

**DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT:
HUNTINGDONSHIRE LANDSCAPE & TOWNSCAPE ASSESSMENT
(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report informs Cabinet of a draft Supplementary Planning Document, the Huntingdonshire Landscape & Townscape Assessment, and seeks Cabinet's endorsement of the document as a basis for public consultation.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Huntingdonshire Landscape & Townscape Assessment was adopted by Cabinet as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) in September 2004. It has now become necessary to review the document's content and status as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Provision for the SPD was made in the Council's Local Development Scheme, which was endorsed by the Government in April this year.

3. THE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

- 3.1 SPDs form part of the suite of new documents that local planning authorities may prepare as a result of the planning reforms introduced in 2004. Their purpose is to expand upon the policies contained in Development Plan Documents (such as this Council's emerging Core Strategy DPD).
- 3.2 The production of SPDs involves more rigorous procedures than those employed for SPG prepared under the previous system. In particular, a sustainability appraisal is required as part of the process to help gauge any potentially significant environmental, social and economic effects. A sustainability appraisal of the draft SPD is currently being produced and would form part of the future consultation documentation.
- 3.3 The SPD contains largely the same material as appeared in the SPG, although relevant updates have been made to technical and factual information. In particular, a new chapter has been added relating to the on-going process of Conservation Area Boundary Review and Character Assessment. This will provide these documents with additional policy justification.
- 3.4 The focus of the document remains the identification of the district's local distinctiveness and opportunities for its enhancement.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Once approved by Cabinet, the draft SPD and accompanying sustainability appraisal will be issued for public consultation. The results of that consultation (and any amendments suggested in response) will then be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet, following which the document can be adopted as part of the Local Development Framework. An adopted SPD which has been through this process can be expected to be given considerable weight as a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 4.2 The proposed timetable for these remaining steps is as follows:
- Public consultation – November/December 2006
 - Development Control Panel consultation – 18th December 2006
 - Report back to Cabinet – February 2007

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Cabinet is recommended to endorse the draft Supplementary Planning Document, the Huntingdonshire Landscape & Townscape Assessment, as a basis for public consultation.
- 5.2 Cabinet authorises the Executive Member for Planning Strategy to make minor consequential amendments to the documents arising from the sustainability appraisal, prior to the issue of the document for public consultation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 (Cambridgeshire County Council & Peterborough City Council, 2003)

Huntingdonshire Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report (HDC, 2005)

Huntingdonshire Design Guide (HDC, 2004)

Planning Policy Statement 1 (ODPM, 2004)

CONTACT OFFICER - enquiries about this report to Chris Surfleet, Design and Implementation Team Leader on 01480 388476.