

HUNTINGDON TOWN CENTRE VISION
Vision ,Spatial Strategy and Action Plan
(Report by Head of Planning Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this final report is to seek approval of this document as interim policy guidance to inform the content of the forthcoming Planning Proposals DPD and assist in day to day decisions that have to be made affecting the future viability and vitality of the town centre.

2. SUPPORTING/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Civic Trust was commissioned at the end of 2004 to undertake a study of Huntingdon Town Centre. It was divided into a number of stages:-
1. A review of progress and improvement activity since the first report in 2000
 2. Framing proposals for the key potential sites and bringing them together in an overall spatial strategy
 3. Devising an indicative programme for the next 10-15 years identifying priorities and responsibilities for carrying them out
- 2.2 During the time that this work was being undertaken the District Council were considering the range of options for the new A14. A key issue arising from this consultation was the future of the Huntingdon Viaduct and whether or not this should be retained or removed as part of the alternative proposals relating to the provision of either a two or three lane dual carriageway on the line of the new A14.
- 2.3 The Council stressed that the removal of the viaduct, the de-trunking of the route and the connection to the local network would have considerable benefits to the town in terms of opportunities for development and to relieve traffic problems. The need for a technical study and detailed modelling of the implications was stressed at the time.
- 2.4 A joint study was commissioned in September and it was agreed to hold back the publication of the Vision document until the outcome of this study so its implications, if any, for land use planning could be illustrated.
- 2.5 The publication of the results of the study indicates that the removal of the viaduct is a viable proposition and has enabled the attached Vision to become a more integrated transport and planning strategy.

2.6 The study has a number of aims:-

- To give guidance to potential investors on the type of development that is likely to be acceptable
- To make the case for regional and national support to achieve the actions proposed
- To illustrate how the removal of the viaduct and changing road patterns that could result will bring wider economic benefits to the town
- To make a contribution to the Local Development Framework currently being prepared

3. THE SPATIAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

3.1 The document describes the overall development potential of the town and identifies a number of opportunity sites and their individual planning and market potential. It introduces a vision for the town centre, identifies aims and objectives and features of the spatial strategy. The spatial strategy is divided into a number of structuring and land use elements and finally into four character areas. The structuring elements identify the following:-

- The extension of town centre functions beyond the ring road in an 'arc of growth' to include the area around the station and Hinchingsbrooke
- the strengthening of the pedestrian connection of the existing town centre to the new commercial opportunity area to the west of the town centre
- the creation of a landscape and leisure corridor connecting the town centre with the Riverside Park and Hinchingsbrooke Park
- 'civilising the ring road' by better crossings for pedestrians and more landscaping
- the creation of 'activity hubs' at the railway station, Hinchingsbrooke, bus station, Chequers Court, and the old town bridge
- the creation of new and improved urban squares throughout the town
- the provision of additional car parks on the edge of the centre with good pedestrian access links to the centre

3.2 An indicative action plan identifying actions in the short term and long term completes the study.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 It is intended that an exhibition is held in July in Huntingdon at which officers of the District, County and the consultants on the viaduct study will be on hand to explain the planning and transportation aspects of the spatial strategy. This will be the first opportunity for the public to see and question officers about the recently published viaduct study.

5. RECOMMENDATION(S)

5.1 That members adopt the Vision as interim policy guidance

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Huntingdon Town Centre – a Vision and Strategy for Growth and Quality
October 2000 produced by the Civic Trust

A14 Huntingdon Study – report by Atkins into the implications of the removal
of the viaduct at Huntingdon station April 2006

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