

Core Strategy 2007 - Issues and Options

Huntingdonshire District Council

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1 Introduction

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1 Introduction

1.1 In April 2006, Huntingdonshire District Council published a Submission Core Strategy as part of its Local Development Framework (LDF). The Submission Core Strategy set out the spatial vision, objectives and policies for managing development across Huntingdonshire. The Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination, with a six week period allowed for representations to be made with regard to the document.

1.2 Following prolonged discussion on the content of the Core Strategy with the Government Office for the East of England and the Planning Inspectorate, and in the light of further guidance issued on the required spatial content of Core Strategies, the Secretary of State made a direction under Section 22(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for the Council to withdraw the document. We have been advised to replace the Submission Core Strategy (2006) with two separate documents: one to address the core spatial strategy and one to provide development control policies.

1.3 To ensure compliance with the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 12 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 these replacement documents will be subject to full consultation. Within the parameters set by national and regional guidance all issues, options and approaches to be taken to managing development in Huntingdonshire are re-opened for debate.

1.4 The representations received during the previous consultation periods cannot be brought forward to this document. However, they have been used to inform some of the options put forward in this consultation paper.

1.5 This Issues and Options paper is the first stage in the preparation of a completely new Core Strategy. It aims to seek opinions on the issues that need to be addressed in the Core Strategy and what the objectives of the document should be. It raises many potential options on how issues could be tackled and seeks suggestions on alternative options and approaches that could be adopted.

1.6 Regulation 25 consultation will be undertaken throughout May and June with key stakeholders. The representations received will then be considered and used to guide preparation of preferred options consultation material for full public consultation. This will be followed by:

- Public consultation on preferred options (November 2007)
- Submission of the Core Strategy to the Secretary of State (April 2008)
- Consultation on the submission document (April-May 2008)
- Independent Examination - Hearing (November 2008)
- Adoption (June 2009)

Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment

1.7 Sustainability Appraisal is a systematic process which is carried out during the production of Development Plan Documents to ensure that policies and proposals contribute towards relevant environmental, social and economic objectives. Sustainability Appraisal incorporates the 'Strategic Environmental Assessment' (SEA) required as a result of the European Directive 2001/42/EC for plans and programmes that are likely to have a significant effect upon the environment.

1.8 The Council has produced an Initial Sustainability Appraisal of the options included in this Issues and Options report. This accompanies the Issues and Options report and will assist the consultation process and test and refine any policies and proposals prior to preparation of the preferred options.

1.9 In addition to Sustainability Appraisal, amendments made to the UK Conservation (Habitats and etc) Regulations 2006 require an Appropriate Assessment under Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitat Directive 92/43/EEC for all land use plans likely to have a significant effect on a European site. To satisfy the requirements Appropriate Assessments should be undertaken before adoption of a DPD. European sites consist of Special Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Offshore Marine Sites (OMS). This will be carried out if it is considered that any aspect of the Core Strategy warrants it.

How to get involved

1.10 It is important that we get your views on the issues and options in this report. Copies of the document have been sent to key stakeholders and are available at the District Council Offices at Pathfinder House. An interactive version of the document is also available on the Council's website.

1.11 You can comment on the document on-line via our interactive version at <http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk> or e-mail your comments to us at ldf@huntsdc.gov.uk or write to us at the following address:

1.12 Planning Division
Huntingdonshire District Council
Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon
PE29 3TN.

Role of the Core Strategy

1.13 The Core Strategy will set the framework for how Huntingdonshire will develop up to 2021 and beyond. It will contain strategic policies to manage growth and guide new development. This paper sets out Huntingdonshire District Council's initial thinking on what it considers are the key issues for the Core Strategy to address and what we may need to do as a consequence. We would like to receive your comments on this paper. We understand that there may be other issues that are important to you which you consider need to be addressed in the Core Strategy and would be pleased for you to raise them with us.

1.14 Huntingdonshire District Council will be preparing a series of planning documents, collectively known as the local development framework, to guide growth and change in the district up to at least 2021. The main components will be:

- Core Strategy Development Plan Document
- Development Control Policies Development Plan Document
- Huntingdon West Area Action Plan
- Planning Proposals Development Plan Document
- Gypsy and Traveller Sites Development Plan Document

1.15 These will be complemented by Supplementary Planning Documents on specific issues such as developer contributions to affordable housing and planning obligations as appropriate.

1.16 The Core Strategy will set out the key elements of the planning framework for Huntingdonshire to 2021 and beyond. It will have:

- a vision of how Huntingdonshire will develop to meet the needs of our residents and business communities, now and in the future

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- strategic objectives for the area to achieve the vision - to help guide and manage the growth at an acceptable level
- a spatial strategy which will help direct growth to locations where it can be sustainably accommodated and will identify an area of significant change
- core policies to establish overall development principles and to set the scene for more detailed policies to be used in assessing proposals for development - planning applications will be considered against the core policies as well as the detailed ones
- details of how the local development framework will be monitored and how the implementation of the Core Strategy will be assessed

1.17 It will not include detailed development control policies or identify specific potential development sites. These will be dealt with separately as identified above.

1.18 The Core Strategy will provide the local context for considering the long term social, economic, environmental and resource impacts of development. The key role of the Core Strategy will be to guide the spatial aspirations of the District Council and other service providers and stakeholders to ensure that the needs of our residents, businesses and visitors are met and a sustainable future is ensured for Huntingdonshire.

Linkages to other documents

1.19 The spatial vision for Huntingdonshire will be informed by the regional and local context set by other policy documents including the Regional Spatial Strategy and Huntingdonshire's Community Strategy.

1.20 The proposed changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy sets out the overall spatial vision for the east of England as:

Statement 1

'By 2021 the East of England will be realising its economic potential and providing a high quality of life for its people, including by meeting their housing needs in sustainable and inclusive communities. At the same time it will reduce its impact on climate change and the environment, including through savings in energy and water use and by strengthening its stock of environmental assets.'

(Modified text of Regional Spatial Strategy incorporating proposed changes, paragraph 2.2, December 2006)

1.21 The Huntingdonshire Community Strategy was produced by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership and adopted by the Council in 2004. The Community Strategy sets out the long-term vision for the development of communities in Huntingdonshire as:

Statement 2

'A place where future generations have a balanced and good quality of life and can enjoy:

- continued economic success;
- opportunities for all; and
- an environment that is protected and improved.'

1.22 The Community Strategy sets out a framework for delivering this vision. It identifies outcomes needed to achieve the vision, these are:

1.23 Supporting continued economic success

- a stable, buoyant and balanced local economy;
- a balanced housing market; and
- improved and sustainable infrastructure for communities

1.24 Promoting opportunity for all

- a healthy population;
- easy and affordable access to services and facilities;
- good opportunities for learning;
- good cultural and leisure opportunities; and
- vibrant, confident and effective communities

1.25 Protecting and improving our environment

- a high quality built and natural environment;
- low crime; and
- low fear of crime

1.26 For each of these outcomes the Community Strategy sets out measures to assess success, headline targets, short term objectives to achieve the outcomes and priority actions needed. The vision will be delivered by public, private and voluntary organisations. This Core Strategy will play a key role in delivering the aspects of the Community Strategy that concern the development and use of land. The Community Strategy will be updated during the preparation of the Core Strategy and revisions will need to be taken into account at subsequent stages.

Other plans and strategies

The Core Strategy's vision, objectives and policies 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 Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan, Housing Strategy for Huntingdonshire, Local Economic Strategy for Huntingdonshire, emerging Huntingdonshire Environment Strategy, emerging Huntingdonshire Cultural Strategy, 50 Year Wildlife Vision for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and a series of visions, action plans and urban design frameworks

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for Huntingdonshire's market towns which contain proposals for the redevelopment and enhancement of selected areas. These have been produced by the council in consultation with local communities (or, in Ramsey, by the coalition of local organisations that form the Ramsey Area Partnership).

Analysis of environmental, social and economic issues

In addition to the research that underpins these other documents, the Core Strategy has been 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:

- Housing Land Availability Assessment (forthcoming 2007)
- Employment Land Review (forthcoming 2007)
- Urban Capacity Study (2003)
- Housing Needs Survey (2003) and Update 2006
- New Homes Survey (2003)
- Landscape & Townscape Assessment (2004)
- Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2004)
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2004)
- Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study (2005) and Update 2007

2 Vision and Objectives

The need for a vision

2.1 The spatial vision for Huntingdonshire should flow from the visions sets out in the Regional Spatial Strategy and Huntingdonshire's Community Strategy. The Core Spatial Strategy will provide the spatial expression of these for the district and will direct future development to help achieve their visions and objectives.

Issue 1

The need to define a vision for Huntingdonshire to guide the overall philosophy of the Core Strategy.

Option 1

The spatial vision for Huntingdonshire could be:

'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.'

Question 1

Do you consider this an appropriate vision for the district?

Question 2

Are there other aspects it should incorporate?

Objectives of the Core Strategy

2.2 A series of spatial objectives will be required in the Core Strategy. These will summarise its key policy directions and help provide a framework for developing appropriate indicators and targets for monitoring purposes. The objectives will be devised within the context established by the Regional Spatial Strategy's objectives.

Issue 2

To define a series of objectives for the Core Strategy to provide a focus for what it aspires to achieve.

2 Vision and Objectives

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Option 2

To minimise the impact on climate change by:

- enabling required development to be accommodated in locations which limit the need to travel whilst catering for local needs
- promoting developments that conserve natural resources and minimise greenhouse gas emissions

Option 3

To increase housing opportunities for people by:

- ensuring that the quantity and types of dwellings built meet the requirements of local people
- ensuring that an appropriate proportion of new housing is affordable to those in need
- enabling the specialist housing needs of particular groups to be met in appropriate locations

Option 4

To realise the economic potential of Huntingdonshire and its residents by:

- facilitating business development in sectors that have potential to meet local employment needs and limit out-commuting
- enabling business development in rural areas, in locations and on a scale which helps to provide local jobs, limits commuting and avoids adverse environmental impacts
- strengthening the vitality and viability of Huntingdonshire's town centres as places for shopping and leisure

Option 5

To improve the quality of life for local people by:

- providing a framework for securing adequate land and infrastructure to support business and community needs
- increasing opportunities for pursuing a healthy lifestyle by maintaining and enhancing recreation opportunities and encouraging walking, cycling and horse riding

Option 6

To improve and conserve Huntingdonshire's environment by:

- enhancing the distinctive identities of our villages and market towns
- enhancing our characteristic landscapes, habitats and species
- promoting areas of strategic greenspace enhancement

Reasonable alternatives?

2.3 There are an infinite number of objectives that could be proposed for the Core Strategy. However, once it is adopted the Core Strategy and the Regional Spatial Strategy will form the development plan for the district. Therefore, it is logical that the objectives of the Core Strategy form a local interpretation of the Regional Spatial Strategy's objectives.

Question 3

Do you agree with the suggested objectives?

Question 4

Are there any additional objectives we should include?

3 The overarching issue of sustainable development

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3 The overarching issue of sustainable development

3.1 The promotion of a sustainable future is a key responsibility for the Council. It is now a legal requirement that plans reflect the overarching objective of promoting sustainable development. It should influence all aspects of the Core Strategy to shape our approaches to managing growth to ensure that the needs of our residential, business and interest communities are met whilst not compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Issue 3

The requirement to promote sustainable development to ensure that the needs of our residential, business and interest communities are met whilst not compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

3.2 The Core Strategy will provide the local context for considering the long term social, economic, environmental and resource impacts of development for at least the next 15 years. It will contribute to the promotion of sustainable communities and provision of opportunities for local residents and businesses to adopt sustainable practices.

Option 7

Policies will indicate that all development proposals should contribute to the pursuit of sustainable development.

Criteria could be set out to assess how a development proposal will achieve this. These could reflect social, economic and environmental issues including how the proposal would contribute to minimising the impact on climate change.

An assessment could be required to accompany any proposal for major development to demonstrate how these have been met.

Reasonable alternatives?

3.3 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.

Question 5

What criteria do you consider most important in assessing how a development proposal will contribute to sustainable development?

Question 6

Should those promoting a major development be required to complete an assessment to show how they have addressed these criteria?

4 Spatial strategy

4.1 Huntingdonshire is at the centre of the Cambridge to Peterborough growth area and managing the opportunities and pressures from growth will be a fundamental issue for the Core Strategy. Our towns, villages and countryside offer diverse and attractive environments in which to live and work, each having their own distinctive character and role in the district. Huntingdon and St Neots are major housing, employment and service centres for the district, with St Ives and Ramsey playing similar roles at a smaller scale. The District Council has witnessed considerable growth in the towns and villages during the 1970's, 80's and 90's and regeneration opportunities in the older estates and in the town centres are now apparent.

4.2 The district's location between Cambridge, Peterborough and Bedford gives rise to both opportunities and constraints providing competition for employment, retail and leisure facilities. The Core Strategy will be a spatial representation of the most sustainable options arrived at from the interplay of infrastructure and transport together with housing, employment and retail requirements. It will be one where a fair proportion of previously developed land is utilised. The amount and direction of growth will then feed into the proposed Huntingdon West Area Action Plan (an area of change/ redevelopment) and the Planning Proposals DPD.

Infrastructure

4.3 Significant enhancement is proposed of the transport links between Cambridge and the market towns that surround it, achieved through the implementation of the County Transport Plan. High quality public transport services will be developed in the Cambridge-Huntingdon corridor (to include a guided bus route between Cambridge and St Ives and on street bus priority measures between St Ives and Huntingdon) 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. The District Council supports the route which 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. The District Council and County Council are also working towards promoting improvements to the A428 between the A1 and Caxton Gibbet. Delivery of these improvements will influence the distribution and phasing of residential and employment development.

4.4 Market town transport strategies exist to promote packages of integrated highway, public transport, cycling and walking improvements in Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey. A park & ride site will be developed at St Ives (in association with the proposed guided bus route). Consideration may be given to 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.

4.5 Improved access will be made 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).

Housing requirements

4.6 The draft Regional Spatial Strategy has confirmed an allocation of 11,200 new houses to be built in Huntingdonshire for the period 2001 – 2021. The housing numbers allocated to a district should be regarded as a minimum target to be achieved. Of these 8,500 houses have already been built or committed for the period 2001-2006 (of which 5,350 are in Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey), see appendix one. This leaves a balance of 2,700 homes to be found. The thrust of settlement policy set out in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

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Structure Plan (2003) and the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (December 2006) has shifted towards an urban focus with greater emphasis on re-using previously developed sites. This stance will need to be followed through in the Core Strategy.

4.7 PPS3 specifies that local planning authorities should set out their policies and strategies for housing delivery that will enable continuous delivery of housing for at least 15 years from the date of adoption. It is anticipated that the Core Strategy will be adopted in mid-2009. To ensure a 15 year supply the strategy would need to consider housing delivery up to 2024. The draft Regional Spatial Strategy addresses this issue and advises that the annual average rate of housing required for 2006-2021 should continue to be sought during the early years after 2021. For Huntingdonshire this means that provision of a further 550 homes per year would be required from 2021 until 2024. To achieve this, land for a further 1650 homes will be required over and above the balance of 2700 homes to be found as advised by the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Employment requirements

4.8 To support continuing economic growth, the strategy must address the requirement to bring forward sufficient land of a suitable quality in the right locations to meet expected needs for industrial and commercial development, taking into account accessibility and sustainable transport needs and provision of essential infrastructure. However, the scale of employment land needed for the period to 2021 will be the product of a complex series of factors shaping the demand for new accommodation and supply of new and existing employment land and property. It is anticipated that the main factors will concern: overall national economic growth; local labour supply and demand and changing conditions for business competitiveness, most notably the need to reduce CO₂ emissions and unsustainable modes of transport for employees and the distribution of goods. Appendix one shows employment land completions since 2002.

Retail requirements

4.9 The spatial strategy will need to set out the relevant centres in which the search for sites for retailing will take place together with an indication of the quantity needed in each centre to ensure their continuing viability and vitality. At present a high proportion of money spent by residents on comparison goods goes to Cambridge, Peterborough and Bedford rather than being spent in shops in our market towns and villages. The Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study (2005, as updated 2007) suggests a target of 20,000 sq m net additional comparison floorspace and 3,900 sq m net additional convenience floorspace. This proposed figure allows for a slight increase in the proportion of expenditure retained locally as a result of more attractive retail opportunities being offered.

4.10 Opportunities for regenerating and strengthening the role of town centres exist and can be achieved by policies to promote further retail development. Where necessary in planning for growth up to 2021 it may be appropriate to extend the town centre after exhausting redevelopment sites in the centre.

Spatial planning areas

Issue 4

Identification of areas where development could be focused to promote sustainable opportunities for access to jobs, services and facilities.

4.11 Huntingdon and St Neots are identified in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003) as locations for future growth in the Cambridge sub-area. In spatial planning terms the relationship between market towns and nearby settlements is an important consideration. The following descriptions reflect the economic and social relationships between settlements within the district.

4.12 Huntingdon area: this includes Huntingdon, Brampton and Godmanchester and had 31,000 residents in 2005. The area is a key driver of the local economy. The Housing Land Availability Assessment (HLAA) recently completed by the Council identified that this area offers significant opportunities for development. The realignment of the A14 could have implications for development opportunities, particularly post 2015.

4.13 St Neots area: this includes St Neots and Little Paxton and had a population of 31,200 in 2005. Coupled with land in Bedfordshire around Wyboston, the area is also a key driver of the local economy. The HLAA recently completed by the Council identified that this area offers significant opportunities for development.

4.14 St Ives: is smaller in scale than Huntingdon and St Neots with a population of just under 16,000 in 2005. It offers fewer opportunities for sustainable development options. The HLAA identified a limited number of suitable sites with flooding being a major constraint. However, St Ives is within the prosperous Cambridge sub-region and will see significant changes in accessibility with the completion of the guided bus route.

4.15 Ramsey area: this includes Ramsey and Bury, but excluding Ramsey Forty Foot, Ramsey Heights, Ramsey Mereside and Ramsey St Marys, and had a population of around 8,000 in 2005. Major housing growth was discounted by the Inspector during the 2002 Local Plan alteration due to Ramsey's poor sustainability. It has relatively poor transport infrastructure and, despite previous allocations, has limited employment opportunities.

Option 8

To use the spatial planning areas described above when identifying strategic directions of growth. These would be used for assessing potential development sites for allocation within the Planning Proposals DPD or the Huntingdon West AAP.

Reasonable alternatives?

4.16 Strategic growth allocations could be focused only within the four largest towns in the district. However, the HLAA has identified limited brownfield land availability in some of these settlements. Limiting allocations only to sites within and around these settlements would limit the opportunity to maximise the re-use of brownfield sites which are located within the spatial planning areas but outside the market towns.

Question 7

Do you agree with the approach of considering potential Market Towns in conjunction with the adjoining settlements identified above solely for the purpose of assessing strategic development allocations?

Settlement hierarchy

4.17 The settlement hierarchy will provide a framework for managing the scale of new development in different locations. Its purpose will also be to preserve the character, scale and form of villages and to protect the openness of the countryside. It will steer most new development towards those larger settlements that offer the best access to services and facilities (both now and for the foreseeable future). This could help reduce the need to travel, as well as making good use of existing infrastructure and previously-developed land in urban areas.

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Issue 5

The need to define an appropriate settlement hierarchy to manage non-allocated growth in different types of location.

4.18 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003) identifies four settlements in Huntingdonshire that merit Market Town status: St Neots, Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey. These are designated on the basis of the range of facilities and employment opportunities they offer compared to other settlements in the district. Huntingdon, and parts of adjoining neighbouring parishes, provide far more jobs in comparison to the size of its potential workforce than elsewhere in the district, making it the most sustainable location for any further housing growth.

4.19 Although Ramsey and Bury clearly supports its designation as a Market Town, the availability of employment is comparatively poor (although efforts to address this are being made through the Ramsey Area Partnership). This is reflected in the Structure Plan and draft Regional Spatial Strategy which indicates that the scale of any new housing development in Ramsey should be relatively small.

4.20 Guidance to assist the identification of Key Service Centres is contained in the Regional Spatial Strategy (proposed changes, December 2006) and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan. Key Service Centres are defined as large villages with a good level of services such as a primary school within the village, a secondary school within the village or easily accessible by public transport, primary health care facilities, a range of shops and services that can meet day-to-day needs, local employment opportunities and a frequent public transport service to higher order settlements. Several of the potential Key Service Centres are closely associated with potential Market Towns and could offer particularly sustainable opportunities for access to jobs, services and facilities. Others are more free-standing and further development could help make them more self-contained. The HLA showed considerable variation in the number of houses different settlements in this category could accommodate. The Employment Land Review identified available allocated employment land in Fenstanton, Yaxley and Sawtry.

Option 9

The Core Strategy will need to identify a settlement hierarchy for use in determining the scale of non-allocated development appropriate in different locations.

The hierarchy could:

- identify Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey and Bury as 'Market Towns'
- identify Brampton, Buckden, Fenstanton, Godmanchester, Kimbolton, Little Paxton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys and Yaxley as 'Key Service Centres'
- list other villages as 'Smaller Settlements'

Reasonable alternatives?

4.21 The hierarchy could be changed in a number of ways to facilitate a wider or tighter distribution of growth. This was an issue which raised significant responses to consultation on the original submitted Core Strategy (April 2006). Various suggestions have been raised involving more or less different categories within the hierarchy. A significant alternative is the previously proposed distinction between two categories of Key Centre in an attempt to distinguish further between additional growth and ease of access to shops, services and employment facilities.

4.22 A further alternative is to base the settlement hierarchy 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 regional policies to reduce the need to travel are being addressed most effectively.

Question 8

Do you agree with the overall approach taken to the settlement hierarchy?

Question 9

Do you agree with the identification of Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey and Bury as 'Market Towns'?

Question 10

Do you agree with the identification of Brampton, Buckden, Fenstanton, Godmanchester, Kimbolton, Little Paxton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys and Yaxley as 'Key Service Centres'?

Options for growth

4.23 We need to make fundamental choices on whether the district should pursue a very intense urban focus for new growth or a more dispersed approach; whether priority should always be given to re-use of brownfield land or whether in some circumstances developing greenfield land with very good access to services and facilities is preferable. Rather than put forward a particular choice the options are deliberately left wide open to incorporate a number of possible alternatives.

Issue 6

The need to identify strategic directions of growth to guide where sites will be allocated for development.

4.24 A series of maps follows in this section which indicate possible directions of growth from each of the larger settlements in the district. These are coded alphabetically and provide an indication of the possible scale of development that could be accommodated. The maps indicate a wide range of alternatives not all of which will be needed to achieve the scale of growth required in the Regional Spatial Strategy. They show possible directions for housing, employment and mixed use development.

4.25 It is likely that many growth areas will accommodate a mixture of housing and employment uses to help develop balanced, sustainable communities and provide viable transport choices. However, to best ascertain people's preferences housing, employment and retail are discussed separately below.

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Housing options for growth

Huntingdon and St Neots areas

Option 10

Policies could propose that the Huntingdon area should get most of the growth.

Option 11

Policies could propose that the St Neots area should get most of the growth.

Option 12

Policies could propose both areas to grow at a similar rate.

Question 11

What proportion of growth should be focused in the two main urban areas?

Question 12

Which of these options would you prefer and why?

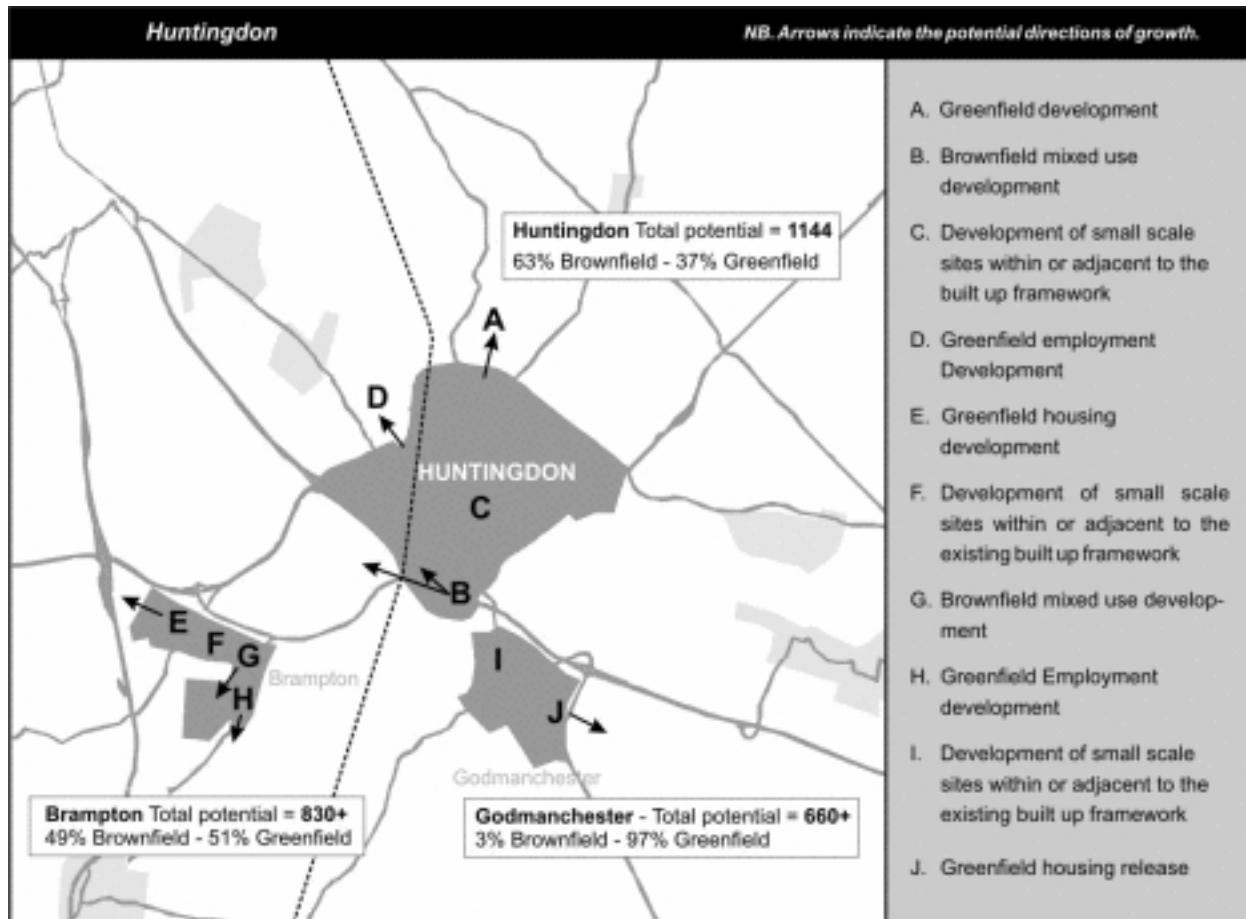
Question 13

Are there any other options which should be considered?

Question 14

To achieve your chosen option which of the directions of growth shown on the maps would you rather see developed?

Map 4.1 Huntingdon

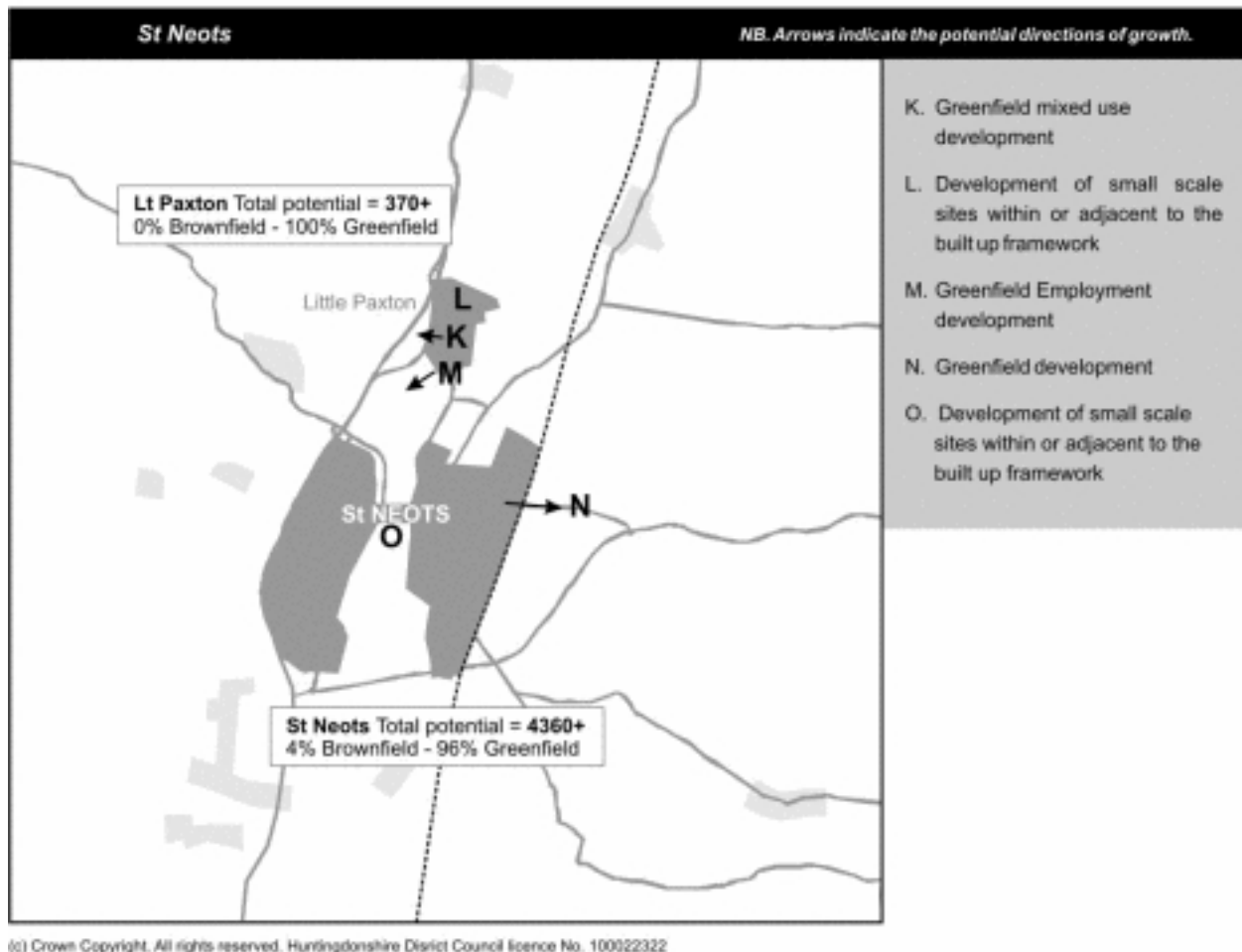


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Map 4.2 St Neots



St Ives and Ramsey

4.26 Strategic guidance indicates that St Ives and Ramsey should receive a smaller level of growth. When considering development in these two locations the following options have been identified.

Option 13

Strategic directions of growth could allow growth only within the existing built framework in Ramsey and/ or St Ives.

Option 14

Strategic directions of growth could allow growth within small-scale extensions to Ramsey and/ or St Ives.

Question 15

Which of these options would you prefer and why?

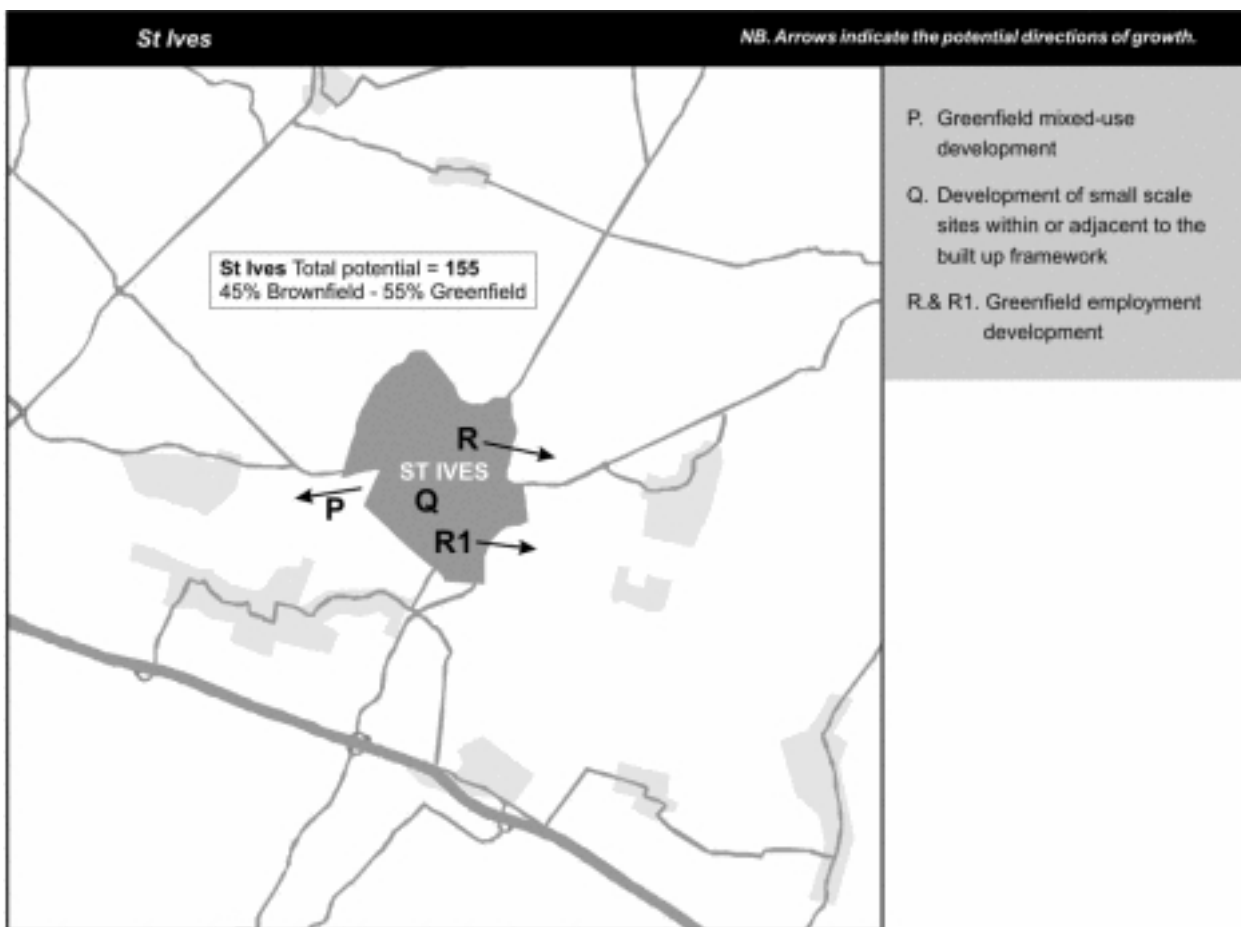
Question 16

Are there any other options which should be considered?

Question 17

Which of the directions of growth shown on the maps would you rather see developed?

Map 4.3 St Ives

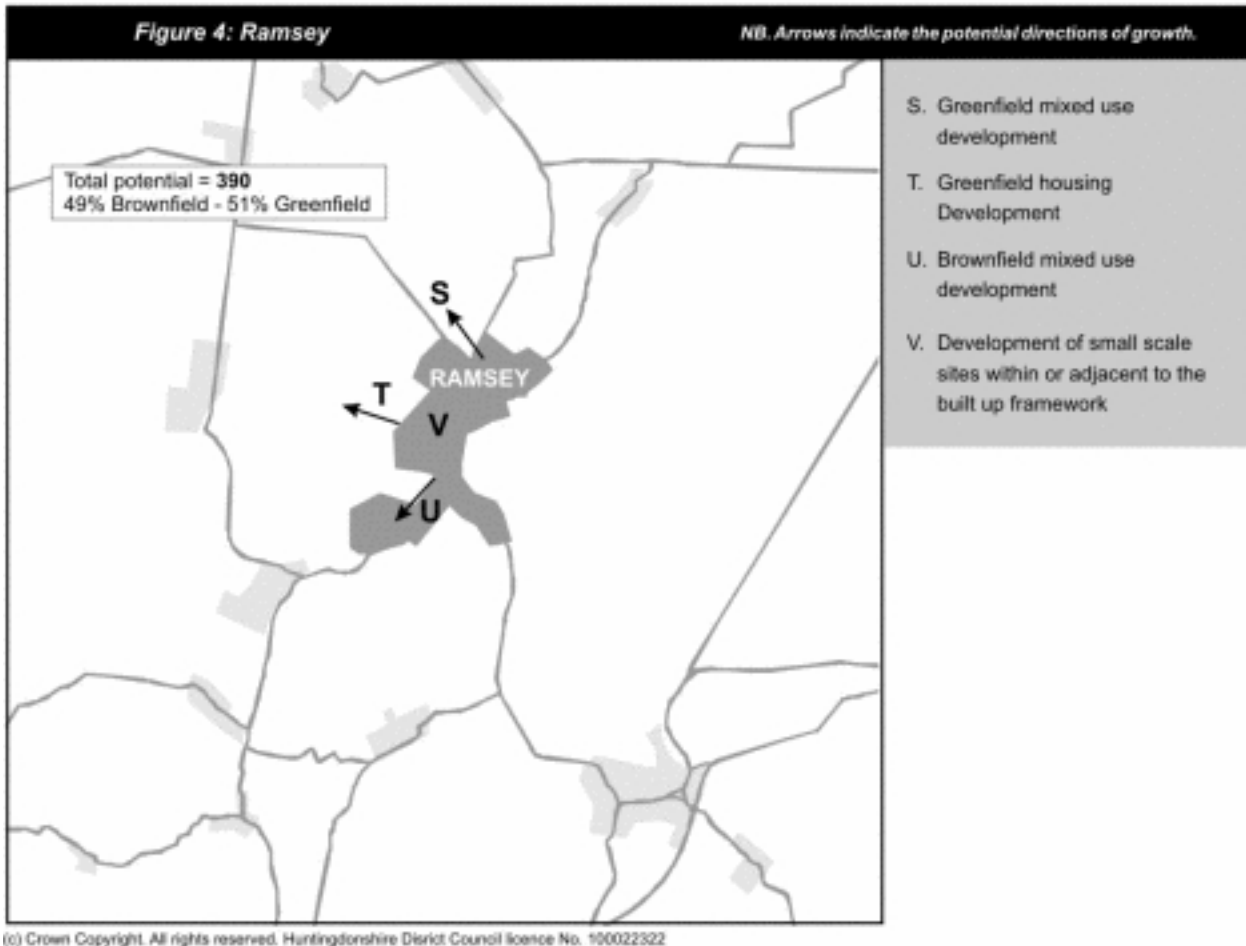


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Map 4.4 Ramsey



Key Service Centres

4.27 When considering development in possible Key Service Centres that are not closely linked with a Market Town the following options have been identified.

Option 15

Development could be distributed across all Key Service Centres broadly in proportion to their existing size and level of facilities.

Option 16

Development could be more limited in those settlements which have recently received high levels of growth.

Question 18

Which of these options would you prefer and why?

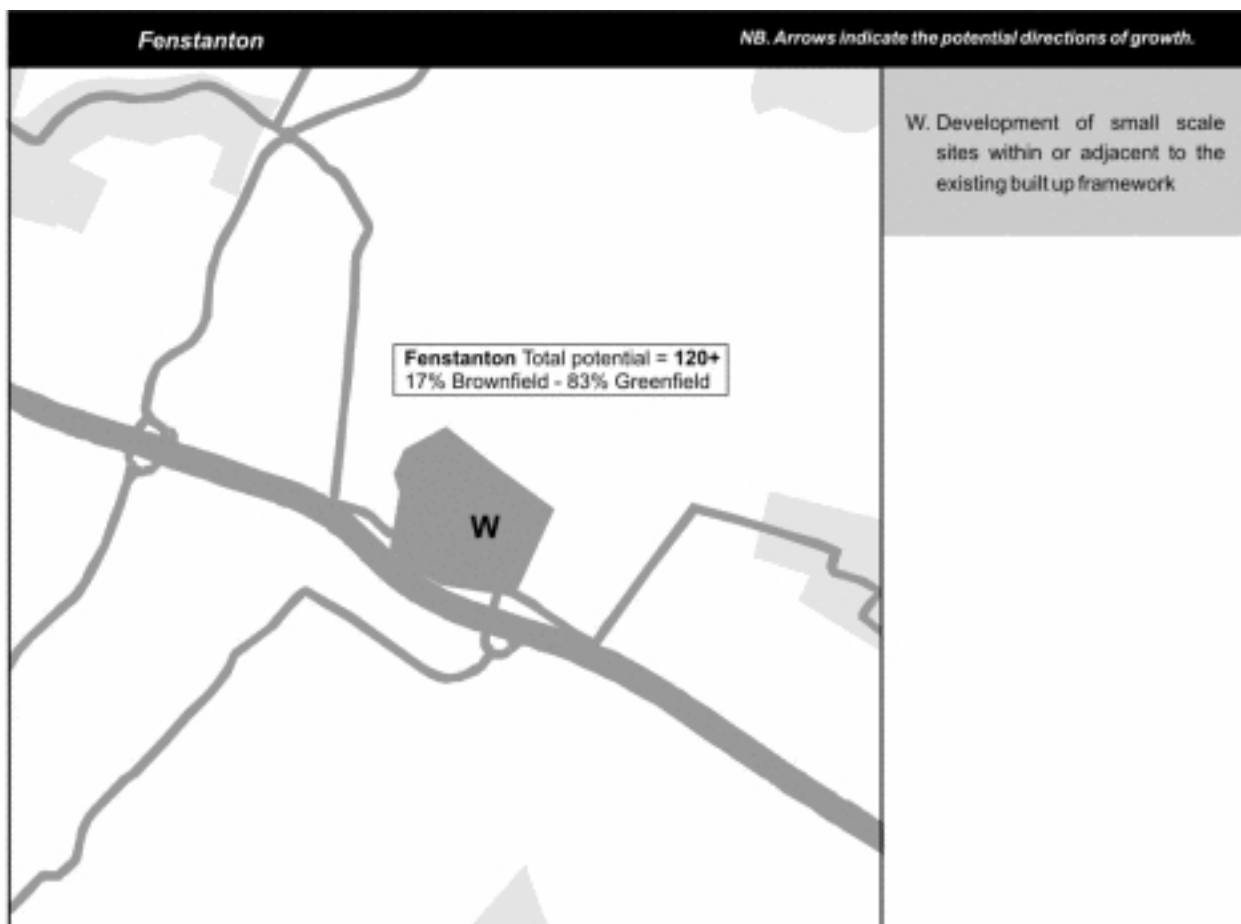
Question 19

Are there any other options which should be considered?

Question 20

Which of the directions of growth shown on the maps would you rather see developed?

Map 4.5 Fenstanton

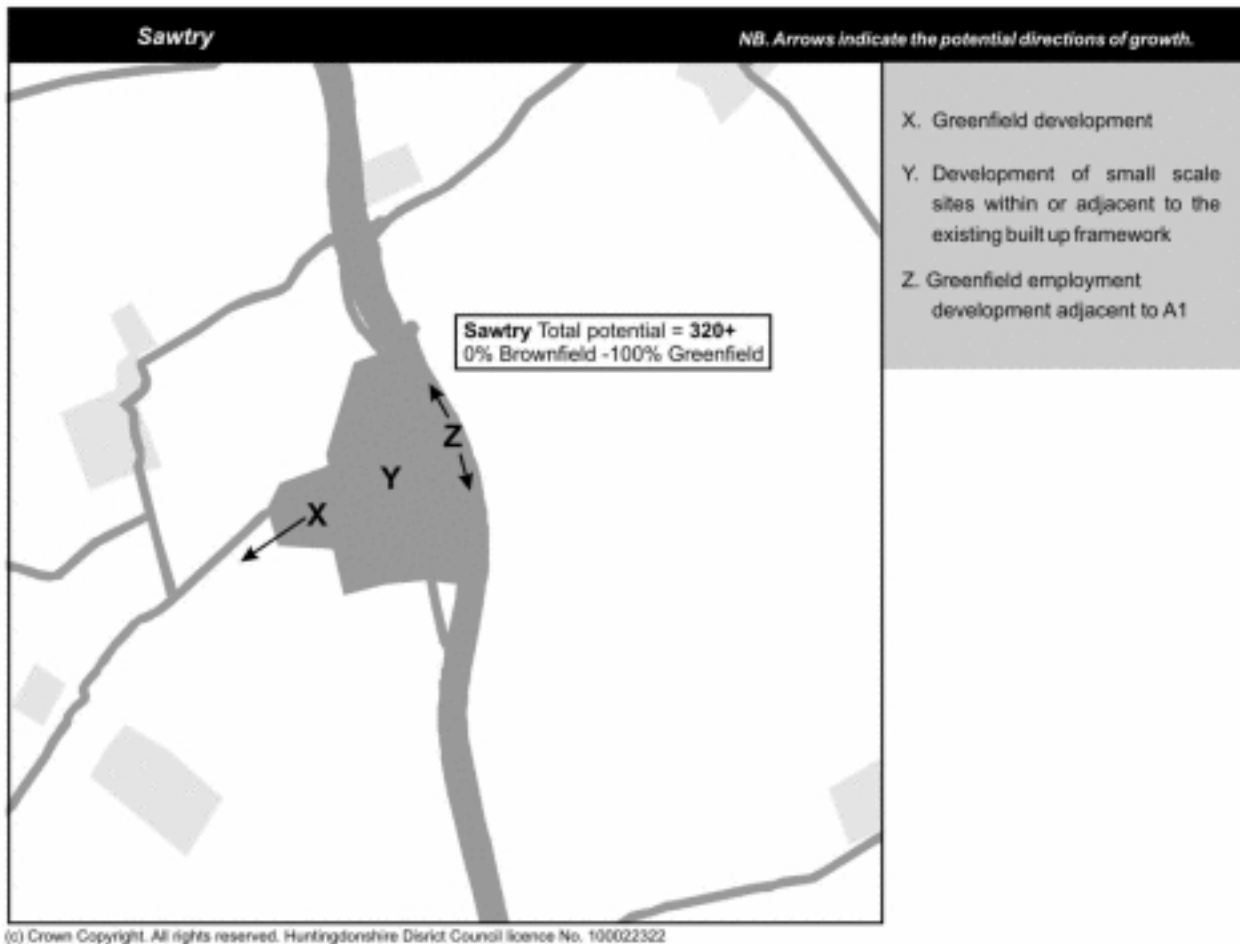


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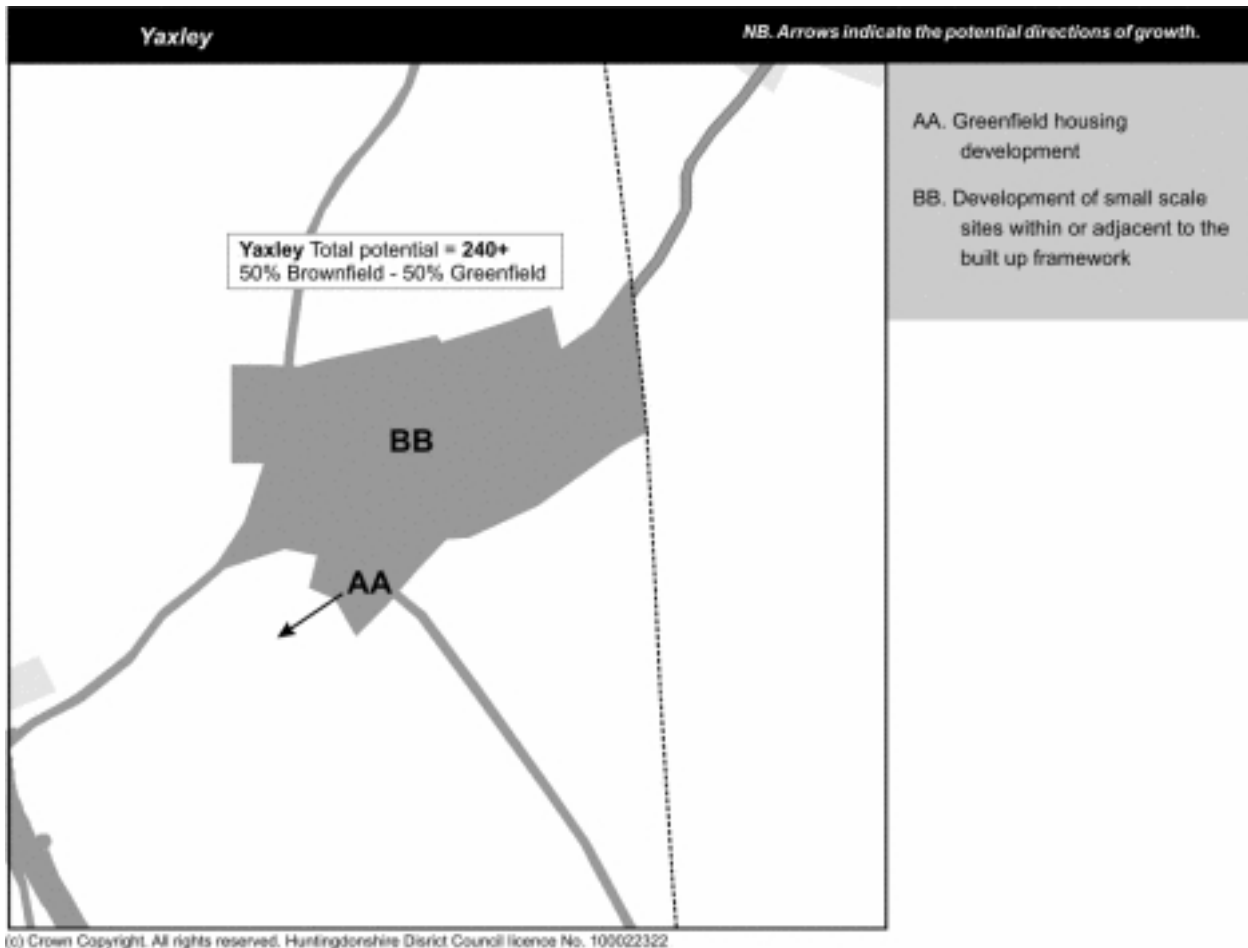
4 Spatial strategy

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Map 4.6 Sawtry



Map 4.7 Yaxley



Employment options for growth

Overall scale

4.28 There are a number of ways in which the overall scale of employment land need can be calculated. One approach is to project recent trends; the most significant alternative is to take into account the impact of changing economic, social and environmental conditions.

Option 17

The Core Strategy could plan for a net requirement of 130 ha. This is based on a projection of development trends over the five years from 2002. It assumes continued relatively high rates of economic growth, no constraints on the availability of labour and no concessions to climate change.

4 Spatial strategy

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Option 18

The Core Strategy could plan for a net requirement of 70 ha. This is based on an acknowledgment of constraints to the availability of labour and the impacts of climate change: the policy, business and environmental imperatives to site large scale warehouses at multi modal locations and replace older CO₂ emitting stock with zero carbon buildings.

Question 21

Which of these of options would you prefer and why?

Question 22

Are there any other options which should be considered?

Overall distribution

4.29 There are many ways that the additional employment land could be distributed across the district. We need to consider how much of the total should be located to follow population growth and how much should be located in accordance with market demand for locations in the Huntingdon area, the St Neots area and St Ives as opposed to other areas where a number of allocations remain either undeveloped or not brought forward for development.

Option 19

Development could be distributed in locations to follow population growth.

Option 20

Development could follow the market preference for location in the Huntingdon area, the St Neots area and to a lesser extent St Ives.

Question 23

Which of these options would you prefer and why?

Question 24

Are there any other options which you think we should consider?

Question 25

To achieve your chosen option which of the directions of growth shown would you rather see developed?

Retail options for growth

Overall scale

4.30 The Retail Assessment Study Update (2007) suggested that the Core Strategy should endeavour to increase the proportion of available expenditure which is spent locally. One way of encouraging this is to provide a greater quantity and choice of shops for people to use which has the added benefit of reducing the need to travel further afield for certain purchases. A target is suggested of 20,000 sq m net of additional comparison retail floorspace and a further 3,900 sq m net of convenience floorspace in the district for the period 2006-2021. This is based on the aspiration of a slow, steady increase in the proportion of expenditure being retained locally.

Option 21

The Core Strategy could plan for a target of 20,000 sq m net additional comparison retail floorspace and 3,900 sq m net additional convenience floorspace.

Option 22

The Core Strategy could plan for a higher target.

Option 23

The Core Strategy could plan for a lower target.

Question 26

Which of these options do you prefer and why?

4 Spatial strategy

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Question 27

If you prefer a lower or higher target what should it be and why?

Overall distribution

4.31 A target of 20,000 sq m net additional comparison floorspace is suggested above. The Retail Assessment Study identified comparatively strong demand from retailers wishing to open in Huntingdon and an encouraging level of interest in St Neots which has traditionally been considered less attractive by investors. The distribution given in the option below was suggested by the Retail Assessment Study. Government guidance dictates that new retail facilities should be in town centres and edge of centre and out of centre locations only considered where this cannot be reasonably achieved. The Retail Assessment Study suggested that although the level of quantitative need for convenience floorspace appears low there may be opportunities for provision based on qualitative grounds in order to increase the range of facilities available. In particular it noted the need for a discount foodstore in Huntingdon town centre. Compared with other centres Huntingdon is the higher order centre where pressure for further retail development is greatest. It also has more opportunities to regenerate and thus strengthen the range of uses on the back of retail expansion with sites in the town centre and sites beyond the town centre.

Option 24

Development could follow the market preference resulting in around 12,000 sq m net of comparison retail growth in Huntingdon, around 6,000 sq m net in St Neots and 2,000 sq m net in other settlements.

Option 25

Development could be distributed equally between St Neots and Huntingdon and a lesser amount allowed in St Ives and Ramsey

Question 28

Which of these options would you prefer and why?

Question 29

Are there any other options which you think we should consider?

5 Other strategic issues

A clean, 'green', attractive place

Areas of strategic greenspace enhancement

Statement 3

Corporate Plan Objectives: 1) to lower carbon emissions, 2) to protect and improve wildlife habitats

Community Strategy Objectives: 1) improve the diversity of our natural environment, 2) improve access to the countryside, 3) improve the understanding of the countryside and the heritage of the landscape, 4) support communities in protecting and valuing open spaces and historic sites, 5) improve access to opportunities for physical and cultural enrichment that promote good health and mental well-being, 6) develop the tourist product

5.1 Huntingdonshire's countryside needs to respond to changing economic and environmental circumstances. 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 and some particular opportunities for significant enhancement have been identified.

5.2 These possible 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. They include:

- 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 Ouse Valley (wet grassland and hay meadows creation)
- the South Cambridgeshire Boulder Clay Woodlands (woodland and hedgerow creation)

Issue 7

The need to identify areas of 'strategic greenspace enhancement' and to promote environmental, economic and social gains within these areas.

5.3 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.

5 Other strategic issues

Huntingdonshire District Council | Core Strategy 2007 - Issues and Options

Option 26

Policies will define areas of Strategic Greenspace Enhancement and identify green corridors connecting them and indicate how development proposals could contribute to improving their biodiversity, landscape and recreational value.

Reasonable alternatives?

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

Energy Use

Statement 4

Corporate Plan Objective: to lower carbon emissions

Community Strategy Objectives: 1) increase sources of renewable energy, 2) promote a more sustainable use of natural resources

5.5 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 meeting 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.

Issue 8

The need to reduce CO₂ emissions

5.6 National planning policy allows local authorities to include policies in local development documents that require a percentage of energy to be used in new residential, commercial or industrial developments to come from on-site renewable energy developments.

Option 27

Policies will promote energy efficiency and will set a requirement for the percentage of energy to come from on-site renewable energy developments

Reasonable alternatives?

5.7 None. This approach is required by regional and national policy and guidance.

5.8 The draft Regional Spatial Strategy sets out a requirement for 10% of energy to be produced from on-site renewable energy sources.

Question 30

Should the plan require 10% of energy requirements to be met by on-site renewable energy sources or should a higher target be required? If a higher target should be required what should this target be?

5.9 A size threshold needs to be set to identify which developments the requirement for on-site renewable energy will be required. The draft Regional Spatial Strategy sets a threshold of 50 dwellings or 1,000m². However a lower threshold of 10 dwellings or 500m² would increase the number of schemes which would utilise renewable energy technologies and would increase the contribution made to reducing CO₂ emissions.

Question 31

What size threshold should be used to determine whether on-site renewable energy technologies will be required?

Housing that meets local needs

Scale of growth

Statement 5

Corporate Plan Objective: to ensure an appropriate supply of new housing

Community Strategy Objectives: 1) ensure the availability of a range of decent housing to meet local needs, 2) realise the benefits to economic, social and environmental well being from housing and employment development

5.10 To encourage the development of sustainable communities within Huntingdonshire policies need to allow for a variable scale of residential development in settlements of different types in line with the settlement hierarchy. This will promote the greatest levels of development in locations offering the most sustainable choices for future residents.

Issue 9

To identify the appropriate scale of housing permissible on unallocated sites to ensure development is concentrated in sustainable locations.

5.11 A variable scale of residential development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy could be promoted to encourage the development of sustainable communities within Huntingdonshire.

5 Other strategic issues

Huntingdonshire District Council | Core Strategy 2007 - Issues and Options

Option 28

Policies will define the scale of housing development of different types. This could be defined as:

- Major development: 60 or more dwellings
- Moderate development: 10-59 dwellings
- Minor development: up to 9 dwellings
- Residential infilling: development of a small site within the built-up framework or defined limits of a settlement by up to three dwellings.

Reasonable alternatives?

5.12 In the previously submitted Core Strategy just three categories of housing development were proposed: major - 10 or more dwellings, minor - up to 9 and infill up to 3. This could be simpler to interpret, but allows less flexibility. A significant number of representations opined that the major category was too broad and the minor category too restrictive. However, the definitions of each category could be changed in many different permutations.

Question 32

Do you agree with the four categories suggested for scale of housing growth?

Question 33

Should any other categories be considered and if so, what should these be?

Location of housing growth

Statement 6

Corporate Plan Objective: to ensure an appropriate supply of new housing

Community Strategy Objectives: 1) ensure the availability of a range of decent housing to meet local needs, 2) realise the benefits to economic, social and environmental well being from housing and employment development

5.13 To ensure the promotion of sustainable communities the scale of development permitted should reflect the level of access to shops, services and employment opportunities available in a location. Thus, locations with best access such as Market Towns would be permitted larger scale developments than Smaller Settlements which, by virtue of their more limited services, offer a less sustainable residential environment for most people and hence would be less appropriate for substantial numbers of new dwellings. This would only be applied to consideration of sites that are not allocated in the Development Proposals DPD or the Huntingdon West AAP.

Option 29

Policies need to define the location of developments of differing scales. This could be that housing development on unallocated sites could be limited to the following:

- within the defined limits of Market Towns: major, moderate and minor housing development, and residential infilling
- within the defined limits of Key Service Centres: moderate and minor housing development and residential infilling
- within the built-up framework of Smaller Settlements: residential infilling
- within the countryside: limited and specific forms of housing development with an essential need to be in the countryside

Reasonable alternatives?

5.14 The previously submitted Core Strategy proposed two categories of Key Centre and allowed for major development proposals in the larger of these. This made no distinction between the scale of development permissible in Market Towns and the six largest Key Centres. A greater amount of development could be permitted in Key Service Centres by allowing major housing schemes and in Smaller Settlements by allowing minor housing schemes in some or all of them. 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. Encouragement of greater levels of development in the countryside would be contrary to national guidance.

Question 34

Do you agree with the level of development permissible in:

- a. Market Towns
- b. Key Service Centres
- c. Smaller Settlements
- d. the Countryside?

Question 35

Should minor development proposals of up to 9 dwellings be permitted in Smaller Settlements where it can be demonstrated that the settlement concerned offers at least a basic range of services and public transport appropriate to the form of the housing to be provided and it secures the most sustainable solution for the site?

Question 36

Are there any other options that should be considered?

5 Other strategic issues

Huntingdonshire District Council | Core Strategy 2007 - Issues and Options

Affordable housing

Statement 7

Corporate Plan Objectives: 1) to ensure an appropriate supply of new housing, 2) to enable the provision of affordable housing, 3) to achieve a low level of homelessness

Community Strategy Objectives: 1) ensure the availability of a range of decent housing to meet local needs, 2) realise the benefits to economic, social and environmental well being from housing and employment development

5.15 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. It is necessary to define the scope of what constitutes 'affordable housing' in order to develop policies specifying where and when its provision will be required.

Issue 10

The need to set target(s) and thresholds for affordable housing that reflects local circumstances.

5.16 PPS3 sets out up to date definitions of affordable housing, distinguishing between social rented and intermediate housing tenures. It acknowledges that to be deemed 'affordable' housing must be made available at a cost low enough for eligible households to afford when compared to local incomes and house prices. It specifies that low cost homes for sale can contribute towards the supply of intermediate housing but specifically excludes low cost market housing from the definition of affordable housing.

5.17 Housing Needs Surveys in the district have shown a significant demand for affordable housing, far exceeding that likely to be built. Thus, it is important to ensure that provision caters for priority needs. The Housing Needs Surveys have advised that a district-wide target should be set to enable the Council to respond to its responsibility at a district-wide level in order to meet need where it can best do so. A Strategic Housing Market Assessment is currently being undertaken and outcomes will be taken into account in preparing later stages of the Core Strategy as appropriate.

Option 30

Policies will set a target of 40% of all housing on eligible sites throughout the district to be provided as 'affordable housing'.

Reasonable alternatives?

5.18 Targets could be set at 40% within the Cambridge sub-region and 30% within the rest of the district of the total number of dwellings on eligible developments. The average target of 35% included in the Regional Spatial Strategy could be used but this is an average for the region and within Huntingdonshire the need for affordable homes is greater than elsewhere in the region. A further variation would be to increase the thresholds to 50% for the Cambridge sub-region and 40% elsewhere. This would bring Huntingdonshire in line with the targets sought in South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City and have the advantage of promoting a consistent approach throughout the wider area. However, the housing market in Huntingdonshire differs from that in South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City and this approach would not reflect the variation in house and land prices.

Question 37

Do you agree that a target should be set of seeking 40% of all housing on eligible sites throughout the district to be provided as 'affordable housing'?

5.19 PPS3 sets a national indicative minimum site size threshold of 15 dwellings. Policies will need to set thresholds to assess whether sites should be eligible for affordable housing requirements. In determining these it should be borne in mind that the majority of development will be directed to Market Towns, followed by Key Service Centres. The higher the threshold is set the lower the number of sites where affordable housing can be required. However, the need for affordable housing has to be balanced with the viability of its provision.

Option 31

Thresholds could be set only requiring the provision of affordable housing on sites for 15 or more houses wherever they are located.

Option 32

Thresholds could be set requiring the provision of affordable housing on sites categorised as major or moderate development wherever they are located.

Reasonable alternatives?

5.20 Many permutations could be developed of site size threshold and different types of location. In particular, it may be appropriate to relate the thresholds for seeking affordable housing to the scale of development permissible in different categories within the settlement hierarchy. Option 23 above adheres strictly to PPS3 guidance with no recognition of local circumstances. Option 24 attempts to respond to the high level of local need for affordable housing and the concentration of housing development in Market Towns and Key Service Centres as the only locations where it is suggested that developments of 10 or more houses will be permitted.

Question 38

Which option do you prefer and why?

5 Other strategic issues

Huntingdonshire District Council | Core Strategy 2007 - Issues and Options

5.21 PPS3 also states that lower thresholds can be set where viable and practicable, including in rural areas. These are in addition to 'rural exceptions' sites allowed solely for affordable housing in small rural communities.

Option 33

Policies could set a threshold for seeking affordable housing on development sites of less than 15 houses in Smaller Settlements.

Reasonable alternatives?

5.22 The previously submitted Core Strategy suggested a minimum site size threshold of 3 dwellings to try to generate provision of some affordable housing on infill sites within Smaller Settlements. A number of concerns were expressed over the viability and management implications of providing affordable housing at such a low threshold.

Question 39

Do you think a threshold should be included for seeking affordable housing on sites of less than 15 houses in Smaller Settlements? If so, what should be the minimum site size eligible for seeking affordable housing?

Question 40

Do you think some other combination of targets and thresholds more appropriate? If so, please suggest what it should be.

Rural exceptions housing

Statement 8

Corporate Plan Objectives: 1) to ensure an appropriate supply of new housing, 2) to enable the provision of affordable housing, 3) to achieve a low level of homelessness

Community Strategy Objectives: 1) ensure the availability of a range of decent housing to meet local needs, 2) realise the benefits to economic, social and environmental well being from housing and employment development

5.23 House prices in many of our villages are unaffordable to many local people leading to significant demand in some for provision of affordable housing to prevent people having to move away or to enable those with local connections to return.

Issue 11

The need to provide affordable housing in Smaller Settlements to meet local needs.

5.24 Although the suggested settlement hierarchy steers most new housing towards the Market Towns and Key Service Centres, it is important to have a mechanism for addressing affordable housing needs that arise within the district's rural areas. Exceptions could be made to the normal limits on development in such locations just for affordable housing for local people. It is important that occupiers of the new properties have access to at least a basic level of facilities appropriate to their needs to help reduce the need to travel, for instance a food shop and also a primary school where the houses will be occupied by families.

Option 34

Policies will set out criteria to assess proposals in locations or on a scale that would not otherwise be acceptable where the development is solely to provide affordable housing to meet local needs.

Reasonable alternatives?

5.25 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.

5.26 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).

Question 41

Should the provision of affordable housing be allowed in locations and on a scale that would not otherwise be permitted for general housing where it is solely to provide for local needs?

Question 42

Should 'rural exceptions' housing be concentrated in settlements with at least a basic level of services or should it be encouraged wherever there is need?

Question 43

Should sites for 'rural exception' housing be allocated in the Planning Proposals DPD?

5 Other strategic issues

Huntingdonshire District Council | Core Strategy 2007 - Issues and Options

Access to services and transport

Infrastructure requirements

Statement 9

Corporate Plan Objectives: 1) to support more opportunities for residents to walk, cycle and use public transport, 2) to make town centres and key settlements accessible, 3) to enable residents to take an active part in their communities, 4) improve access to and the provision of services in rural areas

Community Strategy Objectives: realise the benefits to economic, social and environmental well being from housing and employment development

5.27 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.

Issue 12

The need to ensure appropriate, timely provision of any infrastructure requirements associated with new development.

5.28 The detailed framework for calculating and negotiating obligations will be set out in separate Supplementary Planning 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 may 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.

Option 35

Policies will require development proposals to 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.

Criteria will be proposed to allow assessment of the scale and nature of development proposals where contributions are likely to be required.

Reasonable alternatives?

5.29 None. Existing national guidance (Circular 5/2005) requires development plans to set out policies indicating the circumstances in which planning obligations may be sought and indicates that formulae and standard charges may be used where appropriate.

Question 44

What criteria should be used to determine if contributions are necessary?

A strong, diverse economy

Re-using military sites

Statement 10

Corporate Plan Objectives: 1) to encourage a strong business community which supports new enterprise, 2) to support town centres to be economically viable and vibrant, 3) to encourage the provision of a wide range of jobs appropriate for existing and future residents, 4) to promote development opportunities in and around the market towns

Community Strategy Objectives: 1) maintain business confidence to increase investment which creates opportunities to work locally and reduces out commuting, 2) ensure an appropriate provision of land for business, 3) development and promote the market towns, 4) develop the rural economy, especially the Ramsey area, 5) realise the benefits to economic, social and environmental well being from housing and employment development

5.30 The most appropriate future use of redundant military sites is expected to be a significant issue in Huntingdonshire with large areas of land potentially becoming available for re-use during the lifetime of the Core Strategy. The Panel Report into the Examination in Public of the Regional Spatial Strategy considered representations made on Alconbury airfield suggesting mixed use development of warehousing and 3,000 houses but concluded that 'the solution for Alconbury needs to emerge from full consideration of all the relevant issues and should be reflected in the first review of the RSS'. Indeed, Alconbury Airfield is one of many sites put forward for consideration for major development that the Panel recommended should be re-considered at the first review of the RSS.⁽ⁱ⁾ As a result of this RAF Alconbury is not identified as a strategic site in the RSS (Proposed changes, December 2006).

5.31 New employment uses have recently been established on part of RAF Upwood with other areas still potentially available for development. Significant redevelopment for military use is anticipated at RAF Wyton, however, the actual airfield part of the base is likely to become redundant. The site is being considered for possible relocation by Marshalls but no decision is expected from them until 2008. It is also possible that RAF Brampton may be surplus to military requirements after 2011.

Issue 13

The need to identify the most appropriate future use of military sites which are, or become, redundant.

i East of England Plan December 2004, Examination in Public, Report of the Panel Volume 1, page 66, June 2006

5 Other strategic issues

Huntingdonshire District Council | Core Strategy 2007 - Issues and Options

5.32 Earlier consultation showed no clear preference among local people for Alconbury's future use. Due to its relatively poor sustainability and transport links large scale housing growth has been ruled out at RAF Upwood so alternatives are needed. Options could include employment uses, leisure or restoring some of it to countryside. RAF Brampton is much more sustainably located and may have potential for significant mixed use redevelopment.

Option 36

Policies could set out the strategic approach to re-use of military sites and include criteria against which to assess potential suitability of different types of use.

Option 37

The Core Strategy could state that due to the potential scale of development that could be accommodated consideration of the future of Alconbury Airfield should await consideration at the first review of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Question 45

What uses would you like to see RAF Upwood put to?

Question 46

Should the future of Alconbury Airfield await consideration at the first review of the Regional Spatial Strategy ?

Question 47

Disregarding the potential timing of any redevelopment, what uses would you like to see Alconbury Airfield put to?

Question 48

What uses would you like to see the airfield part of RAF Wyton put to?

Question 49

If it becomes available, what uses would you like to see RAF Brampton put to?

6 Glossary

Adoption

The point at which the final agreed version of a document comes fully into use.

Affordable Housing

Housing available at a significant discount below market levels so as to be affordable to householders who cannot either rent or purchase property that meets their needs on the open market. It can include social-rented housing and intermediate housing.

Amenity

A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the inter-relationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquility.

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)

Document produced each year to report on progress in producing the *Local Development Framework* and implementing its policies.

Areas of Strategic Greenspace Enhancement

Areas which have been identified as having opportunities to expand and create strategic greenspace.

Biodiversity

The whole variety of life on earth. It includes all species of plants and animals, their genetic variation and the ecosystems of which they are a part.

Brownfield

Previously developed land (PDL). In the sequential approach this is preferable to greenfield land. Previously-developed land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings), and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition includes the curtilage of the development. Previously-developed land may occur in both built-up and rural settings. A precise definition is included in Planning Policy Statement 3 'Housing'.

Built-up Framework

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, especially where those gardens relate more to the surrounding countryside than they do to the built-up parts of the settlement.

Community Infrastructure

Facilities available for use by the community. Examples include village halls, doctors' surgeries, pubs, churches and children play areas. It may also include areas of informal open space and sports facilities.

Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)

The power given to the Local Authority to acquire land for redevelopment which may include development by private developers.

Conservation Area

A designated area of special architectural and/or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. It is a recognition of the value of a group of buildings and their surroundings and the need to protect not just individual buildings but the character of the area as a whole.

The Core Strategy

6 Glossary

Huntingdonshire District Council | Core Strategy 2007 - Issues and Options

This document which is a *Development Plan Document* containing the overall vision, objectives and policies for managing development in Huntingdonshire.

County Structure Plan

An existing document containing strategic planning policies and proposals for the county. Under the new system it will be phased out and replaced by policies in the *Regional Spatial Strategy* and *Development Plan Documents*.

Curtilage

The area occupied by a property and land closely associated with that property. E.g. in terms of a house and garden, the garden forms the curtilage of the property.

Development Plan

The documents which together provide the main point of reference when considering planning proposals. Under the new system the Development Plan includes the *Regional Spatial Strategy* and *Development Plan Documents*.

Development Plan Documents

A document containing local planning policies or proposals which form part of the *Development Plan*, which has been subject to independent examination.

European Sites

Consist of Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and sites on draft lists for protection as outlined in Regulation 10 of the Habitats Regulations 1994.

Examination

Independent inquiry into the soundness of a draft *Development Plan Document* or *Draft Statement of Community Involvement*, chaired by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State, whose recommendations are binding.

Greenfield

Land which has not been developed before. Applies to most sites outside built-up area boundaries.

Habitat

The natural home or environment of a plant or animal.

Housing Needs Assessment

An assessment of housing needs in the local area. This assessment plays a crucial role in underpinning the planning policies relating to affordable housing. In addition, the information on local needs is required to determine the location of such housing and guide new investment.

Infrastructure

A collective term for services such as roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.

Issues and Options preliminary consultation document

This is the first stage in the production of development plan documents. The Council brings possible issues and options for the District into the public domain, in order to generate responses to aid the development of the 'Preferred Options' development documents.

Key Workers

Essential public sector workers such as nurses, teachers and social workers.

Landscape Character Assessment

An assessment to identify different landscape areas which have a distinct character based on a recognisable pattern of elements, including combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.

Local Development Document

The collective term for *Development Plan Documents*, the *Proposals Map*, *Supplementary Planning Documents* and the *Statement of Community Involvement*.

Local Development Framework

The collection of documents to be produced by Huntingdonshire District Council that will provide the new planning policy framework for the district.

Local Development Scheme

Sets out the Council's programme for preparing and reviewing statutory planning documents.

Local Strategic Partnership

A group of public, private, voluntary and community organisations and individuals that is responsible for preparing the Community Strategy.

Major development

The creation of 10 or more dwellings within one site.

Material consideration

Factors that may be taken into account when making planning decisions.

Minor development

The creation of up to 9 dwellings on one site.

Mitigation measures

These are measures requested/ carried out in order to limit the damage by a particular development/ activity.

ODPM - Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

The Government department responsible for planning and the production of planning guidance.

Open Space and Recreational Land

Open space within settlements includes parks, village greens, play areas, sports pitches, undeveloped plots, semi-natural areas and substantial private gardens. Outside built-up areas this includes parks, sports pitches and allotments.

Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG)/ Planning Policy Statements (PPS)

Central Government produce Planning Policy Guidance Notes, to be replaced by Planning Policy Statements which direct planning in the country.

Preferred Options

Public consultation on the intended content of a *Development Plan Document*, prior to the DPD itself being drafted. It is a statutory stage of the Local Development Framework preparation for the District.

Previously Developed Land (PDL)

(See *Brownfield*.)

Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS)

Plan covering the East of England as a whole, and setting out strategic policies and proposals for managing land-use change.

Registered Social Landlords

These are independent housing organisations registered with the Housing Corporation under the Housing Act 1996. Most are housing associations, but there are also trusts, co-operatives and companies.

6 Glossary

Huntingdonshire District Council | Core Strategy 2007 - Issues and Options

Residential infilling

The development of a small site within the built-up framework or defined limits of a settlement by up to 3 dwellings.

Rural Exception Site

Sites solely for the development of affordable housing on land within or adjoining existing small rural communities, which would not otherwise be released for general market housing.

Sequential Approach

A planning principle that seeks to identify, allocate or develop certain types or locations of land before others. For example, brownfield sites before greenfield sites, or town centre retail sites before out-of-centre sites. In terms of employment a sequential approach would favour an employment use over mixed use and mixed use over non-employment uses.

Settlement Hierarchy

Settlements are categorised in a hierarchy based on the range of services, facilities and employment opportunities in the settlement, access to education and non-car access to higher-order centres.

Social rented

Social Rented Housing is housing available to rent at below market levels. Lower rents are possible because the Government subsidises local authorities and registered social landlords in order to meet local affordable housing needs.

Spatial Planning

Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning. It brings together and integrates policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function. This will include policies which can impact on land use, for example, by influencing the demands on or needs for development, but which are not capable of being delivered solely or mainly through the granting of planning permission and may be delivered through other means.

Stakeholders

Groups, individuals or organisations which may be affected by or have a key interest in a development proposal or planning policy. They may often be experts in their field or represent the views of many people.

Statement of Community Involvement

Document setting out the Council's approach to involving the community in preparing planning documents and making significant development control decisions.

Statement of Compliance

A report or statement issued by the local planning authority explaining how they have complied with the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2004 and their Statement of Community Involvement during consultation on Local Development Documents.

Statutory Development Plan

The Development Plan for an area which has been taken to statutory adoption. In other words, it has been through all the formal stages and has been approved by the relevant Government office and adopted by the Council.

Statutory Organisations

Organisations the Local Authority has to consult with at consultation stages of the Local Development Framework.

Strategic Greenspace

These are areas of greenspace that serve a wider population than just the District, for example Paxton Pits, The Great Fen and Hinchingsbrooke Country Park.

Submission

Point at which a draft *Development Plan Document* (or the draft *Statement of Community Involvement*) is published for consultation. At the same time it is submitted to the Secretary of State in advance of its *examination*.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Provides additional guidance on the interpretation or application of policies and proposals in the *Local Plan* or *Structure Plan*. Under the new system this will be phased out and replaced by *Supplementary Planning Documents*.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Provides additional guidance on the interpretation or application of policies and proposals in a *Development Plan Document*.

Sustainable Development

In broad terms this means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Government has set out five guiding principles for sustainable development in its strategy "*Securing the future - UK Government strategy for sustainable development*". The five guiding principles, to be achieved simultaneously, are: Living within environmental limits; Ensuring a strong healthy and just society; Achieving a sustainable economy; Promoting good governance; and Using sound science responsibly.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)/ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires Local Development Documents to be prepared with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainability appraisal is a systematic appraisal process. The purpose of sustainability appraisal is to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of the strategies and policies in a Local Development Document from the outset of the preparation process. This will ensure that decisions are made that accord with sustainable principles.

Tenure

Refers to the way in which a property is held e.g. freehold, leasehold, shared equity or rented.

Tests of Soundness

These are tests to ensure that the document produced is sound. For further guidance please refer to 'Development Plans Examination - A Guide to the Process of Assessing the Soundness of Development Plan Documents' produced by the Planning Inspectorate (2005).

Use Class Orders

Planning regulations outlining a schedule of uses to which a given premises or building can be put. Some changes of use require planning permission.

Vitality and Viability

In terms of retailing, vitality is the capacity of a centre to grow or to develop its level of commercial activity. Viability is the capacity of a centre to achieve the commercial success necessary to sustain the existence of the centre.

Windfall site

A previously developed site not specifically allocated for development in a development plan, but which unexpectedly becomes available for development during the lifetime of a plan. Most "windfalls" are referred to in a housing context.

7 Appendix One

Huntingdonshire District Council | Core Strategy 2007 - Issues and Options

7 Appendix One

Housing Completions and Commitments

Settlements	Completions 2001-2006	Commitments 2001-2006
Market towns		
Huntingdon*	509	1655
Ramsey and Bury	261	196
St Ives	118	308
St Neots	715	1591
Key Service Centres		
Brampton	31	49
Fenstanton	145	19
Godmanchester	73	243
Little Paxton	85	560
Sawtry	15	23
Yaxley	404	416
Buckden	77	34
Kimbolton	3	7
Somersham	10	40
Warboys	49	43
Total	2495	5184
Rural Areas		
	410	476
Total	2905	5660
Progress towards Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) housing requirements, as at 31.3.2006		
*includes developments technically in The Stukeleys parish at Hinchingsbrooke and Northbridge		

Employment Land Completions

New Employment Land Completions Since 2002

Market Areas	Light Industrial	Offices	Warehousing	Total	Available
Central Hunts:					
Huntingdon	8.78 ha (23,383 sq m)	5.5 ha (16,880 sq m)	12.14 ha (35,537 sq m)	26.4 ha	15 ha
St Ives	0.35 ha (1,649 sq m)	1.9 ha (7,703 sq m)	Nil	2.25 ha	12 ha
Rural	Nil	Nil	4.07 ha (9,300 sq m)	4.07 ha	-
South Hunts:					
St Neots	2.8 ha (10,546 sq m)	1.68 ha (4,276 sq m)	5.7 ha (23,253 sq m)	10.2 ha	13.4 ha
Kimbolton	1.72 ha (6,223 sq m)	Nil	0.86 ha (3,110 sq m)	2.58 ha	1.6 ha
North Hunts:					
Alwalton	Nil	1.68 ha (5,054 sq m)	Nil	1.68 ha	-
Sawtry	4.39 ha (18,560 sq m)	Nil	Nil	4.39 ha	2.5 ha
Total	18.04 ha (60,361 sq m)	10.76 ha (33,913 sq m)	22.77 ha (71,200 sq m)	51.6 ha	
Warboys					0.9 ha
Yaxley					14 ha*
Somersham		Negligible			2.4 ha*
Ramsey					16.9 ha*
Earith					0.5 ha
Spaldwick					0.8 ha*
				TOTAL	80 ha
				*unlikely to come forward	-34 ha
				Total available	46 ha