

REGENERATION OPPORTUNITIES - HUNTINGDONSHIRE MARKET TOWNS

GATEWAY 1 REPORT

CAPITAL&CENTRIC

Report Title	Project Update Following the Conclusion of Gateway 1
Date / Revision	October 2026
The Programme	Huntingdonshire Market Towns - Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives
Contracting Parties	Capital&Centric (Off the Wall) Limited and Huntingdonshire District Council
Action	This paper provides a summary of the works undertaken across three of Huntingdonshire's market towns to Gateway 1, including the completion of initial concept design work, fee and option strategy, site surveys and investigations, and initial pre-application engagement with the local planning authority.
Report By	Martin Crews, Development Director

IMPACTS	
Finance Summary	The contract is being funded by Huntingdonshire District Council ('HDC') via a Services Delivery Framework under the Bloom Framework to review and develop design for the regeneration and development of sites in Huntingdon, St Neots, and St Ives. HDC awarded a contract to Capital&Centric (Off the Wall) Limited ('C&C') in the amount £1,000,000 for the Development of the design across the three towns in Huntingdonshire to complete Gateway 1 concept design proposals. A further £1,000,000 was allocated to a gateway 2 process, including planning application development. Progression to gateway 2 is subject to HDC approval. C&C have completed Gateway 1 and have spent £1,058,720.61. This is 5% above budget due to additional work to support scheme development and ensure best value, as recommended by C&C. Six draw down requests were issued between 23.02.26 and 10.08.26 to cover the cost of professional fees, surveys and other works as detailed in the proposal, with all costs paid.
Gateway 1 Outputs	• Initial conceptual design work to Royal Institute of Building Architects (RIBA) 2 • Site surveys and investigations • Public Engagement • Submission of a pre-planning application
Development Description	Concept stage proposals for residential led mixed use development on sites in the three market towns of Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots, including new homes, commercial uses, resident amenity space and measures to retain or enhance public parking and bus facilities. The work was limited to RIBA Stages 1 2 concept design and supporting evidence

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gateway 1 has been completed across the three chosen Huntingdonshire market towns of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives. All key outputs have been delivered, including the completion of initial concept design work to RIBA Stage 1 and 2, agreement of fee and option strategies for the key sites, commencement of site surveys and investigations, and the submission of the pre-application with the local planning authority.

The project takes a consistent design led approach across all three towns using efficient, well tested residential typologies that provide cost certainty through benchmarked above ground construction costs, while responding sensitively to each town's distinct character, heritage and infrastructure constraints.

Across the three towns, the concept designs propose 248 new homes, with active commercial ground floor uses and resident amenity at each location. Crucially, the schemes are designed to work with existing infrastructure rather than against it – retaining bus stops, preserving significant public car parking and creating routes that activate previously underused back of house areas and town centre edges.

Development appraisals have been developed throughout the process to ensure the design is deliverable. We currently forecast that, as with comparable Capital&Centric schemes elsewhere in the UK, a level of public grant support will be required to bridge the viability gap on these town centre, mixed use schemes. This is consistent with grant requirements seen nationally, typically in the range of £50,000 to £100,000 per plot depending on site-specific constraints and local values.

A public consultation was held in August to present the proposals to the public and obtain feedback. There was a substantial response across all three towns. The predominant theme was concern about the potential impact of changes to surface car parks on accessibility, convenience, linked trips and town-centre vitality. These concerns align closely with the planning authority's pre application advice, which emphasised that parking is not solely a matter of numbers of spaces but also of location and function.

Capital&Centric appointed GC Insight to highlight the benefits deliverable from the three schemes through an economic benefits assessment. The schemes would generate £75.4m of Gross Value Added (GVA) while supporting 713 temporary Full time equivalent (FTE) jobs and seven apprenticeships, placements or traineeships during construction. The 248 one- and two-bedroom apartments delivered equals 25% of Huntingdonshire's annual housing target which in turn will add around 360 new residents and £533.9k of council tax income. The new residents' discretionary spend is estimated to generate around £3.9m directly into the towns, further supporting around 21 FTE jobs and £1.0m GVA per annum.

In addition to this, 9,300 sq ft of commercial food and beverage space would support 42 FTE jobs and £2.0m of GVA per annum, and the benefit of this will allow a further 20 FTE jobs and £1.7m GVA in the wider economy, allowing around £21,200 income in business rates per annum. The 9,500 sq ft of public realm will allow for the towns to have stronger pedestrian routes and a feel of community for all town residents to benefit from.

This report therefore confirms that Gateway 1 has generated a substantial body of technical, design, survey and economic evidence demonstrating the potential benefits of carefully designed town centre investment. At the same time, the public consultation and pre-application feedback have identified significant community and planning concerns – particularly around parking location, accessibility, linked trips and town centre vitality that should genuinely shape what happens next. While the economic assessment makes a strong case for the value of regeneration, it does not by itself resolve whether these particular sites and schemes are the most appropriate way to deliver those benefits. The final decisions will rest with elected members.

1. INITIAL CONCEPTUAL DESIGN WORK

A professional design team was appointed to deliver RIBA Stage 1 and 2 concept design work across Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives. This early stage process, which was initiated after HDC Cabinet approval in July 2025, included the identification and assessment of option / sites for inclusion and further concept development, based on deliverability and impact. Sites which were not taken forward, as highlighted in para 1.1.1, were discounted on this basis and not recommended for further development. A copy of the final concept design pack is included at Appendix 4. There were significant changes in the design throughout the process to respond to survey information and the potential impact on parking. The numerous iterations also responded to the local context to ensure the schemes were suitable for each town's setting.

The design approach across all three towns looked to use building typologies that Capital&Centric have explored on other projects across the UK whilst ensuring they responded to the local context. This approach provided cost certainty, as above-ground construction costs can be benchmarked against other live tendered prices, and ensures the schemes are highly efficient and, more importantly, deliverable. An iterative approach in design was also employed to take into account potential improvements and feedback throughout the project, from prior to the July 2025 report to Cabinet, which informed the initial approaches, to during the engagement events held during August 2026.

Detailed site by site concept descriptions, room schedules and combined totals for Huntingdon (78 homes), St Neots (83 homes) and St Ives (87 homes) – total 248 homes – remain as set out in the scheme proposals prior to commencement of engagement exercised in August 2026, and are not repeated here for brevity. The reduction from earlier higher residential units was driven by the need to retain more parking on the sites and as part of our iterative approach taken to design, and in response to feedback during engagement events.

1.1 HUNTINGDON

1.1.1 SITE IDENTIFICATION

As part of the instruction, Capital&Centric undertook a review of the potential development opportunities in the town. The following sites were reviewed and assessed:

111 High Street- This is a significant development opportunity in the town, with the current vacant unit prominent on the Market Square, causing a significant blight on the town centre. Through poor ownership and recent criminal activities in the building, its resurgence is deemed critical as part of the towns development. Whilst the site is not under HDC or C&C control, we envisage that it should form the centre of the regeneration of the town. We discovered recently that the owners arranged a lease on the building making a purchase more difficult. We attempted to contact the owner to discuss acquiring the site, but received no response. This remains a key target property to bring forward a new food and beverage offer in the centre of the town to help drive footfall and nighttime economy.

Wykeham House, Market Hill- A planning application was rejected to convert the Grade II Listed building into an HMO. As it is in third party ownership it was not something that was fully developed as a proposal, but it was a property that we looked at to potentially bring forward.

The George Hotel- The George Hotel was marketed by Savills for £1.25m with a large car park to the rear, 26 rooms and a 92 cover bar and restaurant. We spoke to the agent and considered the acquisition but felt that conversion of a hotel into residential accommodation would not be positive for the town. We understand the hotel requires significant investment. The listed nature of the building and risks associated with taking it on are significant. We believe there is scope for a further high-quality boutique hotel in Huntingdon (to complement the Old Bridge), and the best scenario would be for the George to be upgraded and be retained as a hotel. At present, this falls outside of the scope of our work.

Cowper House- We worked with HDC to progress the acquisition of the building for [redacted]. The strategy was to restore the Grade II* listed building onto the High Street and repurpose the former Hunts Post building to the rear. As part of a plan to develop Princes Street car park, it provided a central resident hub providing extensive amenity space including a gym, residents lounge and mini cine. Prior to acquisition and following survey, design and investigation work, which indicated significant repair / reinstatement costs, HDC decided not to acquire the building.

27/28 High Street- The property was considered as part of the acquisition of Cowper House but was quickly placed under offer by a third party. It was also deemed less suitable to acquire than Cowper House due to the size and the lack of additional structures to the rear. The grounds were also smaller. As such, we recommended not to acquire the building. It was subsequently sold at auction for £310,000.

Former Huntingdon Fire Station- When Capital&Centric were appointed, the Former Fire Station was under offer from McCarthy and Stone the retired living specialist. We believe they withdrew from the purchase in March 2026, but it has always been a site of significant interest given its proximity to the town. We see significant potential to develop the site into a new residential neighbourhood and suggest that the site is considered as a potential option to bring forward in partnership between Capital&Centric and HDC

Brook House- The vacant office building adjacent to the Former Fire Station is owned by Places for People Housing Association who we believe originally planned to deliver an office to residential conversion. We understand that the building does not convert well and they are currently exploring their options including demolition. We recommend that HDC consider whether they would acquire the building and add to the adjacent Fire Station site to provide a significant opportunity to bring forward a new neighbourhood in Huntingdon.

ATS Site, Nursery Road- This site was marketed by Hartnell Taylor Cook, and following a recommendation from C&C, HDC made an offer to acquire the 0.5 acre site for [redacted]. The offer was not successful as the site was acquired by another garage operator. There were many potential uses explored for this site including layover for the buses from the bus station and residential use.

Former Magpas Offices- This was a site that was on the market when we started discussions with HDC and it was deemed attractive as it included parking adjacent to the site near Mill Common. A private developer acquired the site and is currently on site delivering residential accommodation.

Princes Street Car Park- This is a well utilised car park adjacent to the south of the high street with access to the Commemoration Hall. It is popular due to its proximity to the ring road and the ability to park there and avoid the town gyration. It is also adjacent to the existing first floor car park of St Benedicts Court shopping centre which we understand has parking capacity. Upon review it was determined that the potential development of this car park could only be done in conjunction with the wider HDC parking strategy, and that some parking would need to remain on the site along with market-day lay down space as currently provided. Further, to consider its development additional parking at Mill Common also needed to be delivered in conjunction to ensure the impact on the town was limited.

Bus Station- The bus station forms a significant role in the towns transport strategy. Its current location provides good accessibility to the town but its proximity to the train station means the transport is not a connected interchange. It was determined early that there was no desire to move the bus station but to provide an enhanced service. The land also currently provides significant space for bus layover with the parked buses being the first thing you see when entering the town. The old station is also of poor architectural quality and whilst it provides a significant, much needed facility, the waiting room and bathroom facilities require some investment. Any proposal to develop the site has been developed in conjunction with a strategy to ensure the bus service was maintained, layover area was provided and the facilities were enhanced to encourage active travel. HDC have met with the bus companies and whilst they want involvement in the process, they were supportive of the improvement and regeneration to the bus station.

Land off Mill Common Road- There are two parcels of land formerly owned by the Huntingdon Freemans Trust adjacent to the Mill Common car park which were acquired by the Highways Agency as part of a CPO process to build the new A14. HDC have been in dialogue with the Highways Agency and the Huntingdon Freemans Trust to acquire a leasehold interest on the site to provide over 90 parking spaces to replace and supplement some of the parking that would have been taken by the potential development of the Princes Street Car Park, and to provide parking to residents of the development.

1.1.2 PROPOSED SITES

Due to the ownership structure and the strategic impact, the development of the sites would have on the town, it was determined that the best strategy was to develop a proposal for the following:

- Homes on the Princes Street car park whilst retaining significant parking provision for the Commemoration Hall, blue badge holders and the market traders
- The re-development of the bus station providing homes at upper level, providing a new enhanced waiting area, toilets and off-site bus layover provision. Further improving the pedestrian axis from the train station into the town with a new urban linear park.
- The acquisition of the land at Mill Common to provide additional parking for the town and residents
- Acquisition of Cowper House and utilise the Hunts Post building as resident amenity and provide a coffee shop onto the high street
- Keep the acquisition of 111 High Street under review to bring forward a placemaking F&B offer subject to engagement from the owner.

1.1.3 SITE CONTEXT AND CONCEPT

Huntingdon is a market town and principal shopping centre of Huntingdonshire District. The proposed development focuses on two key sites, the current bus station site and Princes Street car park, which together offer a significant opportunity to deliver new homes in a well-connected central location. The sites have a strong design relationship to the high street and utilise Cowper House to connect to the main town centre, whilst restoring an important historic asset. The development forms a connected, coherent neighbourhood creating a gateway development into the town on the bus station site and then further homes on the Princes Street car park.

1.1.4 ZONE 01 - BUS STATION SITE

Zone 01 occupies the current bus station site, which represents a significant opportunity to unlock a gateway location on the edge of the town centre. The concept design proposes a residential-led building of up to 5 storeys, designed to respond to key view corridors from the station approach, A1307, Castle

Moat Road, Malthouse Close, Princes Street and Walden Road, all of which have been assessed through a detailed heritage Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) analysis. This analysis allows us to understand where you can see the new building from across the town to ensure its impact is minimised. We acknowledge the height and mass of the building needs to be tested to ensure it is fully in keeping with the urban setting but there is a need to develop a structure of significance to have an impact.

The building is configured as a deck access apartment block with two cores. The ground floor incorporates residential homes with front doors onto the rear walkway, creating active frontages to the street to provide security and activity to the back of the development. A new bus facility will be developed as part of the scheme to replace the current waiting room and toilet block. The new facility would be a significant upgrade ensuring that the users have a safe, warm environment to wait for the bus.

The floor plan is efficient and highly lettable, with the residential mix weighted toward one-bedroom apartments reflecting likely occupier demand in this location.

Zone 01 Room Schedule:

Level	1 Bed	2 Bed	Total
Level 00	8	2	10
Level 01	8	3	11
Level 02	8	3	11
Level 03	8	3	11
Level 04	8	3	11
Total	**40**	**14**	**54**
Mix	**74%**	**26%**	

1.1.5 ZONE 02 - PRINCES STREET CAR PARK AND COWPER HOUSE

Zone 02 is the Princes Street car park, immediately adjacent to Cowper House, and is the scheme's crucial link between the new residential neighbourhood and the high street. The concept design proposes a 3-storey building on the car park with a more intimate scale than Zone 01, responding to the character of the surrounding streets and the presence of the Grade II* listed Cowper House.

The initial proposal indicated development across the entire car park, but upon review and feedback from the Commemoration Hall, it was determined that 50% of the spaces should remain and the same number of blue badge parking spaces to be retained. This would ensure that the patrons of the Commemoration Hall were able to park adjacent to the building in evenings. The proposal also retained the market day trader parking. The proposal also relied upon not only replacing the existing parking but providing additional parking on the land off Mill Common. This parking area would also be used by residents of the buildings.

At ground floor of Cowper House, a resident amenity space serves the whole development and, critically, a public facing café is proposed that opens directly off the high street. This café is not a secondary or back-of-house offer, it is designed as an activated, welcoming destination that brings new footfall to this edge of centre location and creates a natural reason for residents and visitors alike to pass through rather than around the site. Cowper House itself sits alongside this zone and is considered as part of the wider concept, with the amenity and café uses helping to animate its setting and support any future use or activation of the building.

The residential mix in Zone 02 is weighted toward two-bedroom apartments, reflecting the more settled, family and professional occupier profile expected in this quieter, more residential part of the scheme.

Zone 02 Room Schedule:

Level	1 Bed	2 Bed	Total
Level 00	2	6	8
Level 01	2	6	8
Level 02	2	6	8
Total	**6**	**18**	**24**
Mix	**25%**	**75%**	

1.1.6 HUNTINGDON COMBINED SUMMARY

Type	Zone 01	Zone 02	Total
1 Bed	40	6	46
2 Bed	14	18	32
Total Homes	**54**	**24**	**78**
Mix			**59% 1-bed / 41% 2-bed**
Commercial / Amenity		**Ground floor public café + resident amenity**	

1.2. ST NEOTS

1.2.1 SITE IDENTIFICATION

As part of the instruction, Capital & Centric reviewed potential development opportunities in St Neots. Given the limited availability of undeveloped land in the town centre, the approach focused on existing buildings and surface car parks. Any proposals involving surface car parks were considered alongside HDC's emerging parking strategy, with the aim of ensuring that sufficient parking provision could be retained or replaced. Scheme identification and concept development were informed by parking data supplied by HDC, recognising the need to balance the potential economic benefits of regeneration against the functional role of town centre parking.

Former Beales Store- When we first discussed the potential regeneration of St Neots the former Beales department store, associated adjacent building and parking were the primary focus. The building was in private ownership, and a sketch scheme was drawn up to propose a mixed use residential led scheme to revitalise that end of the high street. Prior to being able to acquire the site, the landlord let one unit to Poundland and the other to Pure Gym. This impacted our ability to bring forward a development on the site.

Rowley Arts Centre- The Rowley Arts Centre is in the ownership of HDC with the provision of a cinema, and at the time of C&Cs appointment empty former restaurant units. The car park on the site is underutilised during the day and we explored the potential of building homes on the car park. We also understood that the cinema operator was paying a below market rent, so we undertook a strategic review of the site's potential, looking whether we could repurpose the building for alternative leisure use such as padel courts. Changing the use of the cinema was rejected due to the economic impact of losing the current operator on the wider town. We also worked with HDC to consider how to activate and let the commercial units. Fortunately, small independent businesses came forward to take the units which meant we were not required to develop plans further. A proposal to install a deck car park over the existing car park at Rowley Arts Centre to facilitate the development of the Tebbutts Road site was part of our proposal.

Tebbutts Road Car Park- Following the letting of the former Beales store, in conjunction with HDC, we identified the Tebbutts Road car park as a potential development site, on the proviso that the car parking would be replicated elsewhere in the town maintaining suitable provision in accordance with the parking strategy being developed by HDC. Further, parking provision for blue badge parking on the site was proposed to be retained to allow access to the local medical facilities.

Riverside Car Park- Whilst this was an attractive potential development site on the river, it was dismissed due to it being a designated flood zone. It was considered as a potential location to provide additional parking on a single metal deck to free up other surface car parks like Tebbutts Road, but the impact on the river setting and flooding deemed it not viable at this stage without significant further investigation.

Former Marks and Spencer Store- Marks and Spencer stated that they would not renew their lease as they were moving to an out-of-town site in Wintringham in line with their wider company policy. The lease had not expired at the time of developing the designs, but it remains the intention as part of any further development of Tebbutts Road car park, to discuss acquisition of the store and convert into a foodhall to drive footfall back to the eastern end of the high street. It is the intention to speak to the owner of the building during the next gateway.

1.2.2 PROPOSED SITE

Following a review of the sites and the letting of the Beales store, it was agreed between C&C and HDC to develop a proposal to regenerate the Tebbutts Road car park. This was done on the proviso that sufficient parking was left on the site to cater for the GP and dental surgery, including blue badge spaces, and the 210 parking spaces that currently occupy the site would be replaced in other car parks in the town, notably with a deck car park to the Rowley Arts Centre in accordance with HDCs parking strategy.

1.2.3 SITE CONTEXT AND CONCEPT

St Neots is Huntingdonshire's largest town and has been the focus of significant master planning and regeneration investment through the Masterplan for Growth and Future High Streets Fund programme. The concept design for St Neots focuses on the Tebbutts Road car park, a surface car park that currently represents a highly used centrally located surface that creates a back of house feel to the area. By developing the site, the hope is to build high-quality architecture that opens up the space and supports the existing high street. It was acknowledged throughout the process that any development on the site would need to be undertaken in conjunction with HDCs parking strategy and the parking would be replaced within the town. Retaining parking for blue badge holders and those looking to use the medical centres remained a key consideration throughout the design process plus the continued provision of public toilets.

By developing the car park and activating the ground floor frontage facing the route from the car park to the High Street, the scheme creates a new destination that draws people through, turning a forgotten rear service route into a genuine part of the town centre experience. The town has several lovely shopping precincts that connect the high street to the north which have been taken up with wonderful independent operators who thrive away from the main through traffic of the High Street. The provision of replacement parking is critical to ensuring the scheme could be brought forwards.

1.2.4 PROPOSED TYPOLOGY

The building is shown as a deck apartment scheme of up to 5 storeys. We have tested the height of the building, and 5 storeys was deemed to be the highest it could be developed, and it's more likely to eventually be a 4-storey building based on the local surrounding structures. Significant consideration was given to the three main historic focal points within the town Paines Mill, Parish Church of St Mary, and St Neots United Reformed Church. The typology uses an efficient deck system, ensuring dual aspect apartments and access to fresh air from apartment front doors. The potential development provides 83 homes across the levels. The ground floor is fully activated in the building adjacent to Tebbutts Road, with 4 commercial units and resident amenity space, creating a new commercial frontage that addresses the pedestrian route through to the High Street. This ground floor activation is central to the concept - it does not treat the route as a service area but as a proper part of the town. The proposal also provides 54 parking spaces, of which the majority would be used as short term parking for the medical facilities.

The residential mix is broadly balanced, with a slight weighting toward one-bedroom apartments, reflecting the range of occupiers expected in a town centre Build to Rent scheme.

St Neots Room Schedule:

Level	1 Bed	2 Bed	Total
Level 00	0	7	7
Level 01	12	7	19
Level 02	12	7	19
Level 03	12	7	19
Level 04	12	7	19
Total	**48**	**35**	**83**
Mix	**58%**	**42%**	
Commercial Units (GF)			**4 units at ground floor**

1.3 ST IVES

1.3.1 SITE IDENTIFICATION

As part of the instruction, Capital&Centric undertook a review of the potential development opportunities in St Ives. There was a focus on the eastern end of the high street around the Cattle Market car park along with other sites that were deemed possible development sites.

Auction House- The site was marketed by Eddison and C&C recommended to HDC to acquire the building and wider site. An offer of [redacted] was made on an unconditional basis, but we understand the vendor sold the building to the current tenant. The proposal for the site was for it to form part of the wider Cattle Market development and at the end of the existing high street with a new strong frontage onto Station Road. We understand the site may be available again and could re-form part of the proposal.

Cattle Market Car Park- Due to the site's prominence in the town, it was discussed with HDC as a strategic development opportunity. This approach was based on the benefits of increasing footfall to and from this area and expanding on the role of Waitrose as an anchor, which would directly support the wider town centre. The existing car park layout was considered to be highly inefficient with scope to improve this in a mixed use development. Ensuring that sufficient parking was provided in the town, making sure the bus station was not interrupted and that Waitrose were not adversely impacted were crucial considerations in any potential development plan. HDCs parking strategy and parking data (including levels of income, which is an indicator of use, were also crucial to be considered as part of any decision to progress a development on the car park. Existing easements on the land including Waitrose having restrictions to the front section and the Fair having other easements were considered as part of the design process.

NHS Site- HDC were in discussions to acquire the former NHS Clinic on Ramsey Road in St Ives and C&C were looking to develop the site to provide circa 50 homes. The offer was rejected by the NHS as they accepted a higher offer.

Park and Ride Car Park- Although we don't have detailed data, we understand that generally the park and ride car park is underutilised. The use of this car park was considered as potential overflow parking if the number of spaces were reduced on the Cattle Market car park, albeit the walk from the car park to the town would need upgrading and would only be suitable for overflow given the potential impact to traffic by more usage of the pedestrian crossing. There are also two parcels of land to the north of the car park adjacent to the entrance off Meadow Lane that were identified as potential replacement parking for that loss at the Cattle Market or as a potential site for residential development. The land is in the ownership of Cambridgeshire County Council so not under the control of HDC, but we understand if Local Government Reform proceeds, it would likely be in the ownership of a new Unitary council so could be considered for development.

1.3.2 PROPOSED SITE

Based on the prominence of the Cattle Market car park within the town, HDCs ownership and the parking data showing that the long stay parking is underutilised, a proposal to develop on the car park was progressed.

1.3.3 SITE CONTEXT AND CONCEPT

St Ives is an historic market town on the northern bank of the River Great Ouse, with a strong independent retail offer, distinctive townscape and significant visitor potential. The concept design for St Ives focuses on the cattle market car park, a large, surface car park that offers a genuine opportunity for town centre intensification and the economic output that more homes and people bring to an urban setting. The

proposal for the site was considered in the context of ensuring sufficient parking was kept on the site, either through the installation of a single storey deck car park, or the reduction in the size of the proposed development to ensure over 300 parking spaces were retained. The retention of the bus station also formed a significant part of our proposal to ensure the town retained its connectivity.

A proposal to develop the site in 2021 was put forward under the St Ives Vision document, and the feedback from that to retain parking was considered as part of the development.

1.3.4 PROPOSED TYPOLOGY

The scheme proposes a residential-led mixed-use building of 3 to 4 storeys to the west and centre of the site, carefully positioned to retain a significant quantum of public short stay parking and to preserve the existing bus stop on site. The final height and mass are to be determined further to discussions with the planning department. The building includes a minimum of 2 commercial units at ground floor level together with a resident amenity space, both of which address the pedestrian routes through and around the site.

A key design principle is that the scheme must not compromise the town's parking offer. The masterplan level 00 layout retains 247 short-stay public parking spaces on site alongside 75 dedicated Waitrose parking spaces, maintaining the overall accessibility of the town centre for shoppers and visitors. Whilst this is a reduction in the total number there is the scope to build a single storey deck car park which would increase the parking back up towards the current number of spaces.

The bus stop is retained in its current position, ensuring that public transport users are not disadvantaged by the development. The plan was to undertake a cosmetic upgrade to the bus station building but leave the rest of the facility.

There is a Girl Guide structure on the site which would be retained but it would be the intention to undertake some upgrades including repairs and decoration. Whilst conversations were not undertaken with the Guide leaders, they attended the consultation event and were positive about the proposal to repair their facility.

The proposed development on the site has evolved during the process. The original plan developed too much of the site leaving insufficient parking. This assessment, at that point in the project, was based on usage data derived from HDC parking income generated, which indicated higher levels of demand than the concept proposals accounted for. The design progressed with alternative iterations, finally the proposal reduced the number of units and split the scheme into two zones. Zone 01 provides 66 homes across ground to level 03, with a mix weighted toward one bedroom apartments. Zone 02 provides a further 21 homes at levels 00 to 02 within the second part of the building. The overall scheme total from the masterplan is 87 homes. This is a reduction from figures presented in earlier design packs to HDC, reflecting the amended positioning of the building on the site and the priority given to retaining parking and bus infrastructure. The current plan does not show a deck car park, but the plan would be to engage with a manufacturer to ascertain how many more spaces could be delivered on the site to get back towards the existing 468 spaces.

The courtyard gardens concept shown in the design pack sketch visuals gives a sense of the quality of environment intended a softly landscaped, resident focused setting that contrasts positively with the utilitarian car park environment that currently surrounds the site.

St Ives Room Schedule (from Masterplan - latest):

Zone 01:

Level	1 Bed	2 Bed	Total
Level 00	9	4	13
Level 01	16	6	22
Level 02	16	6	22
Level 03	7	2	9
Total	**48**	**18**	**66**
Mix	**72.7%**	**27.3%**	

Zone 02:

Level	1 Bed	2 Bed	Total
Level 00	0	3	3
Level 01	2	5	7
Level 02	2	5	7
Level 03	2	2	4
Total	**6**	**15**	**21**
Mix	**28.5%**	**71.5%**	

St Ives Overall:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	Total
Masterplan Total (latest)	54	33	87 homes
Car Parking Retained			247 short-stay + 75 Waitrose
Bus Stop			Retained
Commercial / Amenity			2 Commercial units + resident amenity at ground floor

1.4 TOTAL ROOM MIX

The three projects presented at the end of Gateway 1 proposed 248 units, a reduction from the proposals previously presented to HDC. This was primarily due to a reduction in the scale of development to enable the retention of more parking on the sites.

Town	Site	Homes	Commercial / Active GF	Parking / Infrastructure
Huntingdon Zone 01	Bus Station	54		Bus infrastructure to be reviewed as part of relocation strategy
Huntingdon Zone 02	Princes Street Car Park	24	Resident amenity + public café off high street	Adjacent to Cowper House
St Neots	Tebbutts Road Car Park	83	4 commercial units at ground floor	Activated route through to High Street
St Ives	Cattle Market Car Park	87	2 commercial units + resident amenity	247 short-stay + 75 Waitrose spaces retained, bus stop retained
Total		**248**		

2. SITE SURVEYS AND INVESTIGATIONS

In order to facilitate the design work during Gateway 1, surveys have been scoped and undertaken to support the design work across all three towns. Survey information such as flood risk assessments, Stage 1 site investigations and highways analysis are critical to support the concept design work and inform the move into detailed design at Gateway 2.

An extensive suite of surveys was undertaken across the three towns and specific sites. This included the following specific surveys and investigations:

Survey	Huntingdon	St Neots	St Ives
Topographic Survey	Yes	Yes	Yes
Desktop Utilities	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transport and movement analysis	Yes	Yes	Yes
Heritage Assessment	Yes	Yes	Yes
Acoustic Report	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tree Surveys	Yes	Yes	Yes
Site Investigations	Yes	Yes	Yes
CCTV	Yes	Yes	Yes
Drainage	Yes	Yes	Yes
Measured Survey	Yes	Yes	Yes
Archaeological Assessment	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bat Survey	Yes	Yes	Yes
3D Laser Scan and Point Cloud		Yes	Yes
Arboricultural Report	Yes	Yes	Yes
Drone	Yes	Yes	Yes
GPR Utilities	Yes	Yes	Yes
Environmental Noise Survey, Creation of 3D Noise Map, Initial Feasibility Summary Report	Yes	Yes	Yes
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal	Yes	Yes	Yes

As part of the potential acquisition process for Cowper House in Huntingdon, Capital&Centric procured and managed the following surveys on behalf of HDC as part of complementary site investigations:

- Measured survey Elevations
- Measured survey Floor plans
- Topographical Survey
- Tree Surveys
- Site Investigations
- Utility Survey

- Stats Search
- Stage 1 Arboricultural Report
- Heritage Appraisal

These extensive surveys and investigations into the sites significantly informed the design process and construction details to develop a robust design that can be delivered. Whilst the potential acquisition could have formed part of a partnership with Capital & Centric, and was included in the public engagement, HDC reserved the right to progress a scheme at this location independently. Ultimately the property was not purchased due to the excessive investment required to bring the building back to a minimal state of repair.

3. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

3.1 OCTOBER 2025 MEET THE NEIGHBOURS

In October 2025, Capital&Centric announced meet-the-neighbour drop-in events on 03 and 04 November in each of the three towns. The original purpose of these events was to meet key stakeholders such as the town council, civic society, local councillors, Business Improvement District (BID) managers and other stakeholders, to introduce Capital&Centric and the proposed sites that were being considered. The marketing material did not specifically reference the sites, but at that stage the following opportunities had been identified:

- Huntingdon – Princes Street car park and the bus station
- St Neots – Tebbutts Road car park
- St Ives Cattle Market car park

The plan was to talk to key stakeholders about the specific sites. Difficulty in obtaining a comprehensive list of key stakeholders led to the decision to open the three events to the general public. A press release was issued on 25 October 2025 and published in the Hunts Post, as well as being shared across social media platforms.

https://www.huntspost.co.uk/news/25575159.st-ives-st-neots-huntingdon-drop-in-town-events/

The events were not well attended, although councillors from all political parties attended and the potential sites were disclosed when questions were asked. A subsequent member drop in event was held on Teams on 06 November 2025, open to all HDC councillors. The proposed sites were presented and discussed; the design pack as at November 2025 is included in Appendix 2.

3.2 AUGUST 2026 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Following the May 2026 local election, a members' briefing was held on 22 June 2026 to present the updated proposals to all HDC council members, including newly elected members. An in-person meeting took place at Pathfinder House with a Teams link available. An updated design pack (Appendix 3) was presented. At that stage the proposals showed a reduced parking allowance across the three sites.

Between the members' meeting and the public engagement, a further design review was undertaken. The design progressed with the explicit aim of retaining more parking across all three sites (the scheme included in Appendix 4). This responded to member comments and anticipated public concern about the loss of parking.

Public engagement events were held on 17, 18 and 19 August 2026. The engagement events generated significant public interest and a high volume of responses.

A full report on the three public engagement events is included in Appendix 5. The predominant theme across all three towns was concern about the potential impact of changes to surface car parks. Respondents emphasised the importance of the location and convenience of parking, its role in supporting linked trips, and the contribution of convenient parking to town-centre vitality and the local economy. These points align with the planning authority's pre application advice.

While the economic benefits assessment (summarised later in this report) demonstrates substantial potential GVA, employment and local-spend benefits, it does not by itself resolve whether these particular sites and schemes are the most appropriate vehicle for delivering those benefits. The strength and

consistency of the public response indicate that any further work must carefully address location, accessibility and the functional role of parking within each town centre.

3.3 HUNTINGDON SUMMARY

The engagement event received 587 responses, of which 87% expressed opposition to the development as then proposed. The principal concerns focused on the potential impact on Princes Street car park (including its importance to the Commemoration Hall and market traders) and on the bus station. Many respondents supported the principle of improving the bus-station facilities but were concerned about any reduction in capacity or loss of indoor waiting and toilet provision.

The scheme, at the point the engagement exercises began, retained a significant number of spaces on the Princes Street site (including blue badge provision) and proposed additional parking at Mill Common, a short walk away. Nevertheless, many respondents remained concerned about the loss of convenient, centrally located parking and its effect on accessibility and linked trips.

A range of views was expressed. Some respondents supported the principle of investment in the town centre and the provision of new homes, while questioning whether these particular sites were the most appropriate locations. Others raised heritage and townscape considerations.

Many respondents were supportive of development in principle, but not on these sites. There was a clear view that Huntingdon needs investment, particularly improvement to the town centre.

3.4 ST NEOTS SUMMARY

The proposed development on the Tebbutts Road car park generated a large response, with over 1,737 responses received. Of those, 89.8% were opposed to the development as then proposed and 7.3% were supportive. The volume and detail of the comments demonstrated a high level of engagement and a deep care for the future of the town centre.

The principal concern was the impact of losing parking in that specific location – particularly its convenience for the medical centre, dental surgery and linked trips to the High Street. While the scheme retained a number of spaces (including blue badge provision) and proposed replacement parking elsewhere in the town (including a potential deck at the Rowley Arts Centre), many respondents considered the existing location of the Tebbutts Road car park to be critical to the functioning of the town centre. Policy PT3 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan, which resists the loss of town centre parking unless vitality and viability are protected, was frequently referenced in the planning feedback and resonates with the public comments.

3.5 ST IVES SUMMARY

The St Ives engagement exercise received 1,559 responses, of which 91.2% were opposed to the proposal to develop on the Cattle Market car park. The primary focus of concern was the potential impact on parking provision.

The latest masterplan retained 247 short-stay public spaces plus 75 Waitrose spaces (over 300 spaces in total) and kept the bus stop in its current position. Even with this level of retention, and the possibility of adding a single storey deck if required, many respondents remained concerned about any reduction in the overall quantum or the loss of convenient surface parking in this central location.

Concerns were also raised about the mass and scale of the development, although the latest plans reduced the height to 3 and 4 storeys. The bus station was raised as a concern by some, although the proposals never involved relocating or reducing the bus facility.

A significant number of respondents expressed the view that the Cattle Market car park is a heavily used and valued piece of town-centre infrastructure, and that the proposed form of development was not considered suitable for the character of St Ives. Some respondents questioned whether the town required additional commercial floorspace of the type proposed.

3.6 CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Across the three towns there was a very strong public response, with 3,883 people providing feedback. The consistent primary theme was concern about the impact of changes to surface car parks on accessibility, convenience, linked trips and town-centre vitality. Respondents also raised questions about mass, scale, heritage and whether these particular sites are the most appropriate locations for the proposed form of development. These community concerns, together with the planning authority's emphasis on location, accessibility, the functional role of parking and the need for a robust town wide parking strategy before any application, represent significant issues that should inform any decision on how (or whether) to proceed.

4. PRE PLANNING APPLICATION

A pre-planning application was presented to HDC as Local Planning Authority (LPA) on 22 June 2026, and a detailed Urban Design Engagement response was provided by the case officers. A copy of the response is included in Appendix 6.

The planning authority treated the proposals as strategic town-centre matters. In each case the feedback emphasised that redevelopment should only be supported if the wider parking network is shown to work at least as well as it does now, without harming town centre vitality. Key points raised included:

• Parking is not solely a question of numbers; location, accessibility, convenience for linked trips and the risk of displaced demand onto less convenient or residential streets are material.

• Equivalent or better bus and taxi facilities must be provided in equally accessible locations if the existing facilities are affected.

• A town-wide parking strategy should be in place before any application, demonstrating that accessibility, vitality and performance will be maintained.

• Mass, scale, impact on neighbouring properties, trees and heritage assets require careful testing.

Capital&Centric responded by revising the schemes prior to public engagement: reducing the scale of development on Princes Street (retaining >35 spaces plus blue-badge provision and proposing Mill Common parking), retaining bus stop facilities and taxi rank on site, re orienting blocks to limit overshadowing and retain trees, leaving 54 spaces on Tebbutts Road primarily for medical users, and scaling back the St Ives scheme to the western side of the site while retaining >300 spaces (with scope for a deck). These revisions addressed the quantum of parking but, as the public engagement demonstrated, did not fully resolve concerns about location and function.

Below is a breakdown of each town, and how the results of the meeting helped shape our next steps.

4.1 HUNTINGDON

The feedback from the LPA on the proposed development is as follows:

Bus Station

- Replacing the town's main transport hub with three on-street lay-bys on Princes Street would sharply cut capacity. It would also lose facilities such as toilets and an indoor waiting room.
- The submission doesn't explain how services, future growth or interchange would work, or where services would relocate.
- Earlier options, such as Mill Common Car Park and Chequers Way, have been dropped with nothing put in their place.
- The future of the taxi rank is also unclear.
- Redevelopment should only proceed if equivalent or better bus and taxi facilities are provided in an equally accessible location.

Princes Street Car Park

- Losing this central car park, along with Bridge Place car park, would substantially reduce convenient parking on the south-eastern side of the town centre.
- The concern is about function as well as numbers. Central parking supports quick, linked trips, and displaced demand could move to less convenient places, spill onto residential streets and hurt footfall.
- Nine centrally located disabled spaces would be lost.
- A town-wide parking strategy should be in place before any application, showing the network will work at least as well as it does now.

Both proposals are treated as strategic town centre matters, and neither is supported without clear evidence that accessibility, vitality and performance will be maintained.

Further comments were raised about the mass and scale of the development on the bus station and the impact the buildings could have on neighbouring properties and the impact on existing trees.

Capital&Centric Response

In response to these comments, we undertook a review of the proposals prior to the public consultation. The scale of development on the Princes Street car park was reduced leaving over 35 spaces along with a proposal to provide parking on Mill Common to increase the spaces. The proposal also retained the same number of blue badge spaces.

The bus station proposal evolved to ensure that the taxi rank remained and that the existing bus station facilities such as the waiting room and toilets would remain on the site. This formed part of the proposal taken to the public consultation.

The orientation of the blocks on the bus station were changed following the comments from the planning pre-app to ensure it limited overshadowing to neighbouring properties and retained all trees on the site.

4.2 ST NEOTS

The feedback from the LPA on the proposed development is as follows:

- The car park sits close to the High Street, the Health Centre, the United Reformed Church and Moores Walk. It also has 16 cycle stands and public toilets, and it supports linked trips.
- Early pre-application plans would move parking to Riverside Car Park and Rowley Arts Centre Car Park using deck parking, giving about 140 extra spaces overall.
- Numbers aren't the issue. The replacement sites are more peripheral, less directly connected to the shops and rely on longer, less legible walking routes. That risks fewer linked trips and weaker footfall.
- Market Square parking has already been reduced under application 23/01383/CLPD, with 32 spaces lost and 4 disabled spaces replaced by 8.
- **Required before any application:** A town wide parking strategy should show how displaced demand will be redistributed, how walking distance and accessibility compare, how wayfinding will be maintained, and what the impacts on footfall and vitality will be.
- **Policy:** Policy PT3 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan resists the loss of town centre parking unless vitality and viability are protected. It supports well-designed multi-storey parking within a comprehensive strategy, and better quality, safer parking.

Overall, redevelopment should only be supported if the wider parking network is shown to work at least as well as it does now, without harming town centre vitality. Concerns were also raised about the scale and mass of the building at 5 storeys and further information would be required to justify such scale.

Capital&Centric Response

The updated proposals left 54 parking spaces on the site which were proposed to be for public use, primarily for blue badge holders and those using the medical facilities. The proposal would need to be considered against the wider economic benefit for the town by bringing forward quality rental accommodation.

4.3 ST IVES

The feedback from the LPA on the proposed development is as follows:

Cattle Market car park in St Ives is one of the most significant town centre interventions and further information is required to justify its development due to the loss of parking.

- The wider site covers the Cattle Market (Bus Station) car park (197 spaces, 15 disabled), the Harrison Way section (196 spaces, 0 disabled) and the Waitrose car park (75 spaces, 6 disabled). It also has 16 cycle stands and public toilets.
- About 301 spaces would be lost, around 64% of current provision. Future deck-access parking is mentioned, but there's no detail on capacity, access or design.
- The retained area is triangular and has mature trees, which could limit how efficient a parking structure can be. Poor integration with the new housing could also create inactive frontages and an overly engineered townscape.
- Indicative access via Station Road and the Waitrose car park could add traffic through Cromwell Place and Market Hill, which are already busy with pedestrians and historically sensitive. Keeping the Meadow Lane access should be explored, as it gives a more direct route to Harrison Way and the strategic road network.
- Earlier Council master planning suggested wrapped or capped multi-storey parking within mixed-use parcels, but the submission doesn't show whether these were considered.
- It should show that replacement parking keeps accessibility and convenience, retains enough capacity, is well integrated into high-quality buildings, protects mature trees and keeps the wider network working effectively.

Without this evidence, the effects on town centre accessibility, vitality and function remain unclear.

Capital&Centric Response

The updated proposal that was taken to the public consultation scaled back the development, focusing on the western side of the site, leaving over 300 parking spaces with the potential to add a deck car park if needed. This responded to the planning comments regarding the lack of parking.

5. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The design team have been fully engaged and developed a significant amount of design work across the three towns. The table below provides a high level summary of the design team and survey work undertaken across the three towns. Cowper House design and surveys in Huntingdon are shown in separate, dedicated rows.

5.1 HUNTINGDON

Work Package	Discipline	Scope	Works to Date Completed
Concept Architecture - Zone 01 bus Station	Architect	RIBA Stage 1-2 concept design, floor plans, massing, view corridor studies	Concept design developed through multiple iterations from feasibility to public consultation. Coordinated GA plans, sections, elevations, massing studies, design review material, public consultation material and revised scheme to respond to HDC comments and key view corridors.
Concept Architecture Zone 02 Car Park	Architect	RIBA Stage 1 2 concept design including café and resident amenity layouts	Concept design developed through multiple iterations including revised massing, layout testing, integration with Cowper House, parking review, public consultation material and B Haus / deck access option testing.
Heritage ZTV Analysis- both zones	Heritage Consultant	Zone of Theoretical Visibility analysis across all identified view corridors	View corridor analysis completed and heritage advice issued based on pre-application schemes. Heritage visual impact material prepared to support council review.
Landscape Design both zones	Landscape Architect	Concept public realm and streetscape design	Public realm and landscape proposals coordinated into the evolving scheme. Landscape input incorporated for council review and public consultation scheme.
Structural Engineering both zones	Structural Engineer	Concept structure and foundations scoping	Primary frame coordination completed, including input on foundations, deck structure, roofs and floor arrangements. Structural input incorporated into coordinated design reviews.
MEP Engineering both zones	Building Services Engineer	Concept MEP strategy	Plant requirements, risers, service distribution and apartment and utility layouts reviewed and coordinated into the concept proposals.

Work Package	Discipline	Scope	Works to Date Completed
Cost Consultancy both zones	QS / Cost Consultant	Cost plan and development appraisal inputs	All scheme iterations live costed for client viability review throughout design development.
Planning Consultancy both zones	Planning Consultant	Pre application engagement and strategy advice	Initial meetings held and planning input provided to support strategy development and planning statement preparation for submission.
Topographical Survey both zones	Survey Specialist	Site topographical survey	Survey requirement identified and used to inform ongoing site analysis. Detailed survey information remains part of the wider investigation scope.
Utilities Desktop and Survey both zones	Survey Specialist	Utilities mapping and intrusive survey	Below ground services, site constraints and utilities surveys reviewed to inform concept design development.
Transport and Movement Assessment both zones	Transport Planner	Access, parking and movement scoping	Extensive transport review undertaken including bus layover testing, off site car parks, public consultation coordination and ongoing access and movement input.
Project Management both zones	Project Manager	Programme and delivery management	Design team meetings coordinated, briefing packs issued after each DTM, and programme managed through Gateway 1 and pre application stages.
COWPER HOUSE - Heritage Building Survey	Building / Heritage Surveyor	Measured and condition survey of Cowper House	Building surveyed and incorporated into concept planning work to support future reuse considerations.
COWPER HOUSE Concept Architecture	Architect	Concept design for adaptive reuse, café and amenity integration	Initial and revised concept layouts produced for Cowper House, including café, co working, resident amenity, gym, cinema and workspace arrangements.
COWPER HOUSE Structural Survey	Structural Engineer	Structural condition assessment	Initial structural input assumed as part of wider design coordination, with further survey and assessment to inform next design stage.
COWPER HOUSE - Heritage Assessment	Heritage Consultant	Statement of significance and initial heritage impact assessment	Heritage input provided in relation to Cowper House setting, wider scheme heritage sensitivities and pre application proposals.
COWPER HOUSE Legal / Option Costs	Legal	Option agreement, title investigation and heads of terms	Ongoing alongside site strategy and ownership review.

5.2 ST NEOTS

Work Package	Discipline	Scope	Works to Date Completed
Concept Architecture	Architect	RIBA Stage 1 2 concept design including 4 commercial unit layouts and activated frontage	Concept design completed to Gateway 1 / RIBA Stages 1-2 level.
Landscape Design	Landscape Architect	Concept public realm and pedestrian route activation design	Initial landscape and public realm concepts prepared to support the evolving design.
Structural Engineering	Structural Engineer	Concept structure and foundations scoping	Initial structural input provided to support concept testing.
MEP Engineering	Building Services Engineer	Concept MEP strategy	Initial MEP strategy input provided to support concept design.
Cost Consultancy	QS / Cost Consultant	Cost plan and development appraisal inputs	Initial cost planning and appraisal input provided.
Planning Consultancy	Planning Consultant	Pre-application engagement and strategy	Early planning and pre-application strategy input commenced.
Topographical Survey	Survey Specialist	Site topographical survey	Survey scope identified / commenced.
Utilities Desktop and Survey	Survey Specialist	Utilities mapping and intrusive survey	Initial utilities review commenced.
Transport and Movement Assessment	Transport Planner	Parking, access and movement scoping	Initial transport and access review undertaken.
Project Management	Project Manager	Programme and delivery management	Project coordination and programme management undertaken through Gateway 1.

5.3 ST IVES

Work Package	Discipline	Scope	Works to Date Completed
Concept Architecture	Architect	RIBA Stage 1 2 concept design per masterplan, including parking retention and bus stop strategy	Concept design and latest masterplan iteration completed to support Gateway 1.
Landscape Design	Landscape Architect	Concept courtyard and public realm design	Initial courtyard and public realm design prepared.
Structural Engineering	Structural Engineer	Concept structure and foundations scoping	Initial structural input provided to support concept development.
MEP Engineering	Building Services Engineer	Concept MEP strategy	Initial MEP strategy input provided to support concept development.
Cost Consultancy	QS / Cost Consultant	Cost plan and development appraisal inputs	Initial cost planning and appraisal input provided.
Planning Consultancy	Planning Consultant	Pre-application engagement and strategy	Early planning and pre-application strategy input commenced.
Topographical Survey	Survey Specialist	Site topographical survey	Survey scope identified / commenced.
Utilities Mapping	Survey Specialist	Utilities mapping and intrusive survey	Initial utilities review commenced.
Transport	Transport Planner	Parking retention strategy, bus stop and access assessment	Initial transport, parking and access review undertaken to support retention strategy.
Project Manager	Project Manager	Programme and delivery management	Project coordination and programme management undertaken through Gateway 1.

6. FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Throughout the process we have been developing appraisals using forecasted rents and our appointed Quantity Surveyors cost plans. This has enabled us to understand the issues relating to viability and to determine design development. The below summarises the appraisals for the final schemes that were presented at the public consultation and form the concluded Gateway 1 design.

6.1 HUNTINGDON

GDV	£21,550,509
Grant	£6,225,000
Total Revenue	**£27,775,509**
General costs inc acquisition	£1,300,000
Construction Costs	£21,537,970
Professional Fees	£4,922,527
Marketing and Letting	£75,000
Funding Costs	£1,999,734
Total Development Costs	**£29,835,231**

6.2 ST NEOTS

GDV	£25,908,394
Grant	£6,640,000
Total Revenue	**£32,548,394**
General costs inc acquisition	£2,250,000
Construction Costs	£22,538,050
Professional Fees	£5,383,880
Marketing and Letting	£100,000
Funding Costs	£2,306,963
Total Development Costs	**£32,578,893**

6.3 ST IVES

GDV	£25,772,687
Grant	£5,580,000
Total Revenue	**£31,352,687**
General costs inc acquisition	£300,000
Construction Costs	£23,954,550
Professional Fees	£5,447,437
Marketing and Letting	£150,000
Funding Costs	£2,080,566
Total Development Costs	**£31,932,553**

7. GRANT FUNDING

Following appointment, Capital&Centric commenced high-level discussion with Homes England in relation to grant funding to fill the viability gap on the three projects. These discussions were at an early stage, and they were also understanding the devolved funds provided to the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority, who we understand only had £25m of devolved funding at the time. Progression of the grant funding application will progress following Capital&Centric getting Gateway 2 approval to progress the development.

8. ECONOMIC REPORT

Capital&Centric commissioned GC InSight to prepare an economic report to show the economic benefits of delivering the regeneration across the three towns. A copy of the report is included in Appendix 8 of this report. The key findings include:

- 248 new one- and two-bedroom apartments, equal to 25% of the district's annual housing target
- A broader housing mix in a district dominated by detached and semi-detached homes
- A stronger town centre rental offer
- About 360 new residents
- Younger, working age people staying in the area, helping to balance an ageing population
- Seven construction apprenticeships, graduate placements or traineeships
- About 713 FTE temporary construction and supply chain jobs
- About 42 FTE jobs in new food and beverage units, plus roughly 20 FTE in the wider economy
- About £3.9m a year of household spend on retail and recreation, supporting around 21 FTE jobs
- Business rates of about £21,200 a year
- Extra council tax from the new homes, which supports local services
- 9,500 sq. ft of new public realm
- More footfall through the day and evening, which helps tackle the 5pm drop-off in Huntingdon
- Better links, such as the station to town centre route in Huntingdon
- A stronger sense of safety and better perceptions of place
- More business confidence and private investment
- Homes close to major job sites like Brampton Cross and Alconbury Weald
- A better position to benefit from Universal Studios in Bedford, especially St Neots

9. SOCIAL IMPACT

As part of Capital&Centric's commitment to leveraging social value as part of their regeneration work, the first Cambridgeshire Regeneration Brainery event was held 05 09 October 2026. The event was opened up to students from across Cambridgeshire, and was a separate initiative to our partnership with HDC, however, a concerted effort was made to attract students from the Huntingdonshire region in respect of our work in this area. The event was well attended, and the wider programme has seen over 7,000 young people from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds get access to a phenomenal weeklong bootcamp meeting top people from the property industry. This was made possible through the work Capital&Centric are undertaking with HDC. The Cambridgeshire Brainery now remains on the calendar, and future events are planned with a focus on attracting students from the Huntingdonshire area.

The economic evidence in Sections 5 (Design Development team and work packages), 6 (Financial / appraisal summaries), 7 8 (Economic benefits assessment by GC Insight) and 9 (Social Impact / Cambridgeshire Regeneration Brainery), continues to show significant potential GVA, employment, council-tax and local spend benefits. As noted in the Executive Summary, this evidence demonstrates the potential value of regeneration but does not, of itself, determine whether these specific sites and schemes are the right vehicle for delivering it.

10. NEXT STEPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Gateway 1 has been completed, and the agreed deliverables have been achieved. The work has generated a substantial and useful evidence base design concepts tested against local context and surveys, a suite of technical investigations, pre-application advice, and a quantified economic benefits assessment. At the same time, the public engagement and the planning authority's feedback have identified significant community and planning concerns, particularly around the location and functional role of parking, accessibility, linked trips and town-centre vitality. These concerns should genuinely shape what happens next.

HUNTINGDON

The Princes Street car park proposals attracted substantial criticism, focused on the impact on the Commemoration Hall and convenient central parking. The subsequent decision by HDC not to acquire Cowper House has also reduced the regenerative impact of that element of the scheme. The bus station proposals, while generating some concern about service capacity, appear more capable of being refined through detailed design and continued engagement with operators, provided equivalent or better facilities are retained on an accessible site.

Further opportunities previously identified (Former Fire Station / Brook House; 111 High Street) remain potentially significant and could be explored if Members wish to pursue alternative or complementary sites that may attract greater public support.

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **The former Fire Station and Brook House-** These form a significant development opportunity in the town and whilst the market had previously intervened, the recent withdrawal of McCarthy and Stone and the stalled development by Places for People show the complexities in bringing the site forwards. As such, public sector intervention in the sites will allow high quality residential to be developed with a rental tenure that will have a long lasting positive impact on the town. New pedestrian routes could be formed through the site to provide better connectivity into town and a new standard of accommodation delivered.
2. **111 High Street-** This building could form the heartbeat of the towns renaissance with a new food and beverage offer that would drive footfall and enhance the nighttime economy. The process to acquire the building will be challenging given the owners lack of engagement to date.

ST NEOTS

The response to the Tebbutts Road proposals was overwhelmingly negative. While a strategy to replace parking quantum elsewhere in the town (including a possible deck at Rowley Arts Centre) was developed, the strength of feeling about the loss of parking in that specific, convenient location makes progression of the current scheme challenging. Policy PT3 of the Neighbourhood Plan and the planning authority's advice both underline the need to protect vitality and viability. Alternative approaches or sites would need careful consideration if regeneration objectives are to be advanced.

ST IVES

The Cattle Market proposals similarly attracted very strong opposition, even after the scheme was scaled back to retain more than 300 spaces and the bus stop. Concerns centred on the principle of developing on the car park and on the suitability of the proposed form of development for the town's character. Any

further proposal on or adjacent to the site (including possible involvement of the Auction House) would require a substantially revised approach, clearer parking strategy (location as well as numbers), and meaningful engagement with the local community. Other opportunities, such as land adjacent to the park and-ride (subject to County Council / future unitary ownership), could be explored as potentially less contentious alternatives.

NEXT STEPS

Prior to any decision on progressing to Gateway 2, it is recommended that the parties meet to review the full evidence base, the design and survey work, the economic benefits case, the planning authority's advice, and the detailed engagement feedback, and to determine which, if any, sites or alternative approaches warrant further exploration. The final decisions will of course rest with elected Members. Gateway 1 has demonstrated both the potential benefits of investment and the scale of the community and planning issues that any successful scheme will need to address.

APPENDIX 1 – SEPTEMBER 24 CONCEPT DESIGN PACK

APPENDIX 2 – NOVEMBER 25 CONCEPT DESIGN PACK

APPENDIX 3 – JUNE 2026 DESIGN PACK

The Shires - Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives concept design pack (February 2026) is attached.

APPENDIX 4 - AUGUST 2026 FINAL DESIGN PACK

APPENDIX 5 – PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORTS

Reports on the public consultation at Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots

APPENDIX 6 - PRE APP COMMENTS

APPENDIX 7- ARCHITECTURAL AND DESIGN (LED BY SHEDKM) PRE-APP RESPONSES

APPENDIX 8 - GC INSIGHT ECONOMIC REPORT