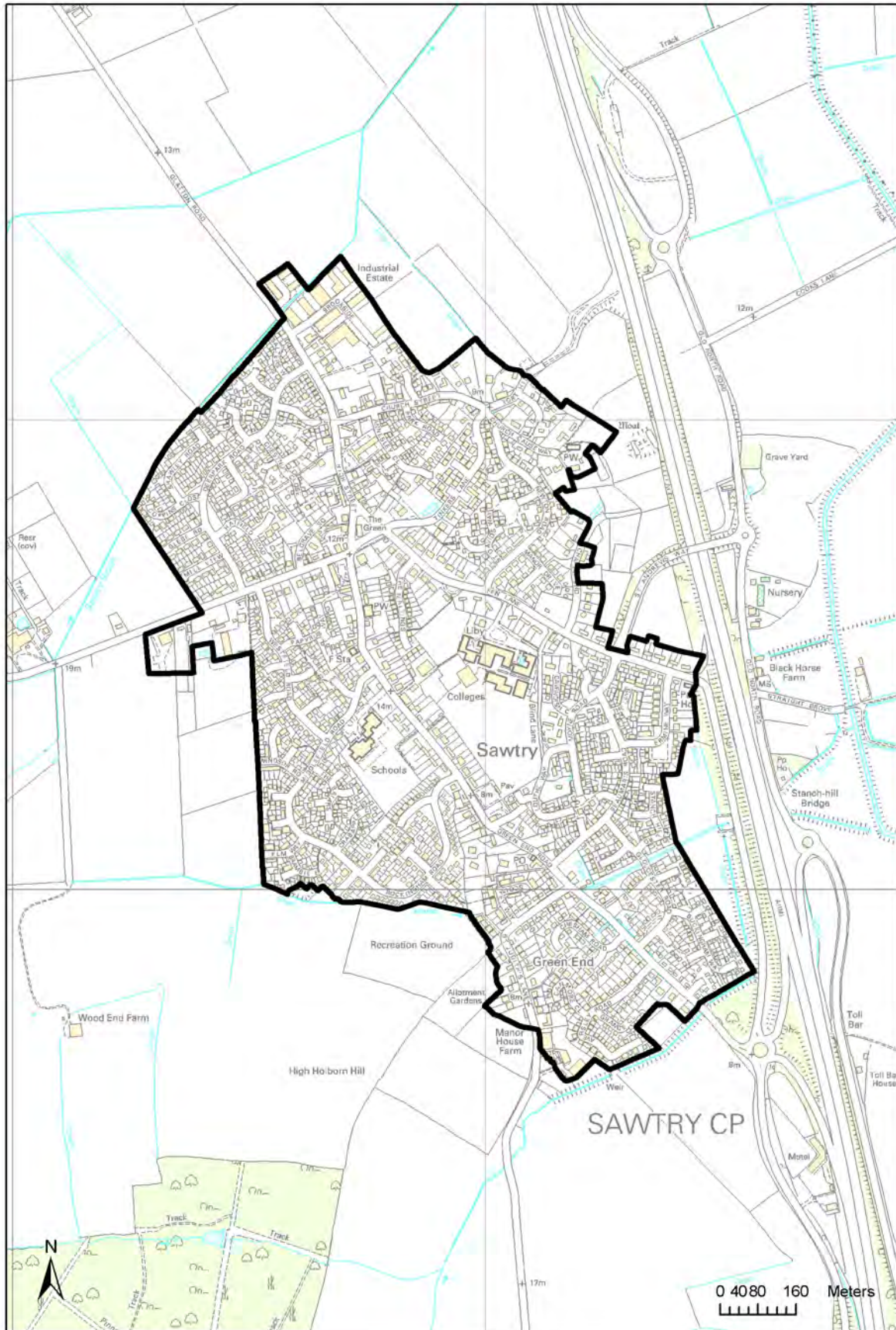
KIMBOLTON: INDICATIVE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY



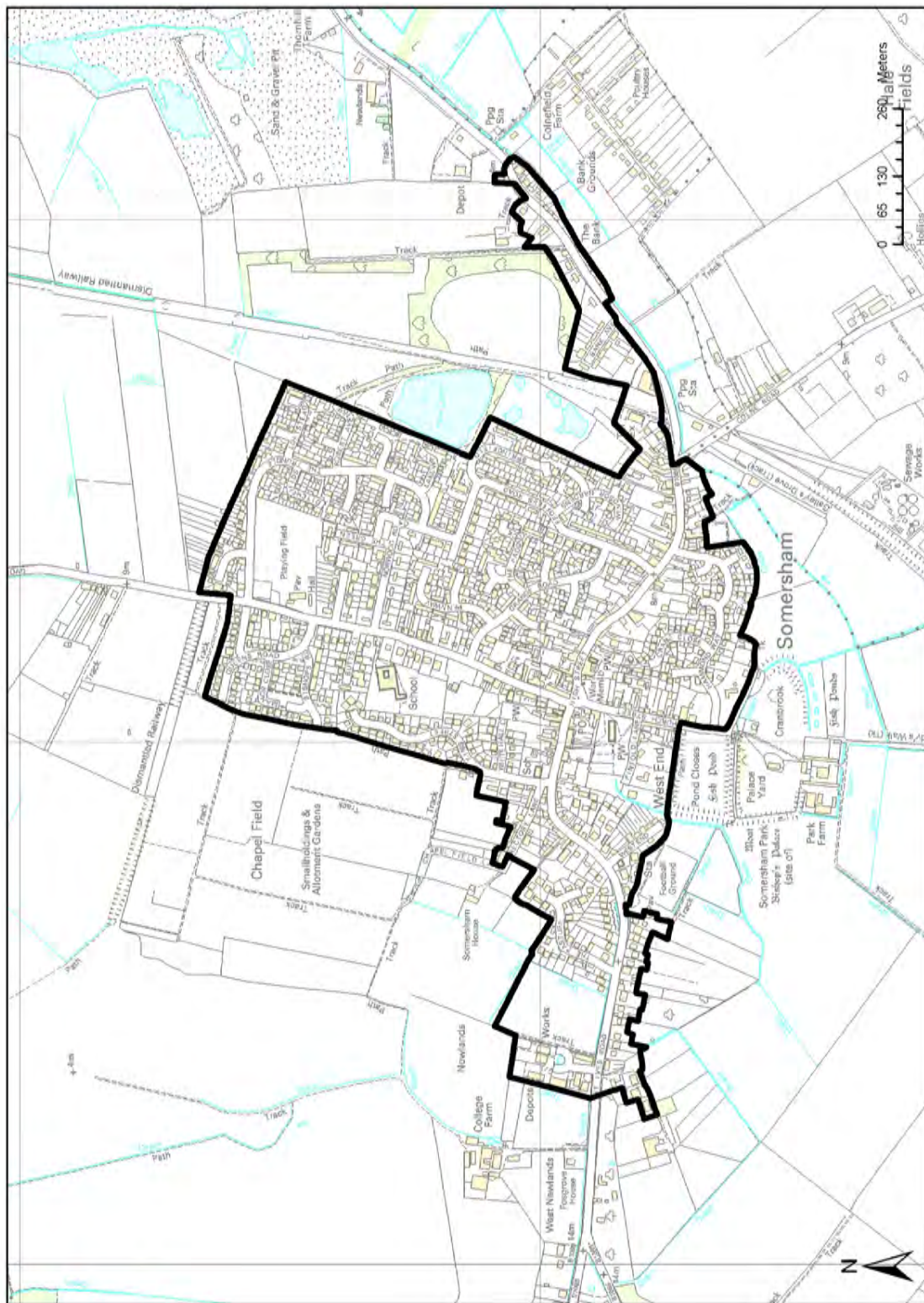
LITTLE PAXTON: INDICATIVE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY



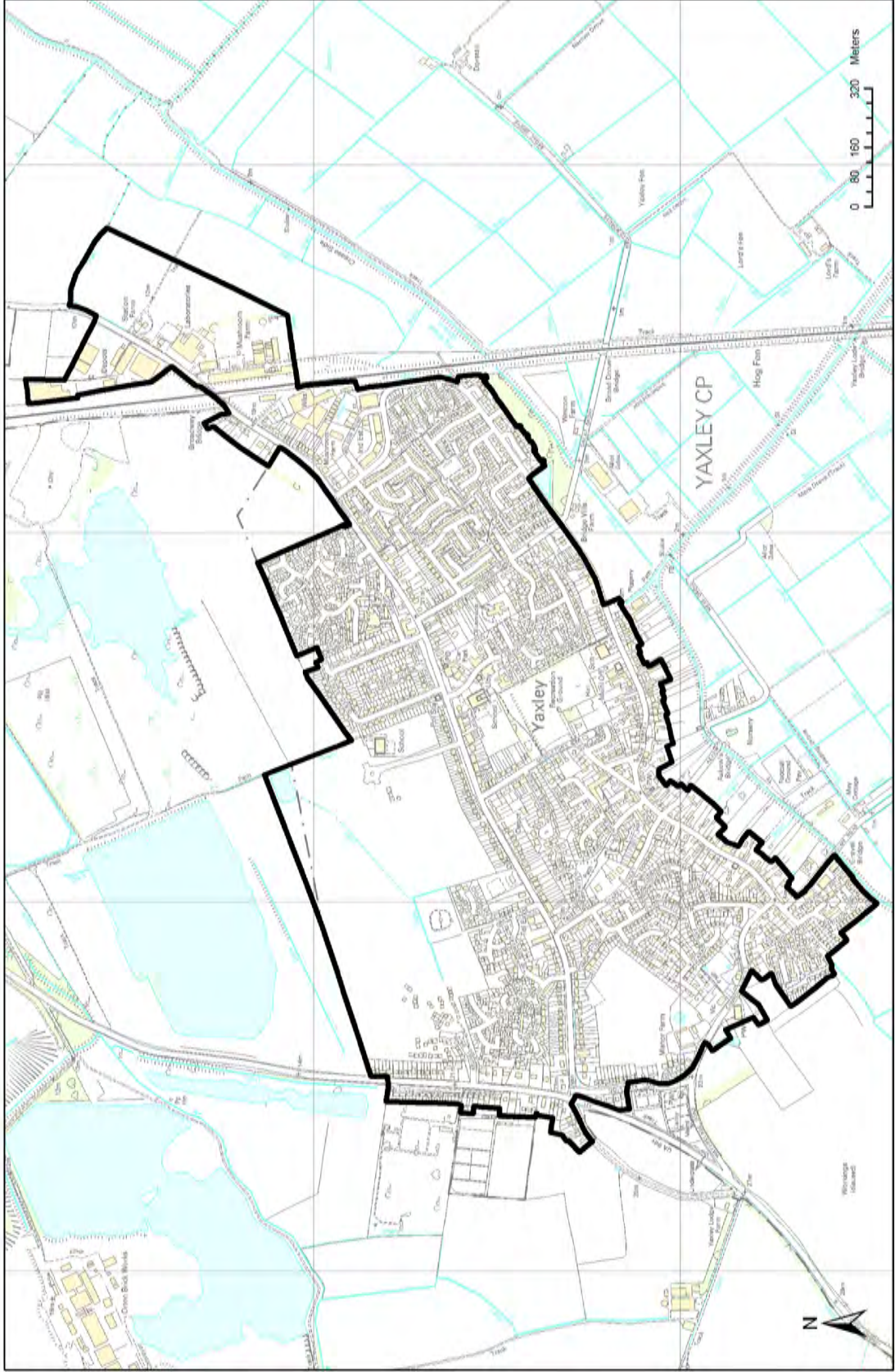
SAWTRY: INDICATIVE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY



SOMERSHAM: INDICATIVE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY



YAXLEY: INDICATIVE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY



APPENDIX 3 AREAS OF STRATEGIC GREENSPACE ENHANCEMENT

The map on the following page illustrates the general extent of the proposed 'Areas of Strategic Greenspace Enhancement' (Policy Area G6). The areas are a refinement of those proposed in the 50 Year Wildlife Vision for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, with some additions.

The areas and boundaries have been identified in discussion with the Wildlife Trust, Peterborough Environment City Trust and English Nature. The basis for the proposed designations is as follows:

Wetland habitats

For the valleys of the rivers Great Ouse and Nene, the identified areas include those parts of the flood plain that are known to have particular potential for habitat, landscape and recreational enhancement. Broadly, this corresponds to the 1 in 100 year indicative floodplains, amended to exclude built-up areas and to take into account significant physical features that form a natural boundary to potential areas of enhancement. The Nene Valley was not included in the 50 Year Wildlife Vision, but offers similar scope to the Ouse Valley for strategic greenspace improvements.

For the area of the Great Fen the established project boundaries have been used, reflecting the long-term vision of creating a 3,000 hectare wetland in north Huntingdonshire.

Woodland habitats

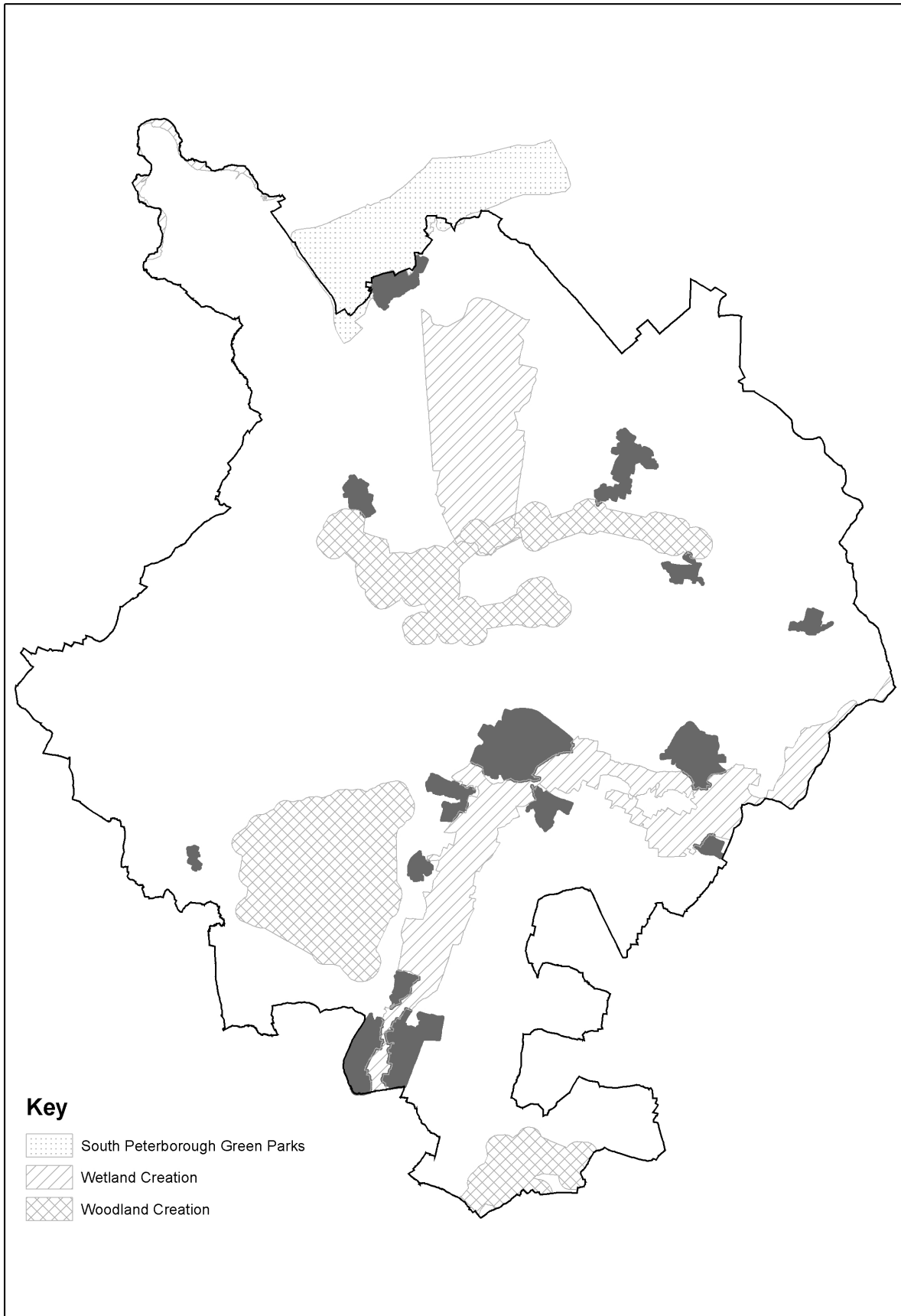
The three areas identified for woodland-based enhancement reflect the opportunities created by concentrations of ancient woodland in parts of the district and neighbouring authorities. Where significant concentrations exist in close proximity they have been joined to create the Areas of Strategic Greenspace Enhancement. The defined areas also incorporate 500m buffers around the existing blocks of woodland.

This approach recognises the scope for creating larger blocks of woodland habitat through further planting or natural regeneration (the buffers provide scope to join existing woods other than in a 'straight line' manner, which may be desirable from both a landscape and land ownership point of view in certain locations).

South Peterborough Green Parks

The defined area reflects the indicative project boundaries of this scheme, which aims to link areas of existing and potential wildlife and recreational value to the south of Peterborough. The project is in the early stages of development, but builds upon a number of existing greenspace initiatives, including a new country park to the south of Hampton.

AREAS OF STRATEGIC GREENSPACE ENHANCEMENT



APPENDIX 4 ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL ESTATES, DISTRIBUTION & BUSINESS PARKS

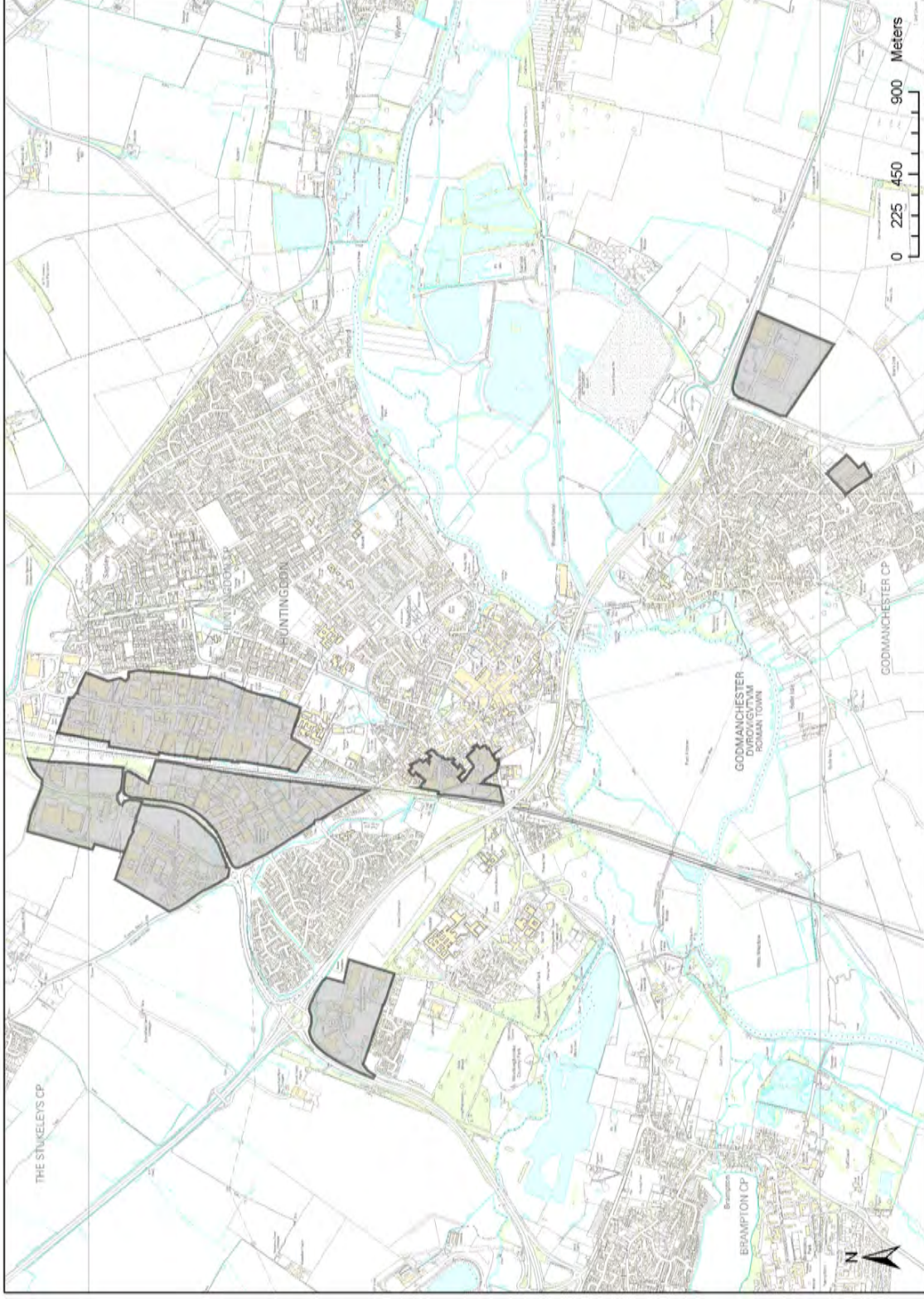
The maps on the following pages illustrate the general extent of established industrial estates, distribution and business parks (Policy Areas E2 & E3). The areas have been identified on the basis of the following criteria:

- The site should have an established use for office, industrial or warehouse purposes.
- Sites operating solely on the basis of temporary permissions have been excluded.
- Relatively small sites (of less than 1ha) have also been excluded.

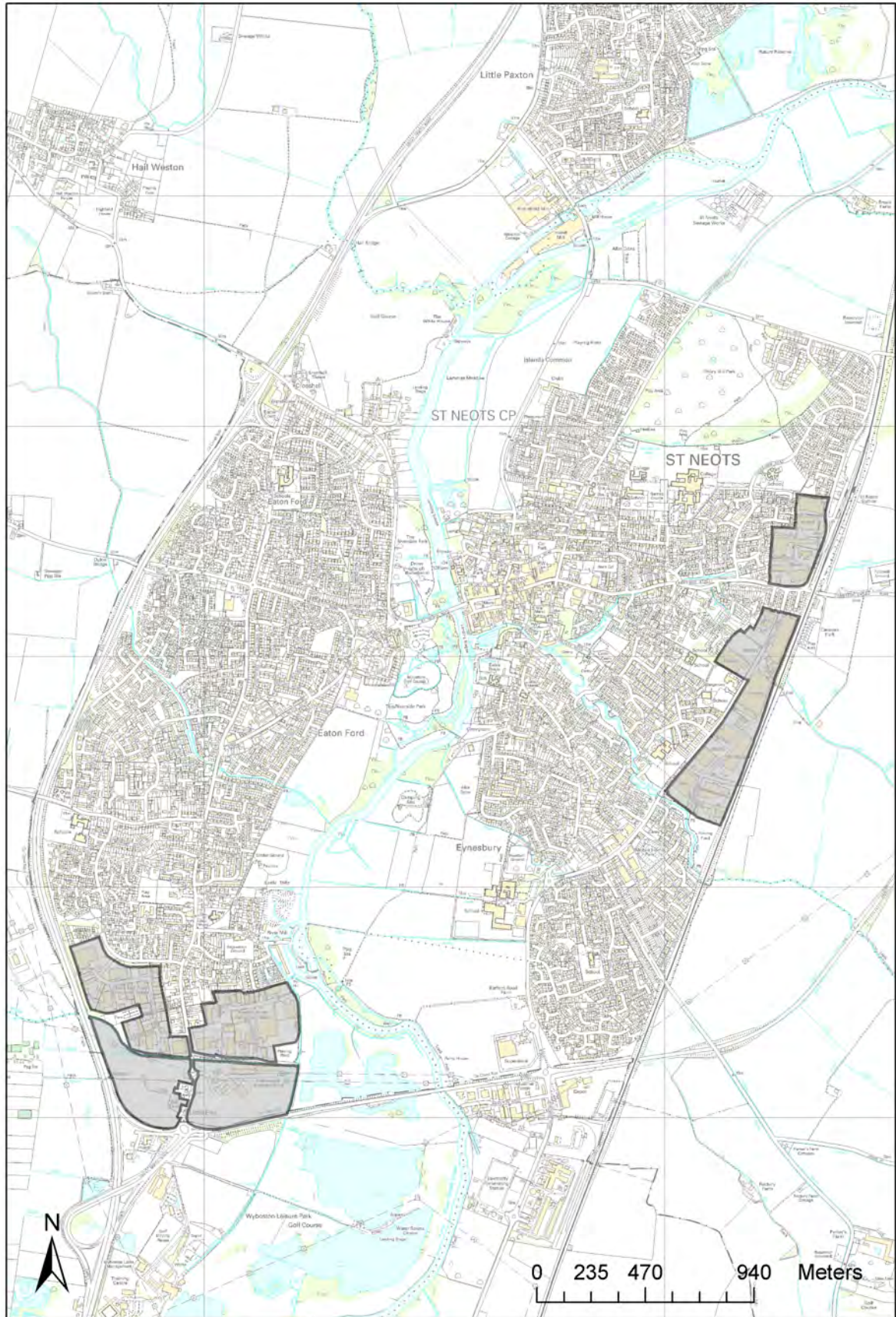
The full list of sites is given below, arranged according to whether they are situated within or close to a Market Town, Key Centre or Smaller Settlement:

Market Towns	Key Centres	Smaller Settlements
<p>Huntingdon Ermine Business Park Hinchingsbrooke Business Park St John's Business Park St Peter's Road Ind. Estate Stukeley Meadows Bus. Park West of Huntingdon ind. area</p>	<p>Fenstanton Galley Hill Business Park</p> <p>Godmanchester Cardinal Park Chord Business Park & Roman Way Industrial Estate</p>	<p>Alconbury Weston Crossway Distribution Centre</p>
<p>St Neots Bell Farm Colmworth Business Park Cromwell Road Industrial Estate Howard Road Industrial Estate Little End Industrial Estate Station Road Industrial Estate</p>	<p>Kimbolton Bicton Industrial Park</p> <p>Sawtry Brookside Way Industrial Estate & Sawtry Business Park</p>	<p>Alwalton Minerva Business Park</p> <p>Earith Earith Business Park</p>
<p>St Ives Compass Point Meadow Lane Business Park Somersham Road Ind. Estate St Ives Business Park</p>	<p>Somersham West Newlands Industrial Estate</p> <p>Warboys Warboys Airfield Ind. Estate</p>	<p>Great Gransden Sand Road Industrial Estate Hardwick Road Industrial Estate</p> <p>Great Paxton Harley Industrial Park</p>
<p>Ramsey/Upwood Ramsey Business Park & High Lode Industrial Estate Upwood Industrial Estate</p>	<p>Yaxley Mere View Industrial Estate</p>	<p>Little Staughton Little Staughton Airfield Ind. Area</p> <p>Needingworth Old Railway Industrial Estate</p> <p>Wyton-on-the-Hill Uplands Industrial Estate</p>

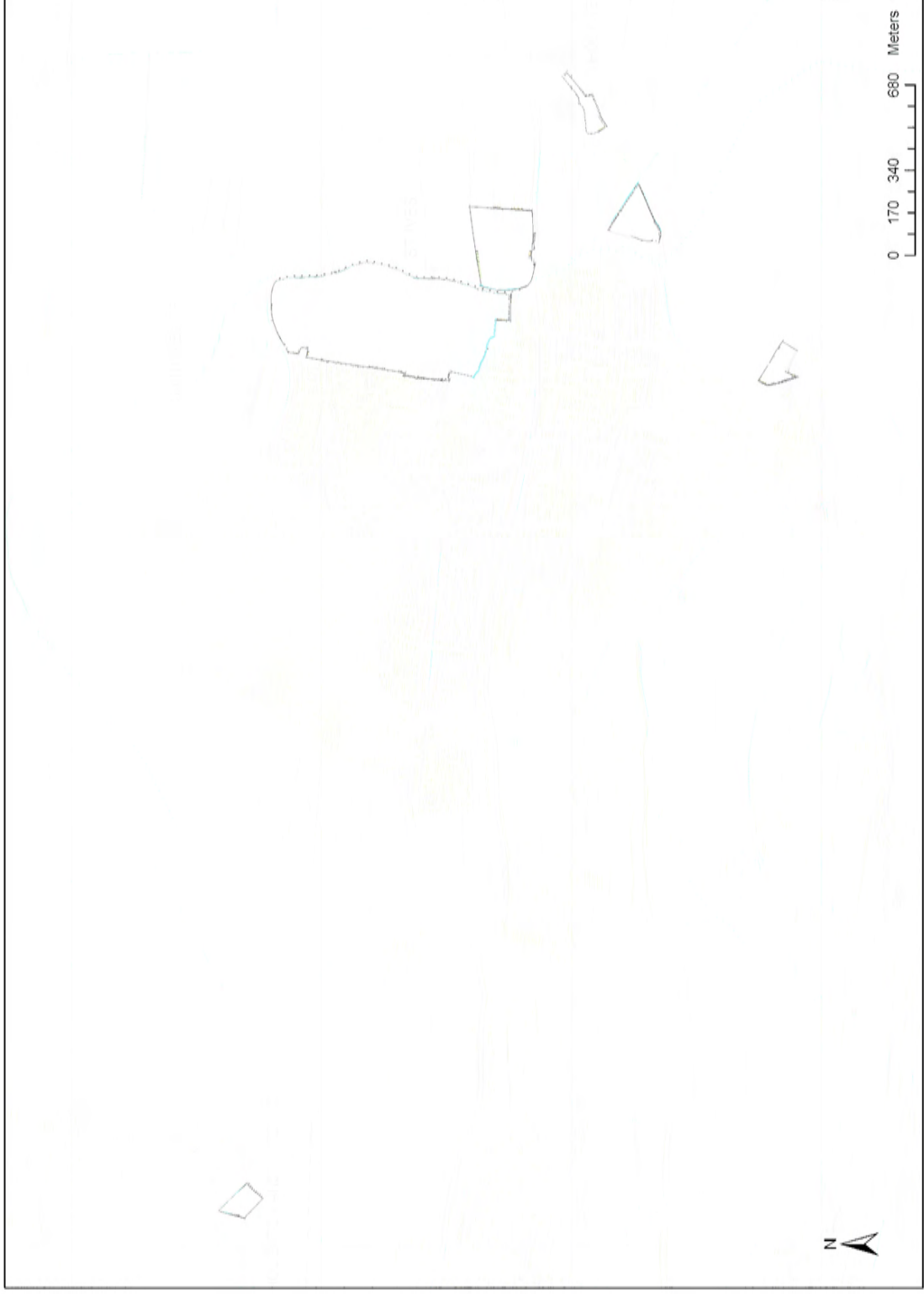
HUNTINGDON & GODMANCHESTER: ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL ESTATES, DISTRIBUTION & BUSINESS PARKS



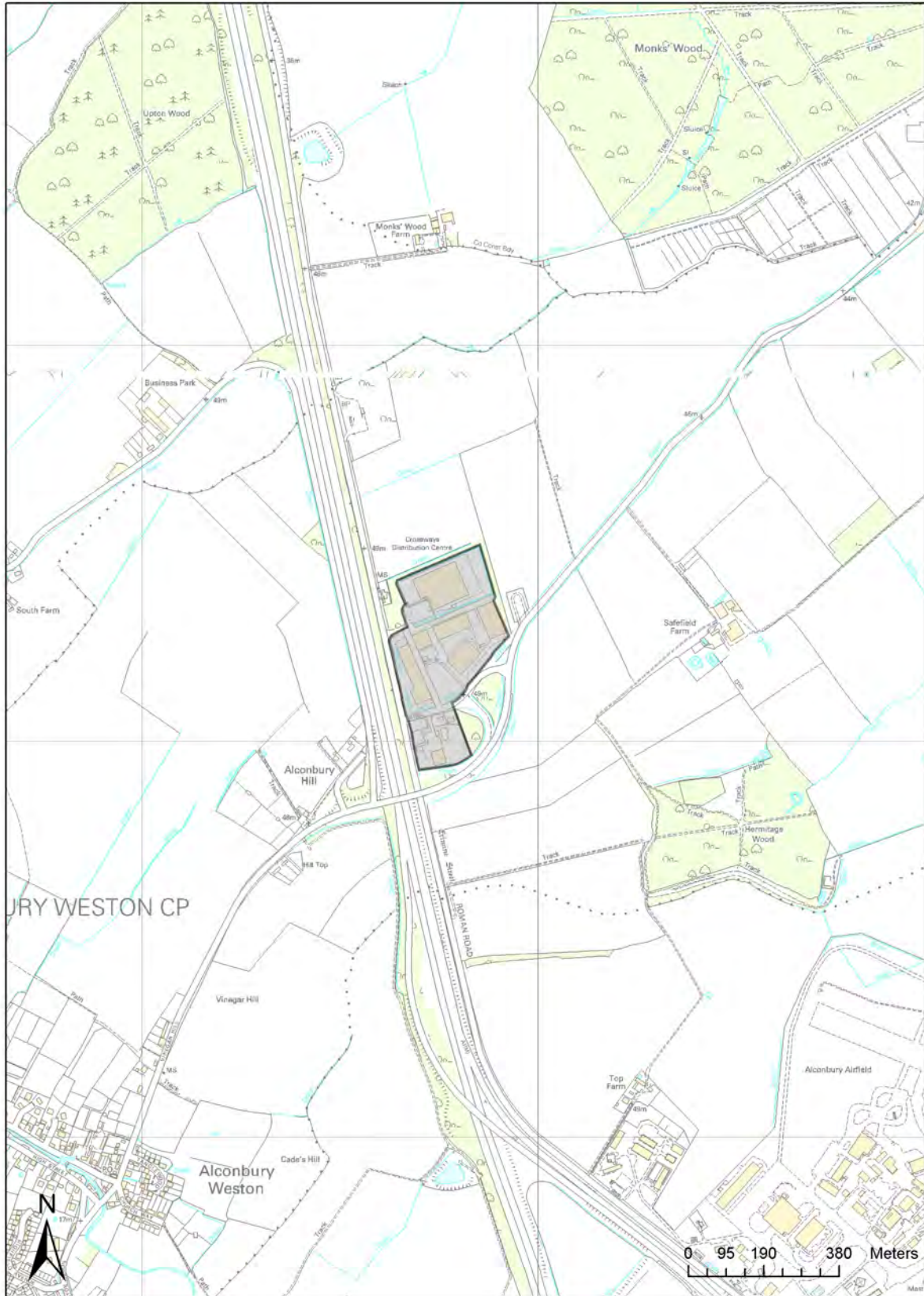
ST NEOTS: ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL ESTATES, DISTRIBUTION & BUSINESS PARKS



ST IVES & WYTON: ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL ESTATES, DISTRIBUTION & BUSINESS PARKS



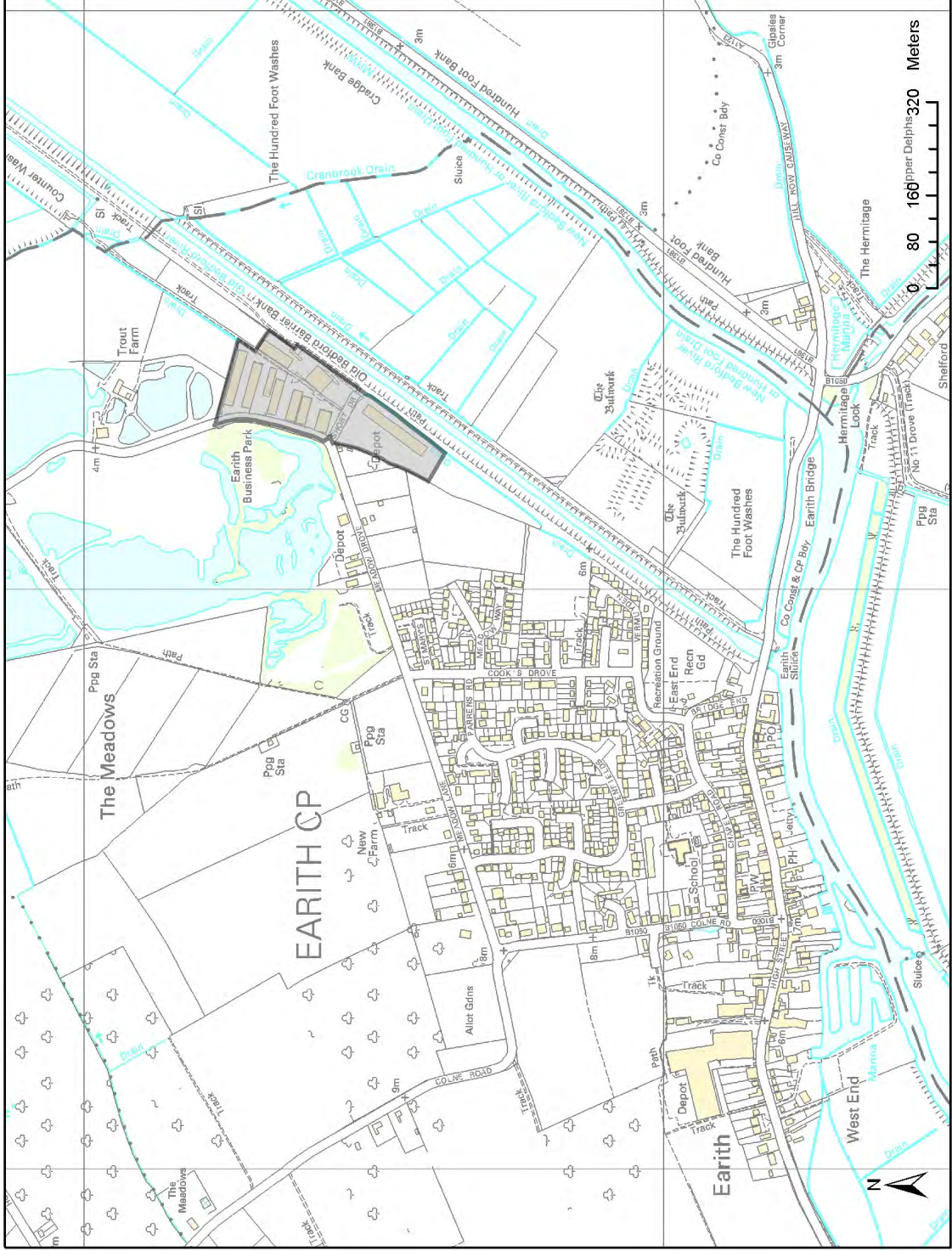
ALCONBURY WESTON: ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL ESTATES, DISTRIBUTION & BUSINESS PARKS



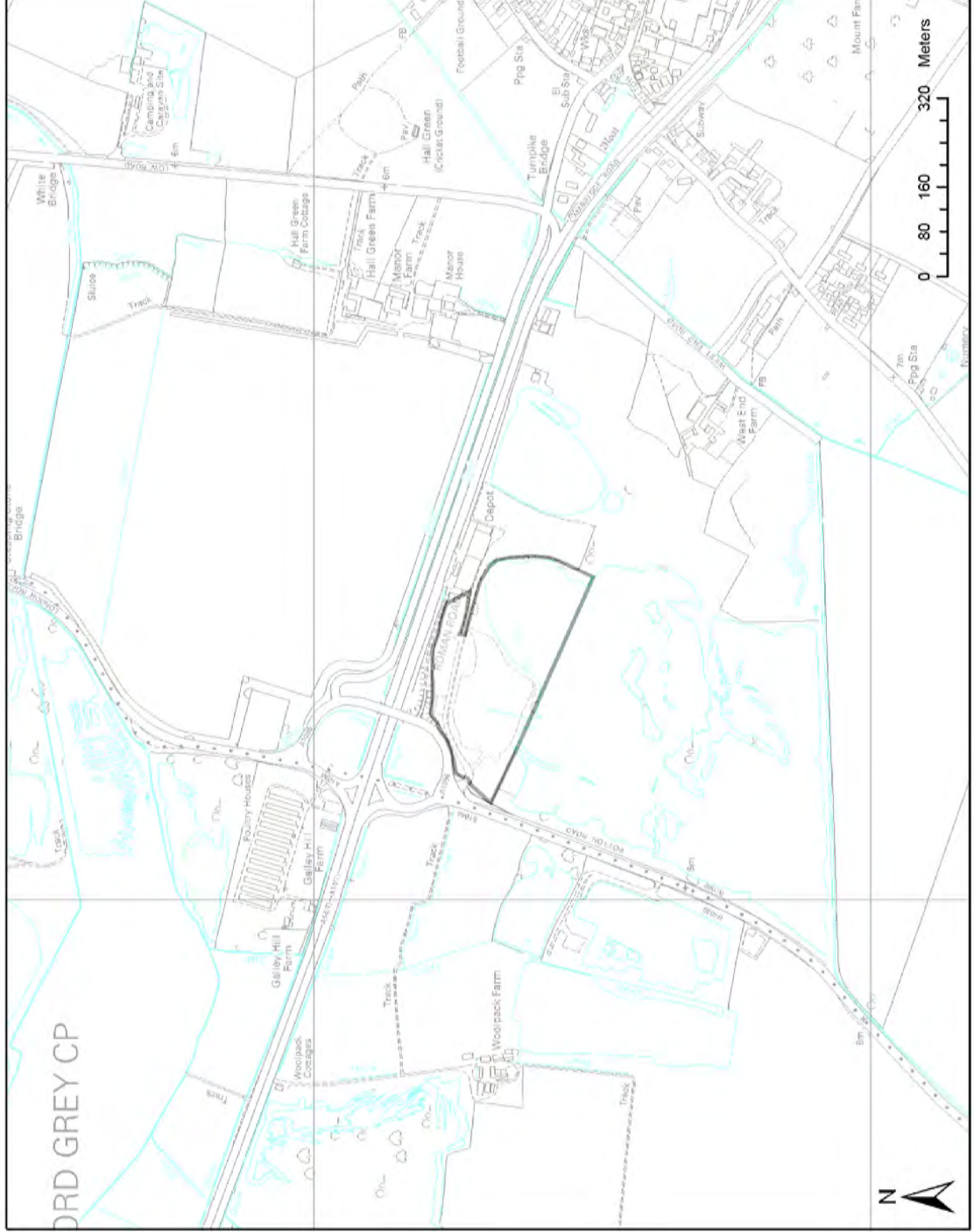
ALWALTON: ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL ESTATES, DISTRIBUTION & BUSINESS PARKS



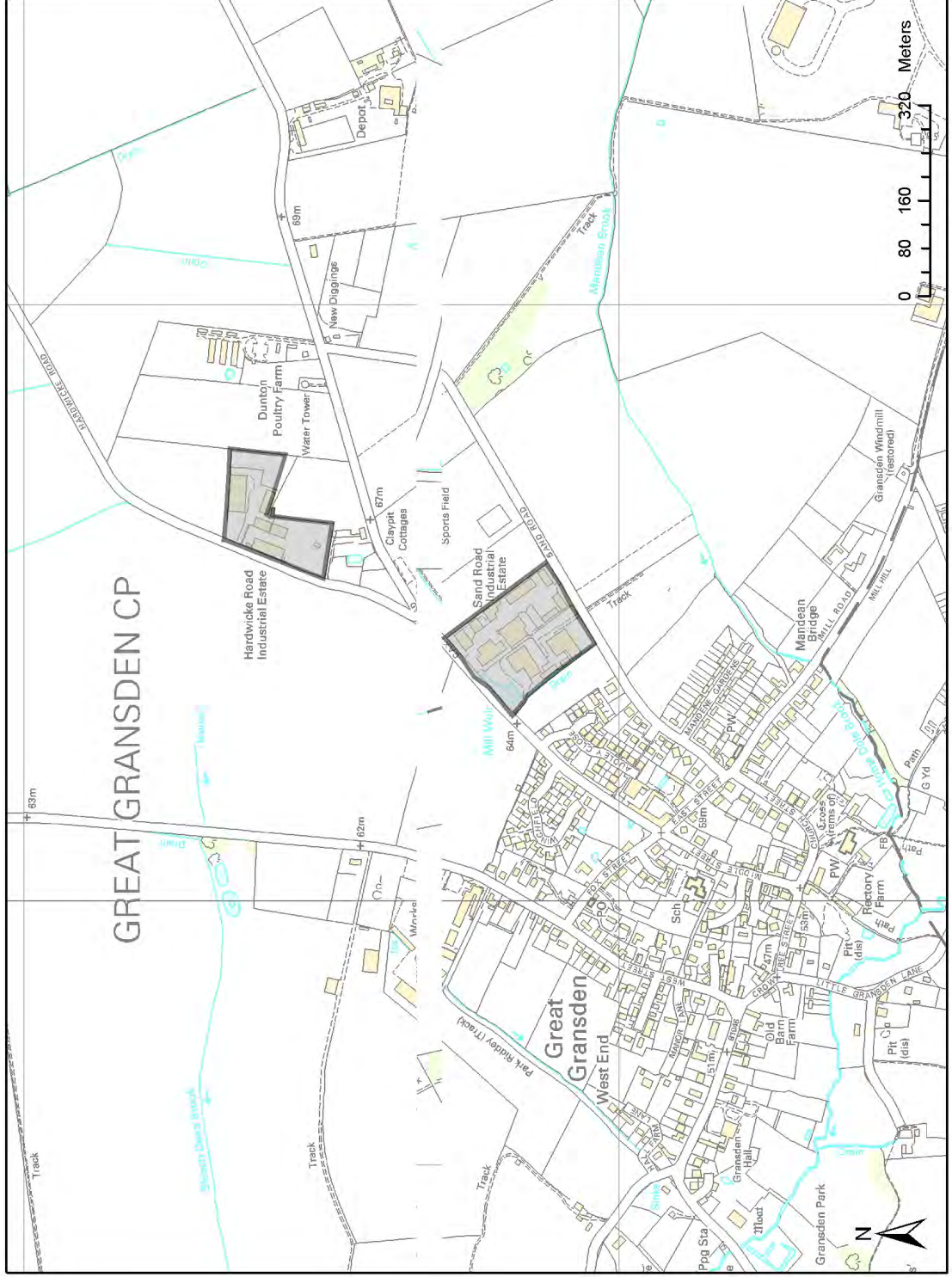
EARITH: ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL ESTATES, DISTRIBUTION & BUSINESS PARKS



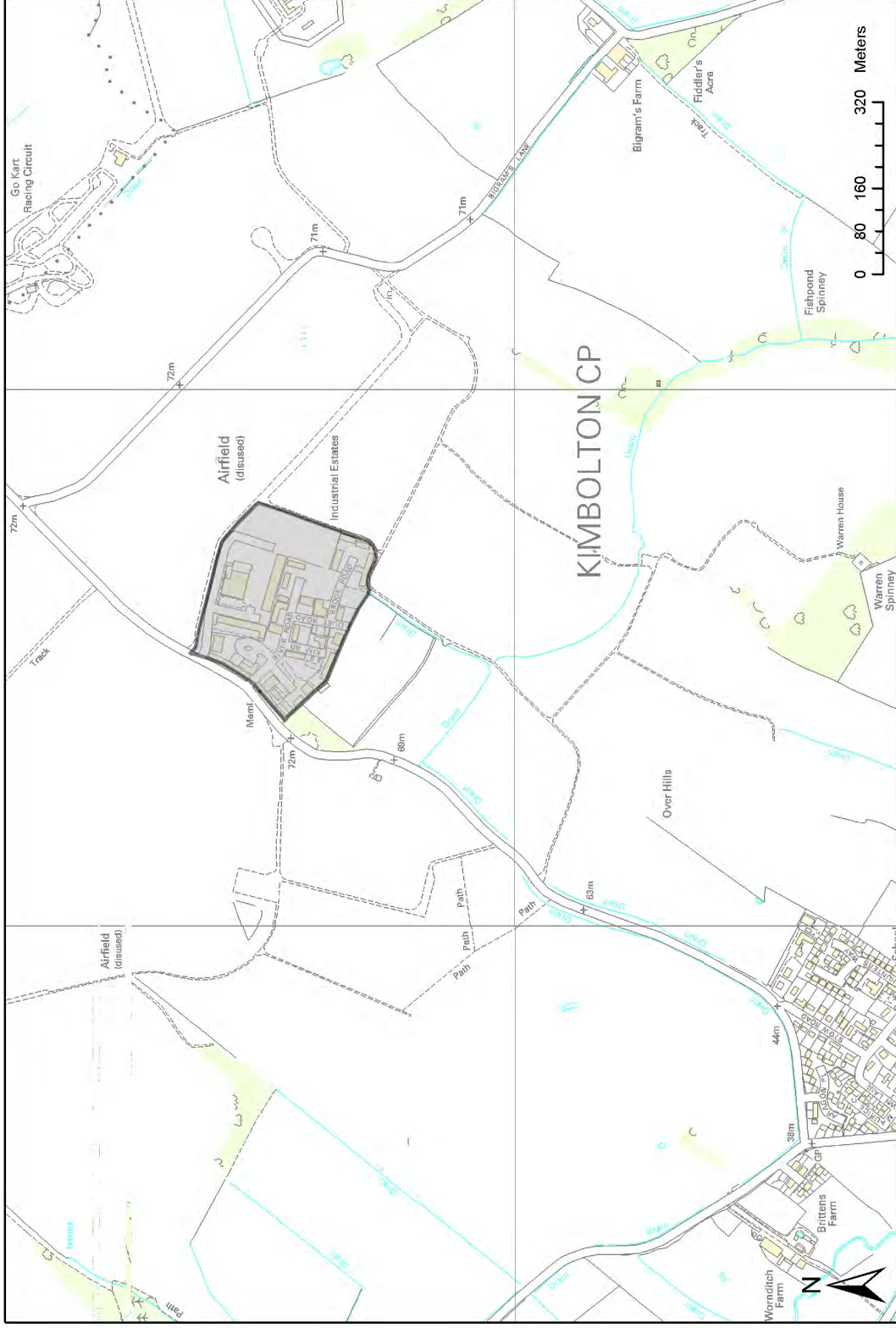
GALLEY HILL (FENSTANTON): ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL ESTATES, DISTRIBUTION & BUSINESS PARKS



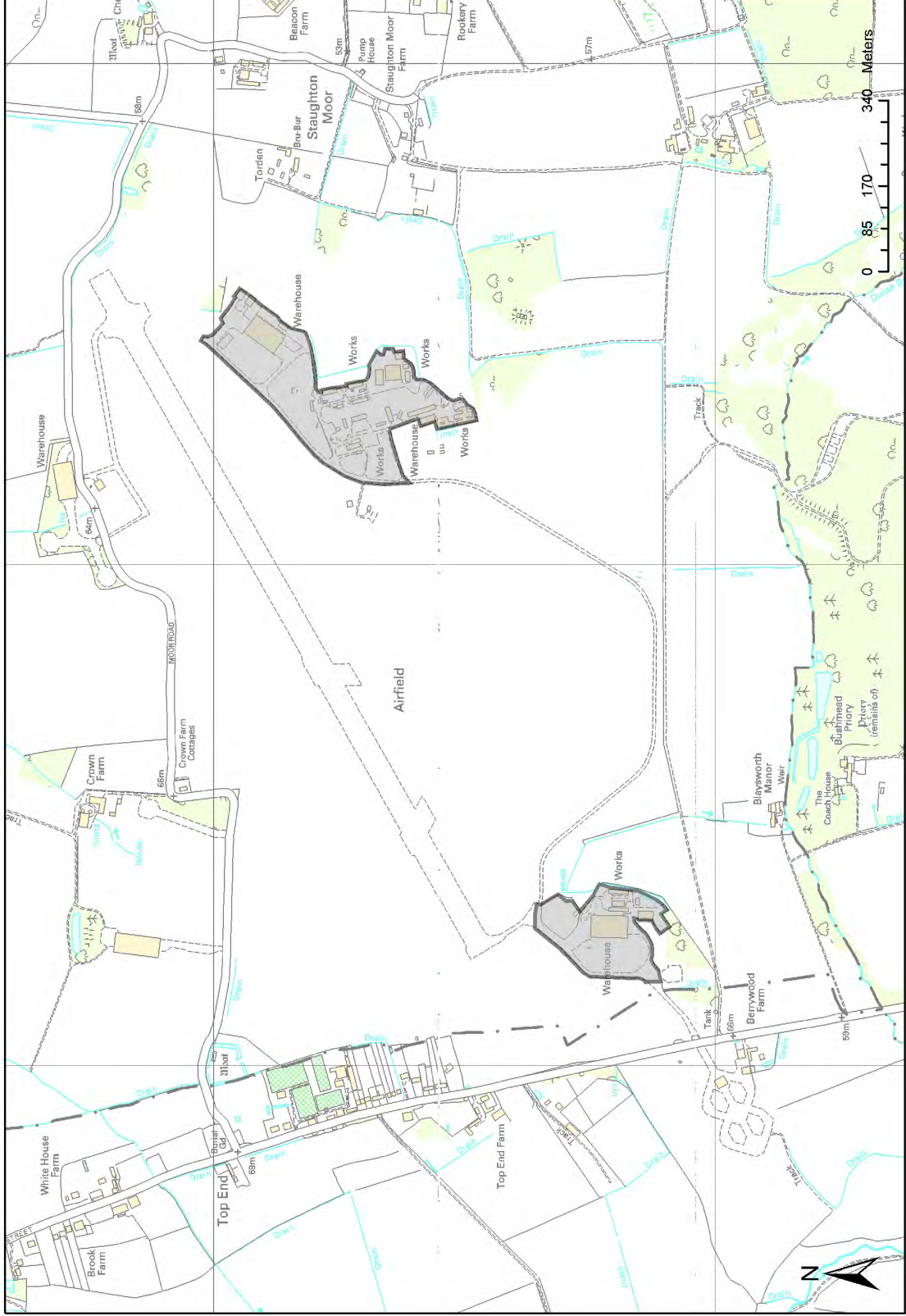
GREAT GRANSDEN: ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL ESTATES, DISTRIBUTION & BUSINESS PARKS



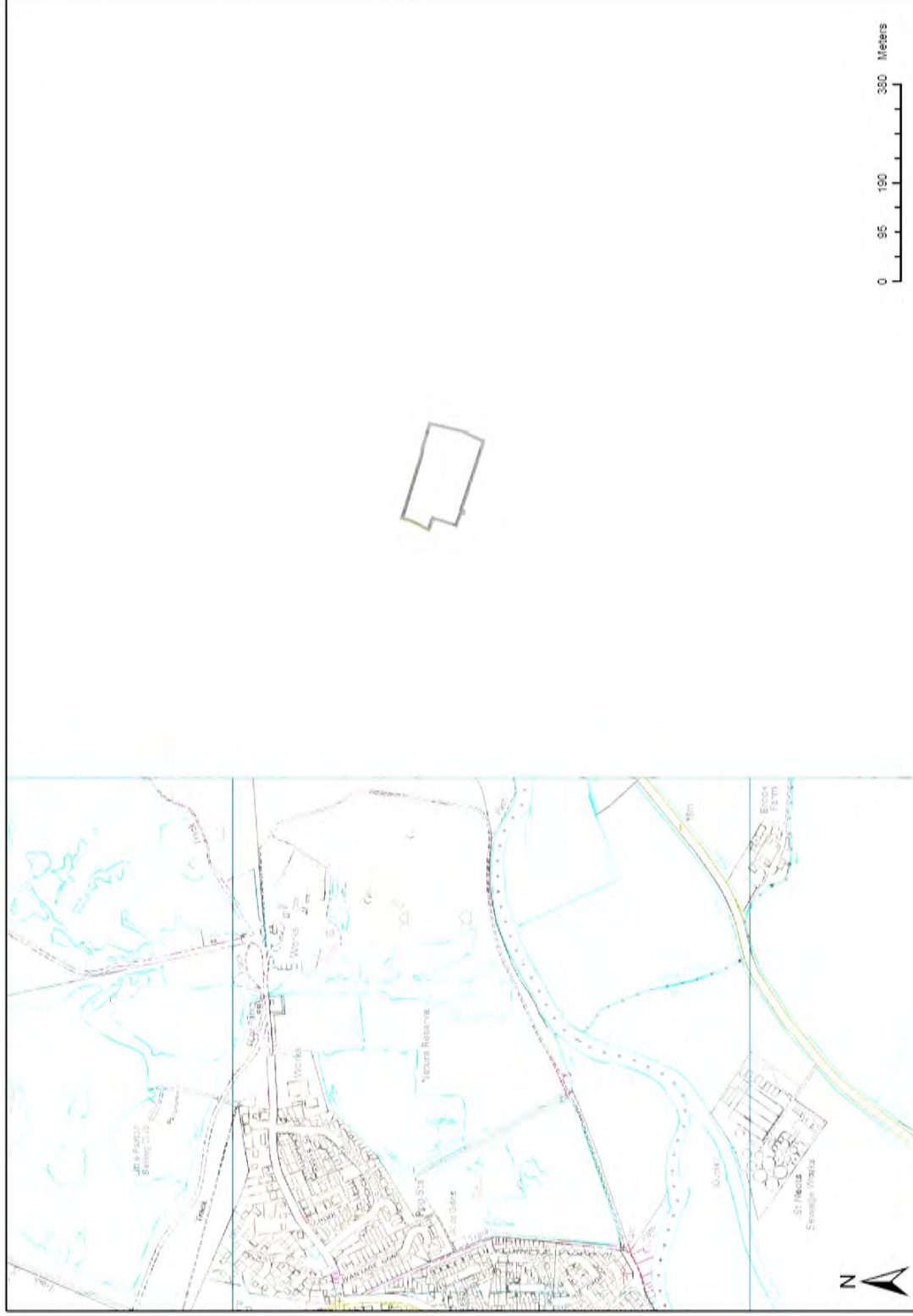
KIMBOLTON: ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL ESTATES, DISTRIBUTION & BUSINESS PARKS



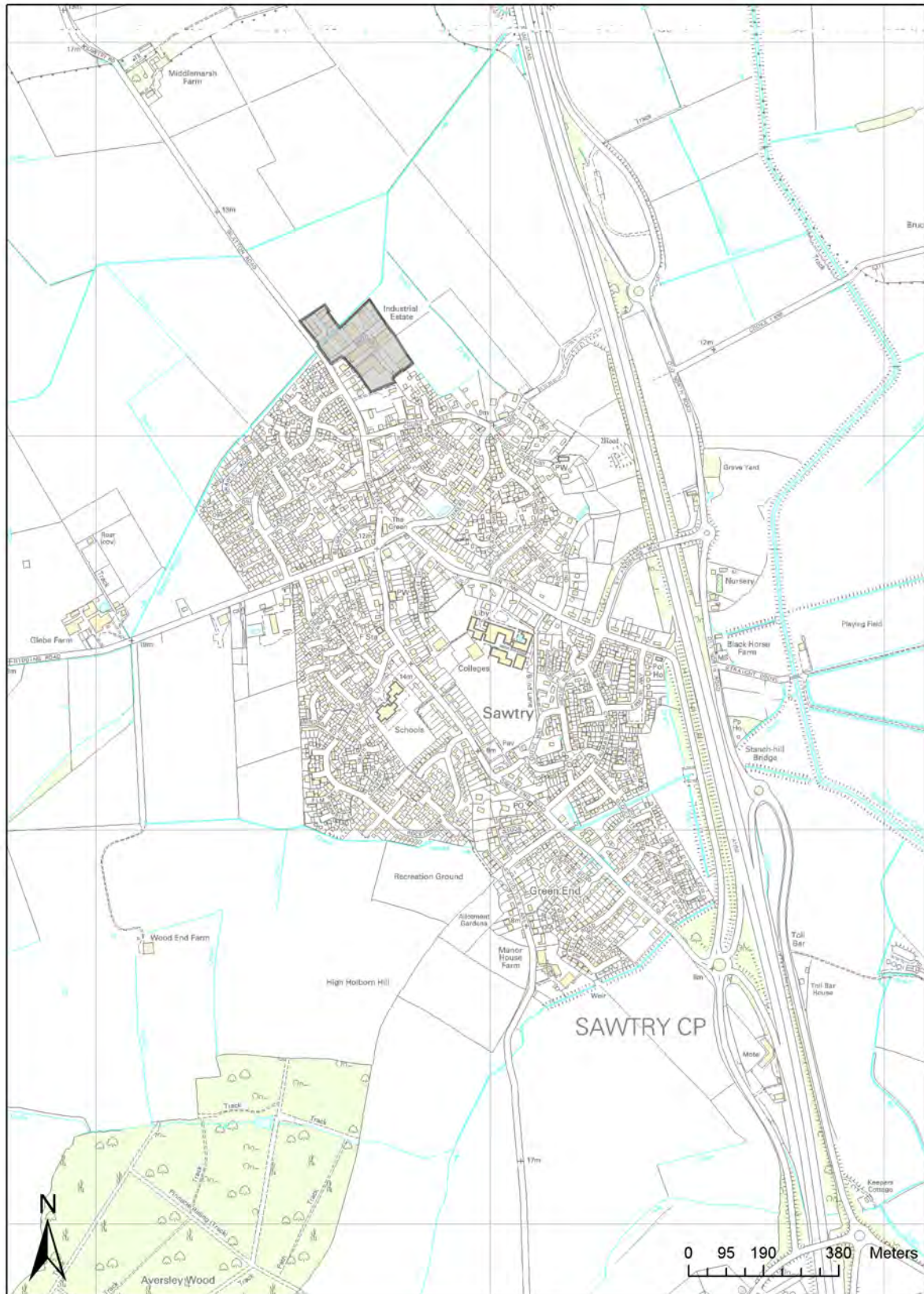
LITTLE STAUGHTON: ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL ESTATES, DISTRIBUTION & BUSINESS PARKS



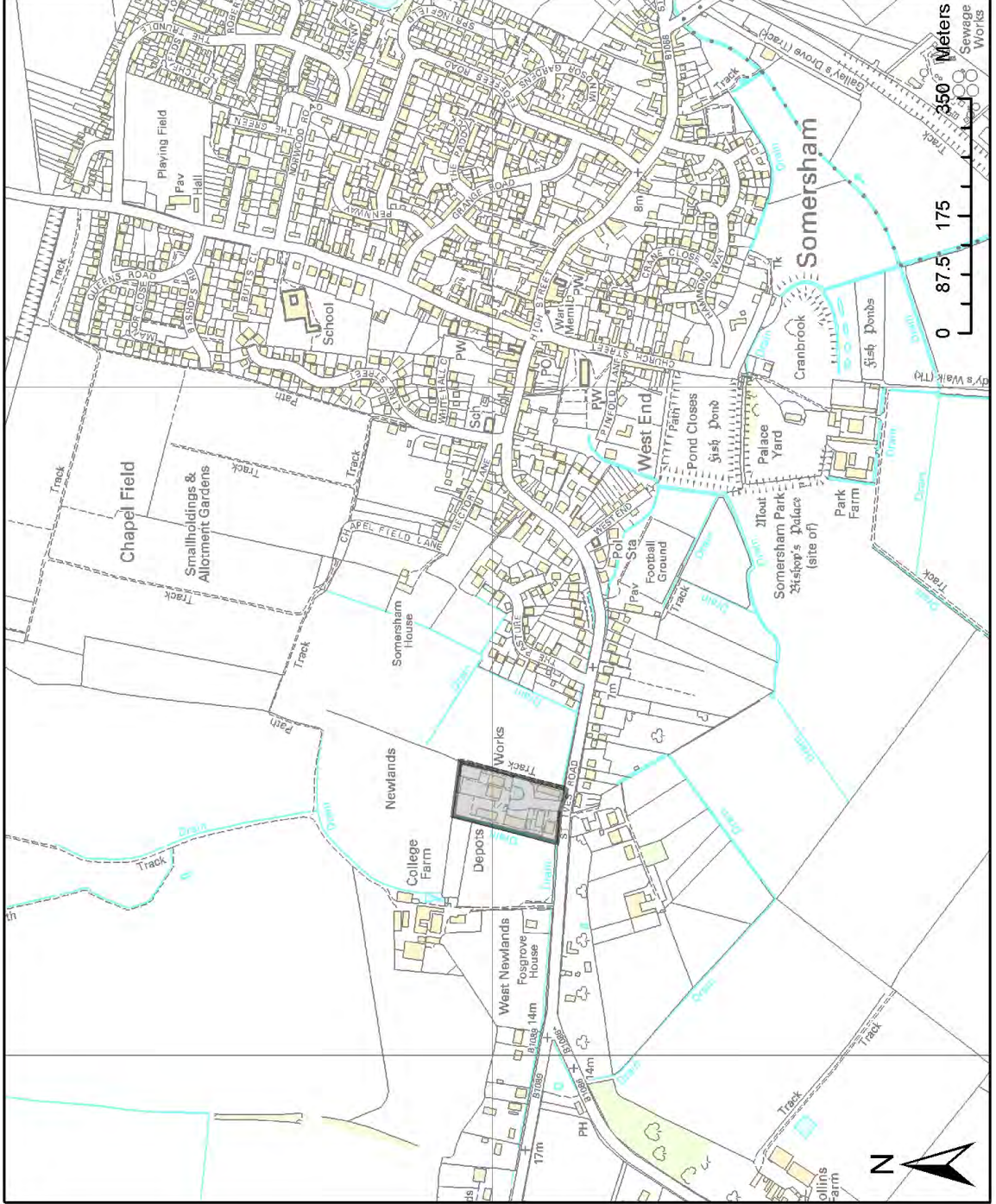
GREAT PAXTON: ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL ESTATES, DISTRIBUTION & BUSINESS PARKS



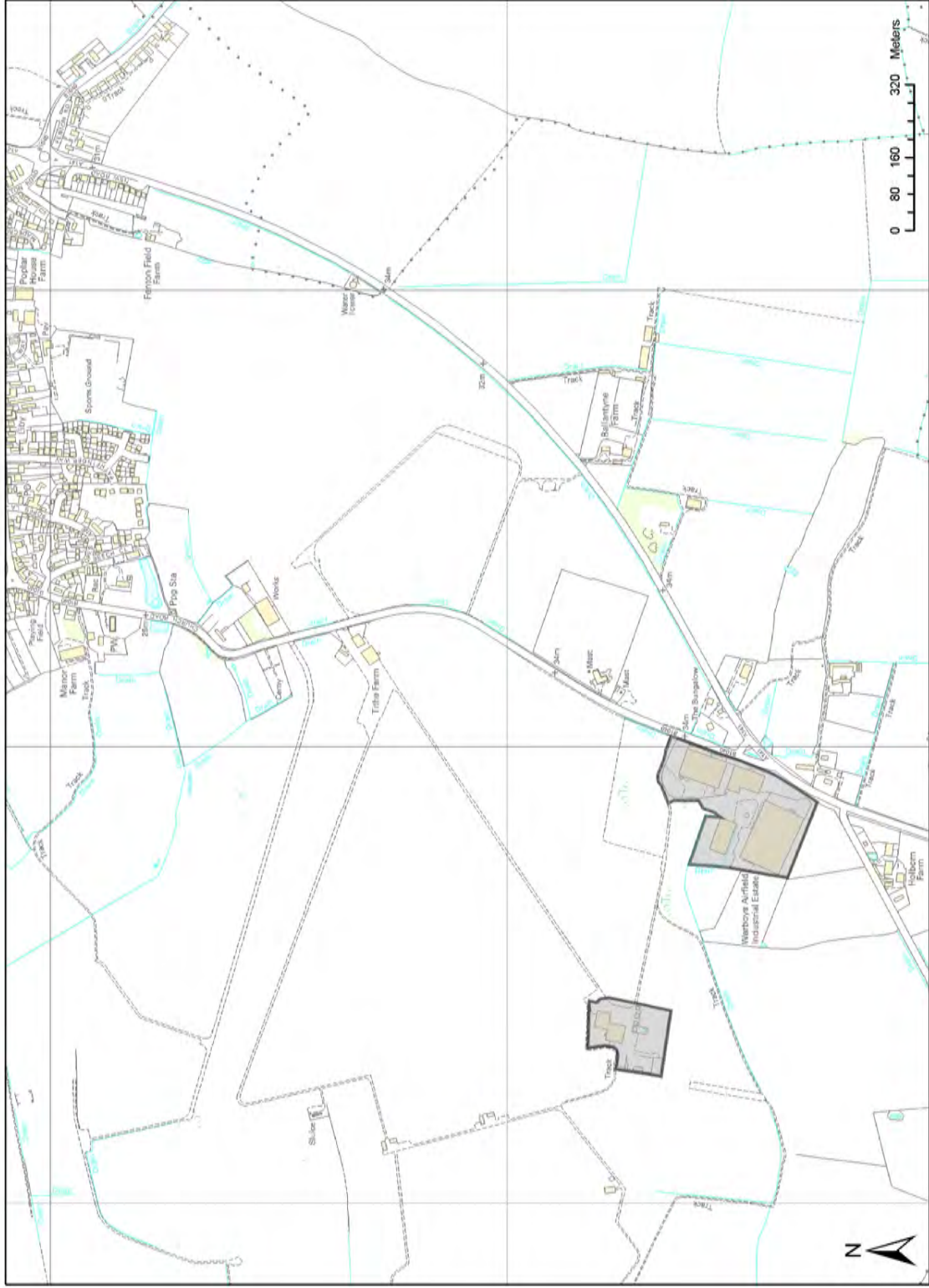
SAWTRY: ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL ESTATES, DISTRIBUTION & BUSINESS PARKS



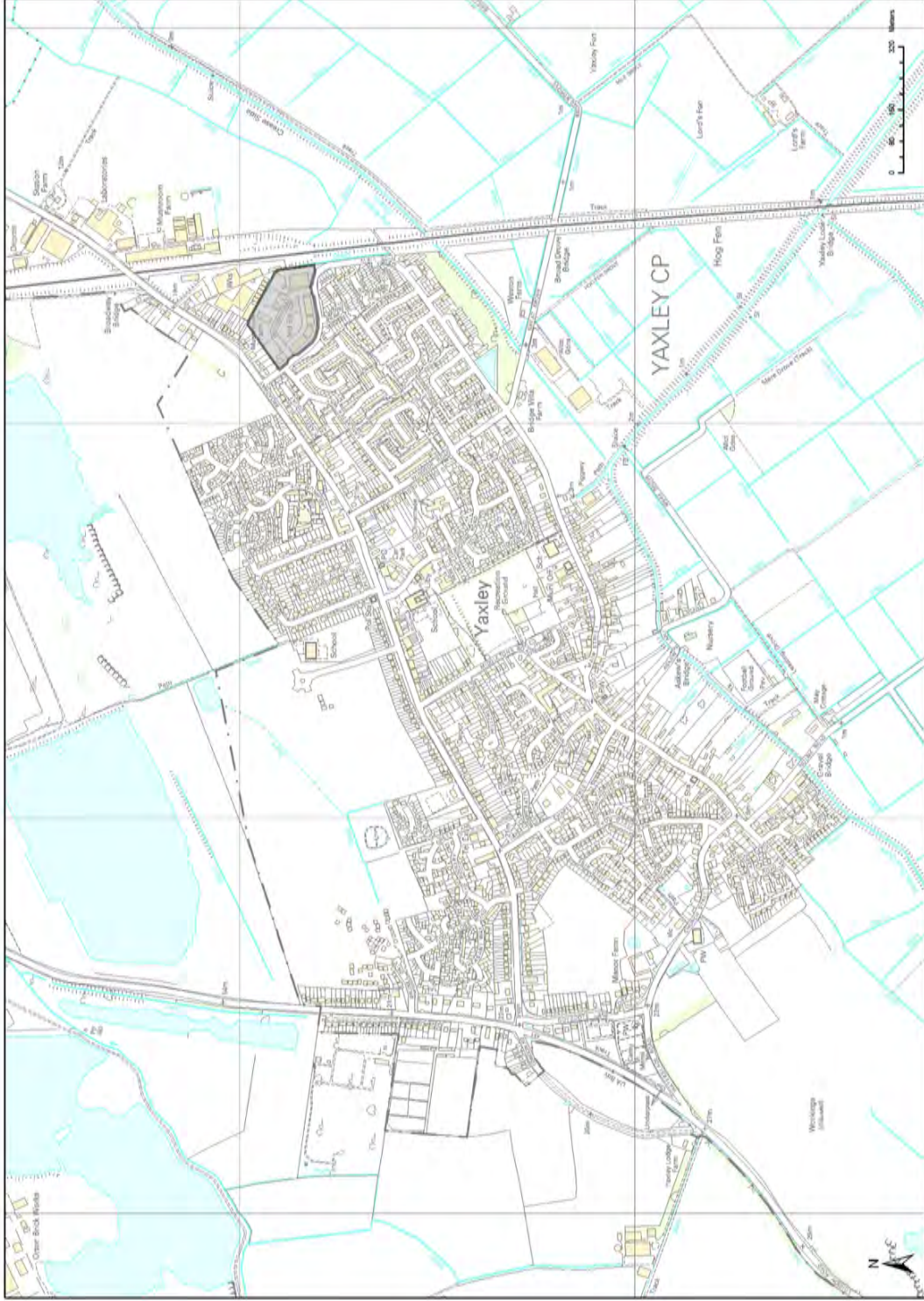
SOMERSHAM: ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL ESTATES, DISTRIBUTION & BUSINESS PARKS



WARBOYS: ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL ESTATES, DISTRIBUTION & BUSINESS PARKS



YAXLEY: ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL ESTATES, DISTRIBUTION & BUSINESS PARKS



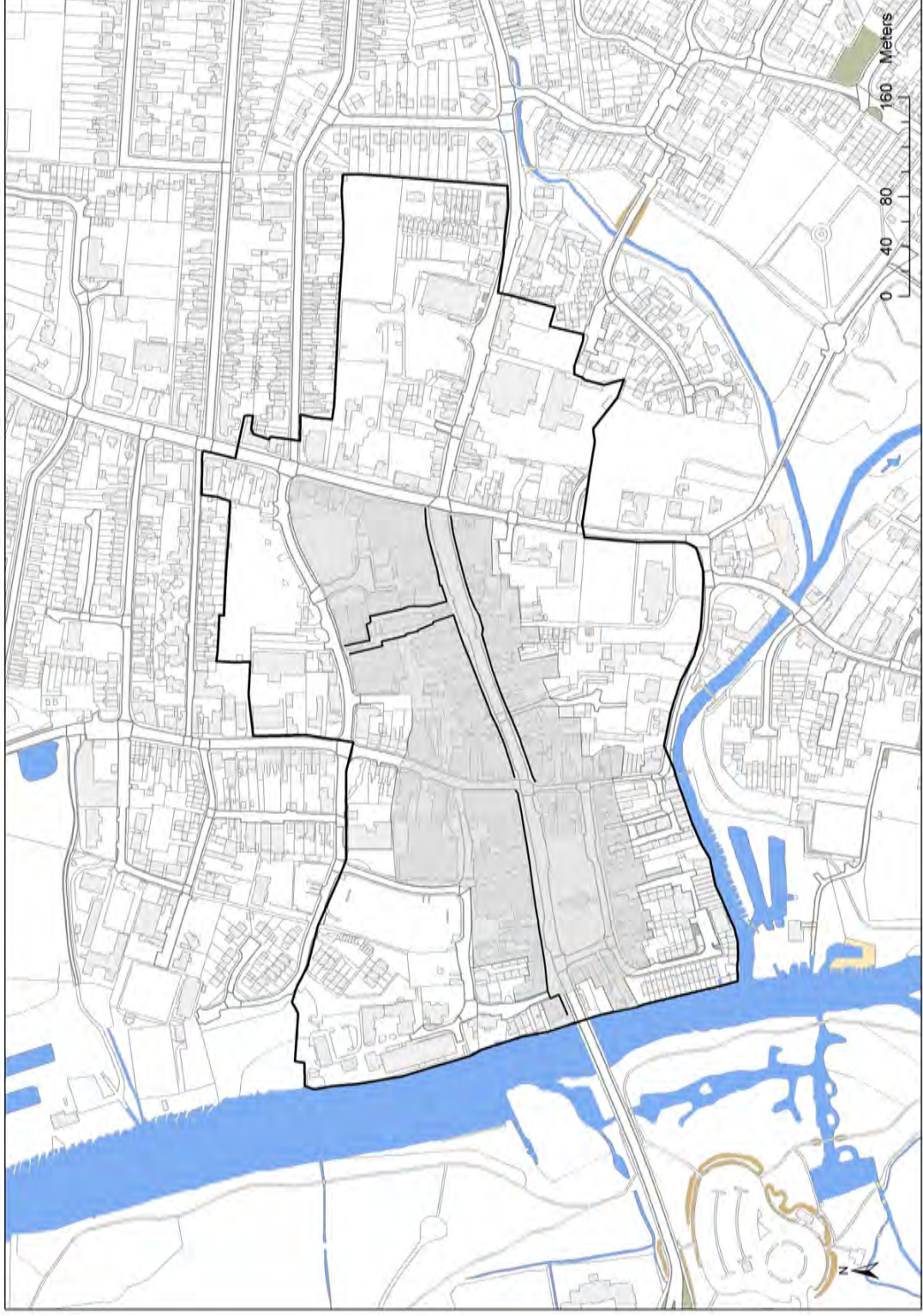
**APPENDIX 5 TOWN CENTRES, PRIMARY SHOPPING AREAS &
PRIMARY FRONTAGES**

The maps on the following pages illustrate the general extent of the boundaries proposed for the town centres and primary shopping areas, together with the primary frontages. The basis for their identification is explained in the text for policy area E7.

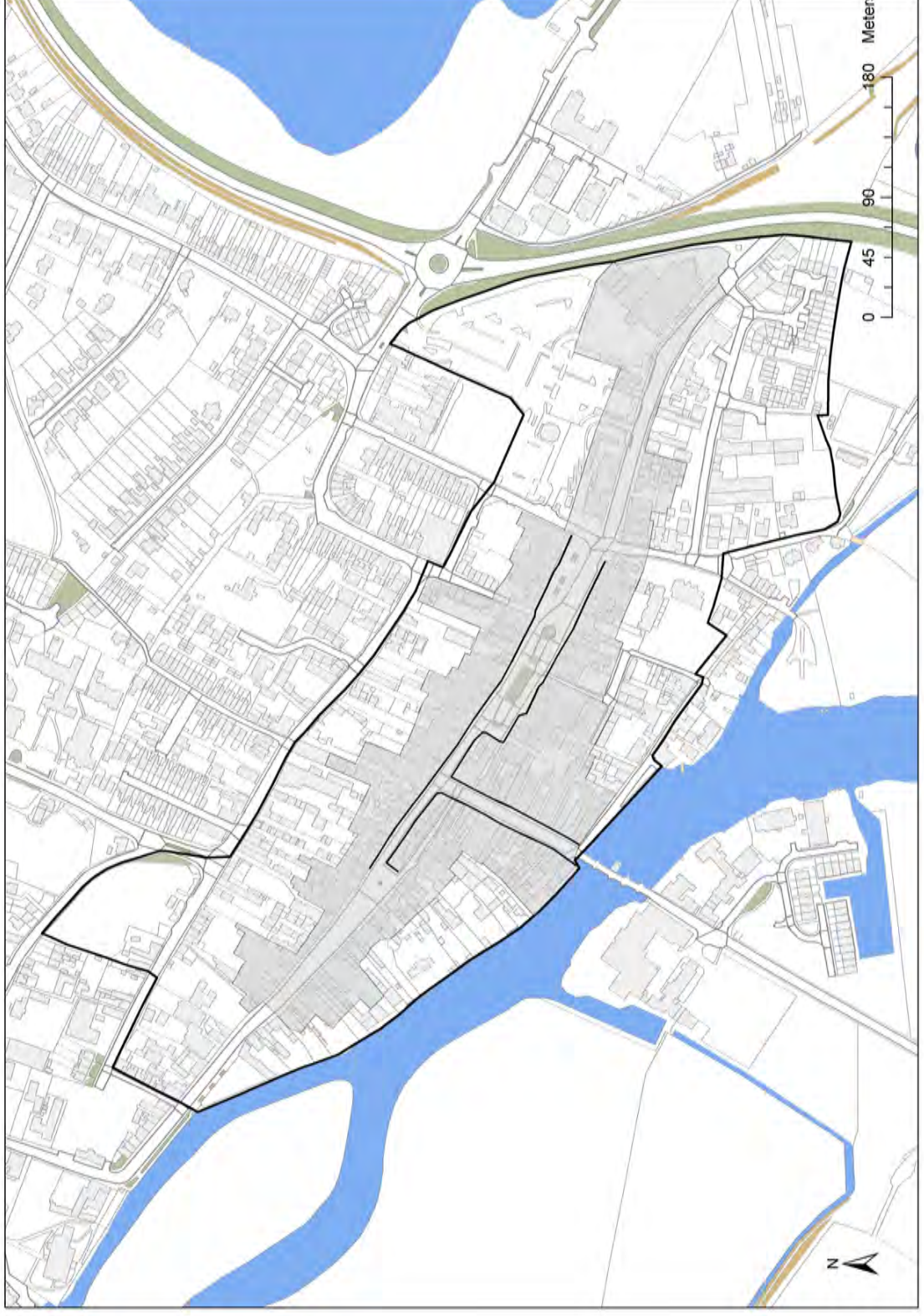
HUNTINGDON: TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY, PRIMARY SHOPPING AREA & PRIMARY SHOPPING FRONTAGE



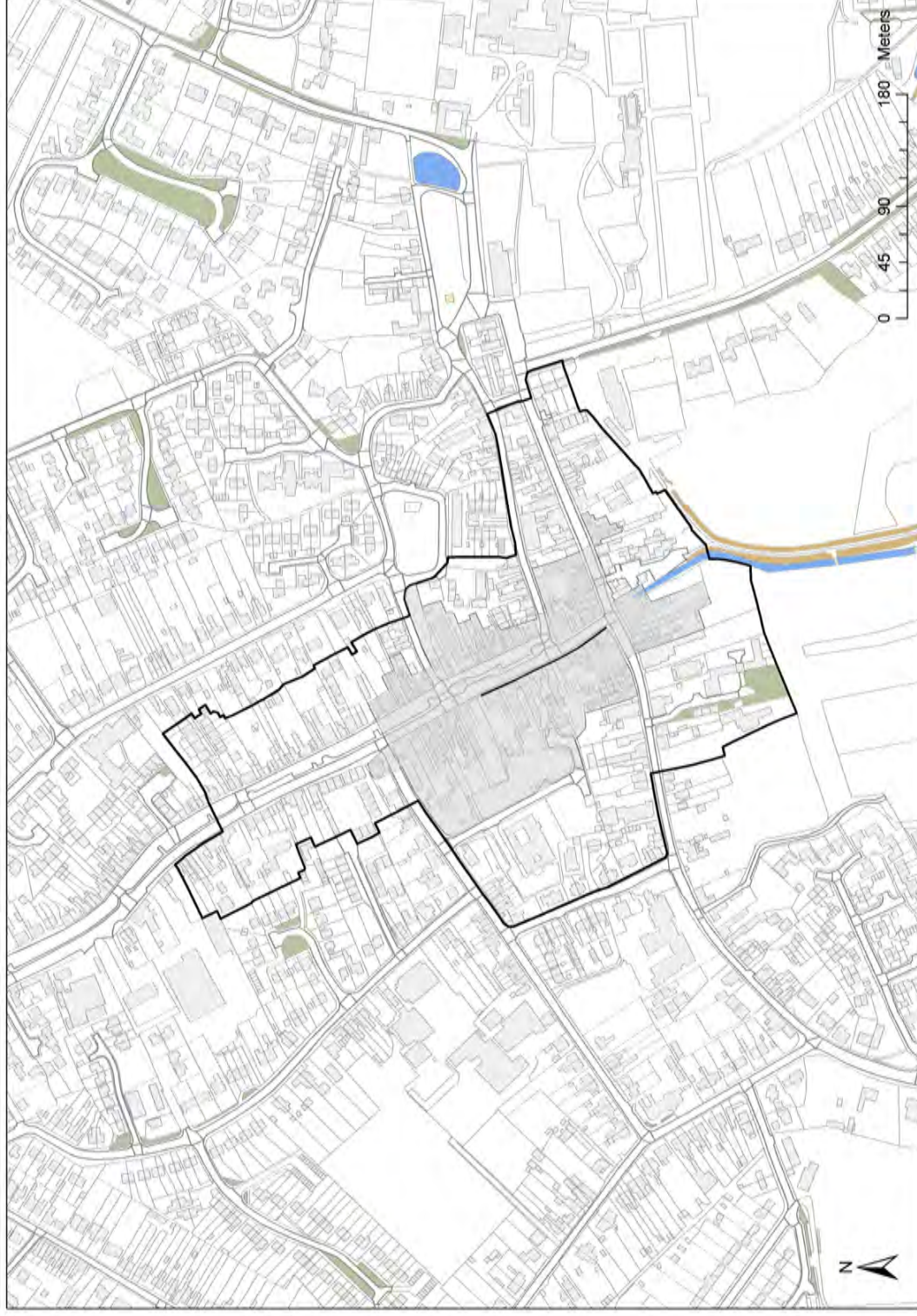
ST NEOTS: TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY, PRIMARY SHOPPING AREA & PRIMARY SHOPPING FRONTAGE



ST IVES: TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY, PRIMARY SHOPPING AREA & PRIMARY SHOPPING FRONTAGE



RAMSEY: TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY, PRIMARY SHOPPING AREA & PRIMARY SHOPPING FRONTAGE



APPENDIX 6 PROPOSED CAR PARKING STANDARDS

The proposed car parking standards are based upon the Council's existing Interim Parking Standards (which take into account guidance in PPG3 and PPG13 where appropriate). However, some adjustments have been made as a result of:

- (a) aligning the standards with relevant sections of the Use Classes Order; and
- (b) considering the standards employed by other authorities with a similar spatial structure to Huntingdonshire (this approach has also informed the cycle parking standards proposed here).

Use class and nature of activity	Maximum car parking provision		Minimum cycle parking provision	Notes
	Staff / residents	Public / visitors		
Retail & financial services				
A1: Retail (food)	Allowance included in standard for public / visitors	Up to 1 car space per 14 m ²	Minimum of 1 cycle space per 100 m ²	The car parking standards apply to all sizes of scheme, but for those up to 1,000 m ² (gross) a higher level of provision may be allowed in locations that do not enjoy good access by walking, cycling or public transport
A1: Retail (non-food)	Allowance included in standard for public / visitors	Up to 1 car space per 20 m ²		
A2: Financial & professional services	Allowance included in standard for public / visitors	Up to 1 car space per 20 m ²		
Food & drink				
A3, A4, A5: Restaurants & cafes, pubs/bars & hot food takeaways	Allowance included in standard for public / visitors	Up to 1 car space per 5 m ²	Minimum of 1 cycle space per 50 m ²	
Business				
B1: Business	Up to 1 car space per 30 m ²	Allowance included in standard for staff	Minimum of 1 cycle space per 100 m ²	The car parking standards apply to all sizes of scheme, but for B1 proposals up to 2,500m ² (gross) a higher level of provision may be allowed in locations that do not enjoy good access by walking, cycling or public transport
B2: General industrial	Up to 1 car space per 50 m ²	Allowance included in standard for staff	Minimum of 1 cycle space per 200 m ²	
B8: Storage & distribution	Up to 1 car space per 100 m ²	Allowance included in standard for staff	Minimum of 1 cycle space per 500 m ²	

Use class and nature of activity	Maximum car parking provision		Minimum cycle parking provision	Notes
	Staff / residents	Public / visitors		
<p>Communal accommodation</p> <p>C1: Hotels</p>	Up to 1 car space per staff bedroom, <u>plus</u> up to 1 space for every 2 non-resident members of staff	Up to 1 car space per guest bedroom	Minimum of 1 cycle space per 10 guest bedrooms	Additional car parking can be provided for bars, restaurants and other facilities available to the public, using the relevant standards for those uses
C2: Residential institutions	Up to 1 car space for each resident member of staff, <u>plus</u> up to 1 space for every 2 non-resident members of staff	Up to one car space per 4 residents	Minimum of 1 cycle space per 5 members of staff	Staff car and cycle parking relates to the total number of workers required on site at particular times (including overlapping shifts)
<p>Dwellings</p> <p>C3: Dwellings (town centres)</p>	1 car space per dwelling (average, per development)	Up to 1 car space per 6 units	Minimum of 1 cycle space per bedroom	A higher level of car parking provision may be allowed in Ramsey town centre, due to the relatively limited availability of public transport
C3: Dwellings (other locations)	2 car spaces per dwelling (average, per development)	Up to 1 car space per 4 units	Minimum of 1 cycle space per dwelling	Cycle parking for dwellings can be accommodated within garages, so long as they have room for a cycle as well as a car
<p>Community facilities</p> <p>D1: Non-residential institutions (museums, libraries, galleries, exhibition halls)</p>	Up to 1 car space for each member of staff	Up to 1 car space per 30 m ²	Minimum of 1 cycle space per 5 members of staff, <u>plus</u> at least 1 space per 150 m ²	
D1: Non-residential institutions (public halls & places of worship)	Allowance included in standard for public / visitors	Up to 1 car space per 4 seats, <u>or</u> up to 1 space per 15 m ²	Minimum of 1 cycle space per 10 seats, <u>or</u> at least 1 space per 37 m ²	

Use class and nature of activity	Maximum car parking provision		Minimum cycle parking provision	Notes
	Staff / residents	Public / visitors		
D1: Non-residential institutions (schools)	Up to 1 car space for each member of staff	Up to 1 car space per class, up to a limit of 10 spaces	Minimum of 5 cycle spaces per class for primary schools; minimum of 10 spaces per class for secondary schools	
D1: Non-Residential institutions (clinics, health centres, surgeries)	Allowance included in standard for public / visitors	Up to 5 car spaces per consulting room	Minimum of 1 cycle space per 2 consulting rooms	
D2: Assembly & leisure (cinemas & conference facilities)	Allowance included in standard for public / visitors	Up to 1 car space per 5 seats	Minimum of 1 cycle space per 75 m ² , <u>or</u> at least 1 space per 10 seats	
D2: Assembly & leisure (other uses)	Allowance included in standard for public / visitors	Up to 1 car space per 22 m ²	Minimum of 1 cycle parking space per 75 m ² , <u>or</u> at least 1 space per 10 seats	

In addition to the above, a minimum number of car parking spaces for the disabled will be required at the level recommended by the Department for Transport (see *Inclusive Mobility*, 2002):

Nature of activity	Minimum disabled parking provision		Notes
	Staff	Public / visitors	
Existing business premises	At least one space for each disabled employee	At least 2% of car park capacity (minimum of one space)	
New business premises	At least 5% of car park capacity (minimum of one space)	Allowance included in standard for staff	
Shopping areas; leisure & recreational facilities; other places open to the public	At least one space for each disabled employee	At least 6% of car park capacity (minimum of one space)	Additional spaces may be required for hotels and other places that cater for large numbers of disabled people