

Development Control Policies Development Plan Document - Issues and Options

Huntingdonshire District Council

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 has introduced new types of plan for shaping and guiding development, and new procedures for preparing them. The Local Development Framework (LDF) will replace the Huntingdonshire Local Plan in setting out planning policies and proposals for the area. The LDF will comprise a number of documents to be produced over a period of time.

1.2 The emerging Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) will set out the spatial vision, spatial objectives and core policies for the district and all other development plan documents must be in conformity with it. The emerging Core Strategy draws on strategies produced by the local authority and other organisations that have implications for the development of land.

1.3 This Development Control Policies DPD will set out local policies for managing development in Huntingdonshire. The policies in this document will be used to assess and determine applications for development in the district. It is therefore important that policies in the Development Control DPD contribute towards the achievement of the Council's wide aims and objectives, including those set out in the Council's Corporate Plan *Growing Success* and in the *Huntingdonshire Community Strategy*, as well as being in conformity with the emerging Core Strategy.

1.4 The *Huntingdonshire Community Strategy* was produced by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership and adopted by the Council in 2004. It sets out the long-term vision for the development of communities in Huntingdonshire and a framework for delivery of this vision. The *Huntingdonshire Community Strategy* was produced following extensive consultation.

1.5 *Growing Success*, the Council's Corporate Plan, is our plan of how we will achieve our part of the Community Strategy. It is based on detailed research and importantly what our communities have told us. *Growing Success* identifies the aims we will be working towards as a Council.

1.6 The aims set out in *Growing Success* and the outcomes identified in the *Huntingdonshire Community Strategy* represent what people have told us they want. The issues and options in this report therefore aim to contribute towards the achievement of these aims and outcomes and have been linked to the more detailed objectives contained in each of these documents.

1.7 Each chapter of this Issues and Options report relates to one of the six community aims set out in *Growing Success*;

- A clean, 'green' and attractive place
- Housing that meets local need
- Safe, active and inclusive communities
- Healthy living
- Access to services and transport
- A strong, diverse economy

1.8 Within each chapter there are issues relating to these aims and options for addressing these issues. The report aims to identify all relevant issues and reasonable options for addressing these. However if you feel there are issues and/ or options which have not been included then we would like to hear from you.

1.9 This Issues and Options report forms the first stage in the production of the document. This stage will be followed by:

- Public consultation on preferred options (November 2007)

1 Introduction

- Submission of plan to the Secretary of State (July 2008)
- Consultation on the Submission plan (July 2008)
- Independent examination - Hearing (February 2009)
- Adoption (September 2009)

1.10 The issues and options contained in this paper have already been subject to extensive consultation as they were originally included in the Core Strategy which was submitted to the Secretary of State in April 2006 and subsequently withdrawn in April 2007.

1.11 The issues in this paper should be specific to Huntingdonshire and should not repeat national guidance, therefore where an issue is adequately dealt with by national guidance it has not been included in this report.

Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment

1.12 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.

1.13 The Council has produced an Initial Sustainability Appraisal of the options included in this issues and options report. This Initial Sustainability Appraisal accompanies the issues and options report and will assist the consultation process and test and refine any policies and proposals.

1.14 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 Assessment should be undertaken before adoption of a DPD. European sites consist of Special Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Offshore Marine Sites (OMS). The Development Control Policies DPD contains general policies rather than site specific proposals, therefore the Council consider it is not possible to assess the implications of these policies on specific international sites, this would need to be done when dealing with site specific proposals.

Question 1

Do you agree that Appropriate Assessment is not relevant to this DPD?

How to get involved

1.15 It is important that we get your views on the issues and options contained in this report. Copies of this 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.

1.16 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:

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

2 A clean 'green' attractive place

Statement 1

Community Strategy Outcome: A high quality built and natural environment.

2.1 Detailed research and consultation in the preparation of *Growing Success* and the *Huntingdonshire Community Strategy* highlighted a number of issues which were raised by people who live and work in Huntingdonshire. Issues raised included the loss of greenfield land and the need to minimise the environmental effects of development. The following chapter identifies issues and options relating to the need to protect and enhance the natural and built environment, the need to ensure new development is designed and built to a high standard and the need to minimise the risk of flooding.

Landscape character

Statement 2

Community Strategy Objective: to improve the diversity of our natural environment.

2.2 National Guidance in Planning Policy Statement 7 requires local authorities to ensure the quality and character of the countryside is protected and, where possible, enhanced.

2.3 As a predominantly rural district, Huntingdonshire's landscapes play a major role in shaping the character of our environment, stimulating leisure and tourism and supporting the overall 'quality of life'. The *Huntingdonshire Landscape & Townscape Assessment* identifies a number of landscape character areas across the district. These range from the low-lying Fenland in the north east to the rolling uplands in the west. These landscape character areas have evolved and are continuing to change. It is important that both the quality and distinctive characteristics of these areas are conserved and enhanced when new development occurs.

Issue 1

The need to protect Huntingdonshire's characteristic landscape.

Option 1

Policies will set out criteria to protect landscape character.

Reasonable alternatives?

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

Question 2

Do you think the criteria based approach to landscape character will provide sufficient protection? (please give reasons)

Sustainable design

Statement 3

Corporate Plan Objective: to lower carbon emissions.

Community Strategy Objective: to promote a more sustainable use of natural resources.

2.5 It is important that buildings are designed and constructed to maximise sustainability of development. This can be done through a number of measures including:

- The incorporation of energy efficient devices, energy efficient materials and on-site renewable energy sources
- The incorporation of water efficiency measures
- The use of locally sourced materials and materials of low embodied energy in construction
- The incorporation of sustainable drainage or rainwater holding facilities
- The incorporation of household recycling and composting facilities
- Layouts which maximise the benefits of solar gain

Issue 2

The need to ensure development is built and constructed to maximise the sustainability of development.

2.6 In 2006 the Government launched The Code for Sustainable Homes. This is a voluntary code which sets a national standard for sustainable construction and design for new homes. Using the Code homes are given a star rating to rate the overall sustainability of the home. It is important that the achievement of the standards within this Code are encouraged to ensure that development is sustainable.

Option 2

Policies will encourage compliance with the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Reasonable alternatives?

2.7 None. The above option is consistent with national and regional guidance.

Question 3

Do you agree that policies should encourage compliance with the Code for Sustainable Homes?

Question 4

Do you think applicants should be required to submit a statement setting out how they have complied with this code?

Renewable energy

Statement 4

Corporate Plan Objective: to lower carbon emissions.

Community Strategy Objective: to increase sources of renewable energy.

2.8 Together with energy conservation measures, the exploitation of renewable energy sources is central to the Government's efforts to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and achieve reductions in CO₂ emissions. Research has demonstrated significant potential for renewable energy generation in the area, especially in relation to biomass, wind and waste energy and solar power.

2.9 Government policy encourages renewable energy schemes unless the environmental impacts would outweigh the wider social, economic and environmental advantages that stem from making greater use of renewable energy potential. A criteria based policy can be applied to ensure that the risk of adverse impacts is minimised. A range of issues will need to be considered, including the effects upon amenity such as noise generation, shadow flicker and electromagnetic disturbance, as well as the impact upon the natural and built environment.

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

Issue 3

The need to minimise the environmental impacts of renewable energy development.

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Option 3

A criteria based policy will be included to minimise impact of renewable energy development on the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape and on sites of national and international importance for conservation and to require the removal of redundant equipment.

Reasonable alternatives?

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

Flood risk

Statement 5

Community Strategy Objective: to reduce the impact of flooding.

2.12 Flooding is an important issue facing the district. Parts of some towns and villages have suffered from serious flooding during recent years, and episodes of heavy rain are forecast to increase as a result of climate change. The damage caused by floods is costly, disruptive and distressing for those affected, so it is essential that new development does not add to the risk of flooding that already exists.

Issue 4

The need to minimise the risk of flooding in new developments.

Development in areas at some risk of flooding will be unavoidable as large parts of all the major towns in the district are within such areas. However, mitigation measures will be required so that there is no net increase in risk. The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) to manage surface water flows can be an important tool in minimising flood risk. SUDS can also assist pollution control through improved filtration and habitat creation within new developments. In view of these benefits SUDS should be employed where ground conditions permit.

2.13 To determine whether a flood risk assessment would be required for their proposal applicants should refer to PPS 25, and the Environment Agency's guidance on flood risk. The 1:10, 1:100 and the 1:1000 flood risk zones are shown on the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment maps.

Option 4

Policies will set out criteria to ensure that development proposals minimise and manage the risk of flooding.

Reasonable alternatives?

2.14 None. Avoiding and managing flood risk is a requirement of national and strategic guidance. The above option therefore represents the most appropriate way to minimise flood risk in new developments.

Trees, hedgerows and other environmental features

Statement 6

Corporate Plan Objective: to protect and improve wildlife habitats.

Community Strategy Objective: to improve the diversity of our natural environment.

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

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

Issue 5

The need to minimise risk of harm to trees, hedgerows or other environmental features of visual or nature conservation value.

2.17 Where specific trees or groups of trees are of particular value (such that their removal would have a significant impact upon the local environment and its enjoyment by the public), and are potentially under threat, the Council will make Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) to protect them.

Option 5

In addition to the use of TPOs for important trees, policies will set out criteria to minimise the risk of harm to trees, hedgerows and other environmental features.

Reasonable alternatives?

2.18 None. The approach taken to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment is required by national and regional guidance. A failure to do so would cause significant and detrimental harm to the character of Huntingdonshire's environment.

Question 5

What criteria would you like to be used to minimise risk of harm to environmental features?

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Protected habitats and species

Statement 7

Corporate Plan Objective: to protect and improve wildlife habitats.

Community Strategy Objective: to improve the diversity of our natural environment.

2.19 The range and vitality of habitats and species is central to the operation of natural processes and our overall quality of life. The need to consider this in all development proposals is highlighted by the criteria relating to the pursuit of sustainable development outlined in the emerging Core Strategy. Huntingdonshire contains many sites and species that are afforded special protection due to their particular importance. Within the planning process it is important that these sites are given additional protection at a level appropriate to their significance for biodiversity or geology.

Issue 6

The need to minimise harm to sites of importance for biodiversity or geology.

2.20 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are designated by English Nature under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

2.21 The following option refers to harm to protected habitats and species; this includes both direct e.g land take, and indirect impacts e.g changes to a watercourse and the potential combination of such impacts.

Option 6

Policies will indicate that development proposals should not harm protected habitats or species.

Reasonable alternatives?

2.22 None. The approach taken to protect sites of national or international importance is required by national and strategic guidance. The above option therefore represents the most appropriate means to protect these sites.

2.23 National planning guidance gives the highest protection to sites of international and national importance but also requires local authorities to protect sites of regional and local biodiversity or geological interest through the use of criteria based policies to judge proposals against. Sites to be protected include County Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Ancient Woodland, important species⁽ⁱ⁾ and protected roadside verges.

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

Question 6

What criteria would you like to see used to protect sites of regional and local biodiversity or geological interest?

Biodiversity

Statement 8

Corporate Plan Objective: to protect and improve wildlife habitats.

Community Strategy Objective: to improve the diversity of our natural environment.

2.24 Biodiversity in developments and within green spaces which are used by wildlife and appreciated by people has an important role to play in improving quality of life and creating a sense of well-being.

2.25 Proposals for development should consider the impact of the proposal on biodiversity. Where possible, biodiversity should be incorporated into the proposal. Where it is not possible to incorporate existing biodiversity into the proposal, and where the proposal is in the public interest, mitigation measures should be required. Mitigation can include reducing disturbance, harm and potential impacts and creating alternative habitats for affected populations.

Issue 7

The need to promote biodiversity within development proposals.

2.26 Biodiversity Action Plans have been produced at national and local levels which set out action plans for habitats and species which are considered to be the most threatened at each level. Where a habitat is being enhanced or created priority should be given to achieving the targets set out in these action plans.

2.27 When producing an assessment of habitats and species and details of any mitigation or enhancement applicants should refer to the 'Biodiversity Checklist: Developers Guidance' or 'Biodiversity and Householder Planning Applications' produced by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership.

Option 7

Policies will indicate that development proposals should conserve and create biodiversity habitats to help achieve Local Biodiversity Action Plan Targets.

Reasonable alternatives?

2.28 None. The protection of biodiversity is a requirement of national and regional guidance. The above option therefore represents the most appropriate way to promote biodiversity and help achieve local biodiversity objectives.

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Question 7

Do you think sufficient emphasis is being placed on the promotion of biodiversity? (please give reasons)

Design quality

Statement 9

Corporate Plan Objective: to ensure good quality in the built environment.

Community Strategy Objective: to improve the quality and distinctiveness of the built environment of our towns and villages.

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

Issue 8

The need to promote a high standard of design in development.

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

2.31 More detailed guidance on the design process and principles is provided by the *Huntingdonshire Design Guide* (2006). Some settlements have also produced *Village Design Statements (VDS)* which set out local design aspirations for individual settlements and can help provide guidance on the preferences of residents.

Option 8

Policies will indicate that proposals should demonstrate a high quality of design and will set out criteria which will be used to assess this. Policies will also require that planning applications will be accompanied by sufficient supporting information to demonstrate how design-related considerations have been addressed.

Reasonable alternatives?

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

Question 8

What criteria would you like to see included in this policy?

Street scene

Statement 10

Corporate Plan Objective: to ensure good quality in the built environment.

Community Strategy Objective: to improve the quality and distinctiveness of the built environment of our towns and villages.

2.33 The character of streets and other public spaces has a major impact upon the quality of our environment. It derives from many factors, design criteria are fundamental but so too are many other influences such as the nature of shop fronts, street furniture, lighting and signage.

2.34 Making street frontages 'active' adds interest, safety, life and vitality to the public realm. Street frontages provide the setting for buildings and help to make an essential contribution to what constitutes the character of an area. The quality of the built environment is greatly enhanced by considering site planning and the integrated use of hard landscaping (e.g. paving, street furniture). However, careful thought needs to be given to the scale, position and potential impact of signage, lighting and street furniture: the objective should be to minimise visual 'clutter' whilst also ensuring that places are safe, convenient and comfortable to use.

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

Issue 9

The need to create a high quality public realm.

Option 9

Policies will indicate that development proposals should make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of streets and public spaces and will set out criteria which will be used to assess this.

Reasonable alternatives?

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

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Question 9

What criteria would you like to see included in this policy?

Transport impacts

Statement 11

Corporate Plan Objective: to ensure good quality in the built environment.

Community Strategy Objective: to improve the quality of the built environment of our towns and villages.

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

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

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

2.40 When a development scheme could have significant transport impacts, the preparation of a travel plan enables options for promoting sustainable forms of movement to be explored, including measures to promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport. Early implementation of a travel plan is beneficial as it helps people make sustainable travel choices as soon as development is occupied.

Issue 10

The need to ensure safe access to the transport network, to prevent unacceptable impacts on the transport network and to promote sustainable forms of transport.

Option 10

Policies will set out criteria for assessing development proposals and will require an all modes transport assessment or transport statement.

Reasonable alternatives?

2.41 The requirement for safe access to the highway network, and for the traffic volumes generated to be within the capacity of the highway network, is required by national and strategic guidance.

Development in the countryside

Statement 12

Corporate Plan Objective: to minimise the development of greenfield land.

Community Strategy Objectives: to promote a more sustainable use of natural resources.

2.42 It is government policy that development in the countryside should be strictly controlled in order to conserve its character and natural resources. The plan needs to contain a policy which sets out the limited circumstances in which development outside settlements will be allowed.

Issue 11

The need to conserve the character of the countryside.

Option 11

Policies will set out criteria to restrict development outside the settlements.

Reasonable alternatives?

2.43 None. Controlling development in the countryside is a requirement of national and strategic guidance.

Question 10

What criteria should be used to assess proposals in the countryside?

2.44 In order to assess whether a proposal is outside of a settlement the plan needs to define the distinction between settlements and the open countryside. This can be done in two ways; a line could be drawn around the settlement to give a clear delineation between the settlement and the countryside or a criteria based policy referring to the built-up framework could be used to assess each proposal on its own merits. The built-up framework is the existing built form. It excludes buildings that are clearly detached from the main body of the settlement, 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.

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2.45 The advantage of drawing settlement boundaries is that these provide certainty as to whether a piece of land is within the settlement or the countryside. However, adding settlement boundaries may imply that development within these boundaries is, in principle, acceptable, using the built-up framework criteria this can be avoided as each proposal is assessed individually.

2.46 The approach to drawing or not drawing settlement boundaries could be different depending upon the place of a settlement in the settlement hierarchy, for example settlement boundaries could be drawn around Market Towns and Key Service Centres, where most growth is likely to occur, and Smaller Settlements could use the built-up framework criteria.

Question 11

Should settlement boundaries be drawn or should the built-up framework criteria be used for a) Market Towns, b) Key Service Centres, c) Smaller Settlements.

Housing density

Statement 13

Corporate Plan Objective: to minimise the development of greenfield land.

Community Strategy Objectives: to promote a more sustainable use of natural resources.

2.47 Appropriate densities for new housing development will vary according to the type of settlement and the specific characteristics of the proposed site. Building at moderate to high densities wherever possible will enable best use to be made of development sites, and help safeguard the countryside from unnecessary development. Denser forms of development can also generate the 'critical mass' of people that may be needed to support local facilities.

Issue 12

The need to ensure the density of development makes efficient use of land.

2.48 Planning Policy Statement 3 sets a minimum national density of 30 dwellings per hectare. Exceptionally, there may be instances where applying the minimum density requirement is not appropriate due to the character of the site and its surroundings; this is a material consideration but would need to be justified through a design statement submitted with a planning application. National planning guidance allows local planning authorities to set density targets appropriate to the plan area, this could be through a target for the whole area or for a density range reflecting the location and character of the area and amenities available.

2.49 In locations with good access to a range of services, facilities and employment opportunities higher minimum densities are appropriate. Maximising the amount of housing in relatively sustainable locations should help to offer greater opportunities for people to make sustainable choices and limit the need to travel. Good access to high quality public transport should be considered to be any proposed site within easy walking distance of a railway station or a bus route with high frequency services to a city or market town.

Option 12

A single net density for development proposals will be applied across the district.

Option 13

A range of densities will be applied for development proposals according to settlement type, character and amenities.

Reasonable alternatives?

2.50 Ensuring development makes efficient use of land by using appropriate densities is required by national and strategic guidance, therefore the two options above represent the full range of options. Option 12 would ensure that a standard density is achieved in development across the district regardless of the type and character of settlements and the amenities available. Option 13 uses a range of densities which can be applied to development. The type and character of a settlement as well as the amenities available will be taken into consideration when applying a net density. This option would ensure that settlements which are more sustainable have higher densities for development than settlements which are less sustainable.

Question 12

Which option do you prefer and why?

Listed buildings

Statement 14

Corporate Plan Objective: to conserve and enhance local heritage.

Community Strategy Objective: to improve the quality and distinctiveness of the built environment of our towns and villages.

2.51 Listed buildings are of national importance, representing the best of our historic and architectural built heritage. Huntingdonshire contains nearly 2,800 listed structures, and it is vital that any works affecting them are guided by an appreciation of both their importance and the planning controls that apply.

2.52 Applications affecting Listed buildings should meet the requirements set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation) Act 1990 which give detailed guidance on development affecting Listed buildings.

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2.53 There is a presumption in favour of preserving listed buildings and their features of architectural or historic interest. The best way of securing their upkeep is usually to keep them in active use. Applications for alternative uses will need to be supported with detailed information on the building and details of any alterations which may be required to accommodate the new use.

There is rarely a good reason for allowing the demolition of a listed building, but PPG15 recognises the very limited circumstances in which total or partial demolition may be necessary and ensures that demolition is allowed only as a last resort (and that neglect cannot be used to justify the loss of listed structures). Where the demolition of a listed building is considered acceptable, the Council will require applicants to arrange the recording of features that would be lost in the course of the works. The requirement that detailed plans for reconstruction / redevelopment are agreed is to make certain that a suitable replacement will be erected.

2.54 The Council will monitor the condition of listed buildings to ensure that support and control from the local authority is applied at the appropriate time. The Council will maintain a register of Buildings at Risk

Conservation areas

Statement 15

Corporate Plan Objective: to conserve and enhance local heritage.

Community Strategy Objective: to improve the quality and distinctiveness of the built environment of our towns and villages.

2.55 Conservation areas exist to assist the preservation and enhancement of areas of particular architectural or historic interest. Applications affecting conservation areas should meet the requirements set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation) Act 1990 which give detailed guidance on development affecting conservation areas.

2.56 The character of conservation areas is often the product of various elements such as the mixture and style of buildings, the extent and form of open spaces and the amount of tree cover. This does not mean that there should be an embargo on new development in conservation areas, but it does require that their preservation and enhancement should be an important factor in determining planning applications.

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

2.58 The demolition of buildings within conservation areas can have a damaging effect by removing structures that contribute to their character or leaving unsightly gaps in the built-up environment. As with listed buildings, where buildings in conservation areas contribute positively to the street scene, there will be a presumption in favour of retention. However, where this is not the case, the criteria in PPG15 will ensure that demolition is allowed only when detailed plans for the site's redevelopment have been approved, to ensure that the scheme will preserve and enhance the character of the area.

Sites of archaeological interest

Statement 16

Corporate Plan Objective: to conserve and enhance local heritage.

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

2.60 Planning Policy Guidance (PPG16) sets out the approach to protecting sites of archaeological importance and this DPD should not repeat national guidance.

Question 13

In relation to sites of archaeological importance are there any issues which are not addressed in PPG16 that you would like addressed in this DPD?

Historic parks and gardens

Statement 17

Corporate Plan Objective: to conserve and enhance local heritage.

Community Strategy Objective: to improve the quality and distinctiveness of the built environment of our towns and villages.

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

2.62 Any development proposal should demonstrate a clear understanding of the park's or garden's historic importance and that it would not harm the overall condition of the park or garden or any features that contribute to its special interest. Where appropriate, it should support the long-term preservation of the park or garden and its setting through sensitive restoration, adaptation and re-use.

Issue 13

The need to protect historic parks and gardens.

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Option 14

Policies will set out criteria to ensure development proposals do not harm historic parks and gardens.

Reasonable alternatives?

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

Re-use and re-development of rural buildings

Statement 18

Corporate Plan Objective: to conserve and enhance local heritage.

Community Strategy Objective: to improve the quality and distinctiveness of the built environment of our towns and villages.

2.64 Huntingdonshire contains large numbers of old farm buildings, mills and other structures that are of historic or visual interest and these buildings make an important contribution to the character of the area. Many of these buildings can be re-used for a variety of purposes but it is important to ensure that any proposal is appropriate both for the building itself and for the area in which it lies.

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

2.66 The re-use and re-development of existing buildings in the countryside for business purposes is encouraged by national guidance. However, there may be limited circumstances in which converting a building in the countryside for business purposes is not possible, or is undesirable due to the volume of traffic that might be generated. Appropriate criteria can be used for judging proposals in those circumstances. Where residential use is proposed applicants should demonstrate that re-use or re-development for business purposes is not viable or would generate significantly more vehicle movements than a residential alternative.

2.67 The re-development of buildings can range from partial reconstruction to its complete replacement. Additional safeguards are needed to ensure that this does not result in an increased scale of development or the loss of buildings that should be retained. Re-development will not be permitted where a building is in a ruinous condition or only its site remains, as this would be tantamount to constructing a new building in the open countryside where the previous structure has, in effect, disappeared (or is in the process of doing so).

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

Issue 14

The need to ensure that re-use and re-development of rural buildings is appropriate for the building itself and the area in which it lies.

Option 15

Policies will set out that re-use and re-development of rural buildings for business purposes will be preferable and will set out criteria against which proposals will be assessed.

Reasonable alternative?

2.69 None. The re-use or re-development of existing buildings in the countryside for business purposes is encouraged by national guidance, subject to appropriate criteria being included in plans or supplementary guidance.

Question 14

What criteria should be used to assess proposals?

Alteration or replacement of existing dwellings in the countryside

Statement 19

Corporate Plan Objective: to conserve and enhance local heritage.

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

Issue 15

The need to restrict the intrusiveness of built development in countryside locations.

Option 16

Policies will be included that limit alterations and extensions that can be made to existing dwellings and restricts replacement dwellings being built in the countryside.

2 A clean 'green' attractive place

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Reasonable alternatives?

2.71 None. The protection of the character of the countryside is required by national guidance. The above option therefore represents the most appropriate means to conserve the intrinsic character of the countryside and restrict the intrusiveness of built development.

Question 15

Do you think this option will sufficiently protect the character of the countryside?

3 Housing that meets local need

Statement 20

Community Strategy Outcome: a balanced housing market.

3.1 Detailed research and consultation in the preparation of *Growing Success* and *Huntingdonshire Community Strategy* has highlighted a number of issues which were raised by people who live and work in Huntingdonshire. A particular issue that people raised is the affordability of housing, although this issue is covered in the emerging Core Strategy, it is recognised that the availability of housing is a key issue. The following chapter looks at how we can provide a balanced housing market across the district; it covers issues and options relating to the location of housing, housing for agricultural workers, retirement housing and nursing and care homes and accommodation for travellers, gypsies and travelling showpeople.

Mix of property sizes

Statement 21

Corporate Plan Objective: to ensure an appropriate mix of new housing.

Community Strategy Objective: ensure the availability of a range of decent housing to meet local needs.

3.2 To ensure the private housing market meets the needs of as wide a section of the community as possible, it is important that new development proposals consider the needs of all household types. Both the Housing Needs Survey Update 2006 and housing completions 1999-2006 indicate a dearth in the provision of one and two bedroom properties suitable for smaller households.

3.3 Within major residential development proposals a range of accommodation sizes and types should be provided to meet the needs of different household types. Proposals for minor and infill residential schemes should consider the mix of properties in the vicinity and how the development proposal can contribute to developing a mixed and sustainable community. Potential developers should consider the changing demographic composition of the district's residents and refer to the most up to date assessments of housing need and supply when submitting an application in order to determine an appropriate mix of dwellings to meet the future needs of the community where development is proposed.

Issue 16

The need for new housing developments to reflect the economic and social needs of the district and promote the creation of sustainable communities.

3.4 A Strategic Market Housing Assessment is being carried out for Cambridgeshire, this assessment will identify the long term need and demand for market and affordable housing. This assessment will be used to inform policies on the mix of housing required in new development.

3 Housing that meets local need

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Option 17

Policies will indicate that proposals should provide an appropriate mix of housing schemes according to their scale.

Reasonable alternatives?

3.5 None. Achieving a good mix of housing is a requirement of national guidance therefore the above option represents the most appropriate means to ensure mixed, sustainable communities are created.

Housing for agricultural and related workers

Statement 22

Corporate Plan Objective: to ensure an appropriate mix of new housing.

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

3.6 It will often be possible for workers in agricultural and land-based occupations to live in a town or village near to their business location. However, occasionally the nature of agricultural and some other rural businesses make it essential for someone to live on, or in close proximity to the business. The construction of new dwellings in the countryside to meet the housing needs of such workers requires special justification as it is important to avoid sporadic development in the countryside.

3.7 A criteria based policy could be used to consider where a new dwelling in the countryside is claimed as being necessary. A clear evidence of need would need to be provided.

Issue 17

The need to provide housing that meets the needs of agricultural and related workers whilst protecting against sporadic development in the countryside.

Option 18

Policies will indicate that development proposals in the countryside should be restricted and will set out criteria against which proposals will be assessed.

Reasonable alternatives?

3.8 None. Restricting development in the countryside is a requirement of national guidance. The above option therefore represents the most appropriate means to protect the countryside whilst supporting agricultural and related business.

Question 16

What criteria should be used to assess proposals?

Retirement housing

Statement 23

Corporate Plan Objective: to support opportunities for the vulnerable to live independently.

Community Strategy Objectives: ensure the availability of a range of decent housing to meet local needs and support vulnerable people to lead active lives and live independently in their own homes.

The number of elderly people is expected to increase significantly in the period to 2021, and provision needs to be made to help meet their particular housing needs. This policy concerns housing for elderly people who wish to continue to live independently but with access to levels of support appropriate to their needs.

Schemes for retirement housing should be designed with flexibility in mind to enable people to remain for their lifetime. The entrance area, communal areas and at least some living units should be designed to wheelchair user standards. A communal lounge is desirable to facilitate social interaction.

Issue 18

The need to provide housing to meet the specialist needs of the elderly.

It is important that such developments are located so that elderly households can have access to a suitable range of facilities. Residents of such developments are more likely to shop locally (and are less likely to travel by car) than other occupiers.

The option below facilitates the provision of high quality sustainable living environments that will meet residents needs as they become older and frailer.

Option 19

Policies will set out criteria to assess proposals for specialist retirement housing.

Reasonable alternatives?

The provision of housing for the elderly is encouraged in national guidance. The above option enables provision to be made for specialist retirement housing. However, in order to provide greater choice for potential residents and opportunities to maintain a relatively rural lifestyle, it may be appropriate to have retirement housing schemes in more rural locations and on a scale that would otherwise not be permitted for general housing. Locations will be assessed against the settlement hierarchy to ensure they have access to a range of essential services that

3 Housing that meets local need

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limit car borne trips. It is however, acknowledged that the provision of communal facilities and support services can require development of a sufficient scale to be viable. To ensure that this is not abused larger proposals for rural locations will be assessed against criteria for sustainable development and design.

Question 17

Should the provision of retirement housing be allowed in locations and on a scale that would not otherwise be permitted for general housing?

Question 18

What sort of services do you think will be required to support elderly residents in retirement housing?

Nursing and care homes

Statement 24

Corporate Plan Objective: to ensure an appropriate mix of new housing.

Community Strategy Objective: ensure the availability of a range of decent housing to meet local needs.

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

Issue 19

The need to provide specialist accommodation and care to people in need.

The option below facilitates the provision of specialist accommodation which meet the changing needs of residents in sustainable locations. To provide choice and opportunity for residents, it may be appropriate to develop nursing and care homes in locations and on a scale that would not otherwise be permitted for general housing. This recognises that specialist accommodation often requires a minimum number of units to be viable, and that a rural location may sometimes be appropriate in addressing the care needs of residents. To ensure this is not abused, larger schemes in rural locations will be carefully assessed against criteria for sustainable development and design quality.

Option 20

Policies will set out criteria to assess proposals for nursing and care homes.

Reasonable alternatives?

The provision of housing that meets specialist needs of specific groups such as the disabled, is encouraged in national guidance. The above option enables provision to be made for nursing and care homes. However, in order to provide greater choice for potential residents and opportunities to maintain a relatively rural lifestyle, it may be appropriate to have nursing and care homes in more rural locations on a scale that would not otherwise be permitted for general housing. Locations will be assessed against the settlement hierarchy to ensure they have access to a range of essential services in order to limit car borne trips. It is however, acknowledged that the provision of communal facilities and support services can require development of a sufficient scale to be viable. To ensure that this is not abused larger proposals for rural locations will be assessed against criteria for sustainable development and design.

Question 19

Should the provision of nursing and care homes be allowed in locations and on a scale that would not otherwise be permitted for general housing?

Question 20

What sort of services do you think will be required to support residents of nursing and care homes?

Accommodation for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople

Statement 25

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

3.9 National guidance indicates that authorities should allocate sites to meet the identified accommodation needs of gypsies, as well as setting out appropriate criteria for making decisions about sites where allocations have not been made.

Issue 20

The need to ensure identified accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople are adequately met.

3 Housing that meets local need

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3.10 It is recognised that many gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople prefer to buy and manage their own sites, often living in relatively small family groups. Private sector provision of sites will be encouraged and the need for allocations will be considered through preparation of a separate DPD. There is, however, still a role for provision of public sites and sites managed by registered social landlords to help meet the needs of those who cannot develop their own sites or prefer to rent, as well as transit sites and emergency stopping places.

3.11 Gypsies and travellers are defined in Circular 01/2006 wherein it is acknowledged that traditional patterns of working are changing, resulting in the community generally becoming more settled, although the ability to travel remains an integral part of gypsy and traveller culture. Organised groups of travelling showpeople are specifically excluded from the definition of 'gypsies' used by Circular 01/2006, but their way of life and accommodation requirements are similar. Hence it is appropriate to address their requirements within the same policy.

3.12 It is recognised that gypsy sites need to be situated in places which meet the current working patterns of gypsies and travellers and these may include countryside locations. However, issues of sustainability are important and decisions about the acceptability of particular sites need to take into account access to essential services and the impact on the settled community in the vicinity in order to promote coexistence between potential residents and the local community.

Option 21

Policies will set out criteria to ensure sites are provided which meet the identified accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople.

Reasonable alternatives?

3.13 None. The provision of sites to meet identified accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers is a requirement of national and strategic guidance. The above option represents the most appropriate means to meet the identified accommodation needs of this group. The need for allocations will be considered in the context of preparing a separate DPD.

Question 21

Do you think a criteria based approach will adequately meet the identified accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople? (please give reasons)

Question 22

What criteria would you like to see included in this policy?

4 Safe, active and inclusive communities

Statement 26

Community Strategy Outcomes:

- **Vibrant , confident and effective communities**
- **Good opportunities for learning**
- **Good culture and leisure opportunities**
- **Low crime**
- **Low fear of crime**

4.1 Detailed research and consultation in the preparation of *Growing Success* and the *Huntingdonshire Community Strategy* has highlighted a number of issues which were raised by people who live and work in Huntingdonshire. This research highlighted that although the majority of people in the district enjoy a high quality of life there are some communities which have more needs than others. It also highlighted that these are a few communities where crime is relatively high and has a detrimental effect on daily life. This chapter looks at how we can achieve safe, active and inclusive communities and identifies issues and options relating to accessibility, security, amenity and mixed use development.

Accessibility, adaptability and security

Statement 27

Corporate Plan Objectives: to work to ensure that communities are inclusive and to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour.

Community Strategy Objectives: to reduce anti-social behaviour and create a safe environment.

4.2 A key aspect of planning for sustainable development is ensuring that places are accessible and safe to use for all groups in society. Criteria are required to help guide and assess new development in relation to this. In part they require measures to minimise the risk of crime (and the fear of crime) for all users. New development must also address the specific requirements of all potential user groups, such as people with disabilities, women, the young, the elderly and minority ethnic communities and be capable of adapting to their changing needs and circumstances.

4.3 Major development should consider an appropriate mix of uses and facilities (such as the availability of local shops and child care facilities) dependent on potential user groups, as well as the design of individual buildings and the layout of external areas. All such decisions will need to be informed by early consultation with potential users.

Issue 21

The need to ensure places are accessible and safe to use for all groups in society.

4 Safe, active and inclusive communities

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Option 22

Policies will set out criteria to ensure proposals are appropriately located, enable easy access and minimise the risk and fear of crime.

Reasonable alternative?

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

Amenity

Statement 28

Corporate Plan Objective: to protect the health of individuals.

Community Strategy Objective: to improve the quality of the built environment of our towns and villages.

4.5 The Council seeks to protect the amenity of existing and future occupiers. An important role of the planning system is to protect the public interest by preventing harm to people and places potentially affected by development. Criteria can be used to judge whether a proposal could have a detrimental impact upon amenity. Further guidance on how this can be achieved is contained in the *Huntingdonshire Design Guide*.

Issue 22

The need to protect the amenity of existing and future occupiers.

Option 23

Policies will indicate that development proposals should not have an unreasonable impact on living conditions for existing or future occupiers in terms of access to daylight and sunlight, privacy, noise and disturbance, fumes and other pollutants and safety and security.

Reasonable alternatives?

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

Mixed development

Statement 29

Corporate Plan Objective: to ensure that people feel safe and have a sense of community.

Community Strategy Objective: to promote social inclusion.

4.7 Mixed development provides an essential element of the Government's aim to promote and create socially inclusive communities. It can be a mix of uses within an individual building (for example ground floor retail and upper floor residential), a series of different use functions grouped together in several buildings or as a predominant characteristic across an urban area, readily identifiable by a mix of functions.

4.8 A mix of uses within an area can help to create diverse and interesting places, reduce the need to travel between home, work, and services, and cut the risk of crime by ensuring that the area is populated at all times of the day. It can be achieved in various ways: by incorporating an appropriate mix of uses in the development of large sites, through the incremental redevelopment of small sites in ways which increase diversity, and by including a mix of compatible uses within individual buildings where suitable opportunities arise such as utilising vacant space above retail units. A compatible mix of uses will be dependent on the character and function of the location. However, within new neighbourhoods a compatible mix of uses may be residential (including live/work units), economic, retail, sport and leisure, education and health.

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

Issue 23

The need to foster sustainable, inclusive communities.

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

Option 24

Policies will indicate that mixed development will be preferable in appropriate sustainable locations.

Reasonable alternatives?

4 Safe, active and inclusive communities

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4.11 None. Mixed use development is promoted in national guidance as contributing to the creation of sustainable communities. The above option therefore represents the most appropriate way to promote sustainable and inclusive communities.

5 Healthy living

Statement 30

Community Strategy Outcome: A healthy population.

5.1 Detailed research and consultation in the preparation of *Growing Success* and *Huntingdonshire Community Strategy* has highlighted a number of issues which were raised by people who live and work in Huntingdonshire. The provision of open space and recreational land is a key factor in the promotion of healthy, sustainable communities. Although the majority of residents in Huntingdonshire enjoy a good quality of life and life expectancy in the district is higher than the national average, it is recognised that this is not true across the district for all communities - there are health inequalities experienced by different communities in parts of Huntingdonshire. The following chapter looks in detail at the issues and options for the provision of open space and recreational land.

Open space and recreational land

Statement 31

Corporate Plan Objectives: to promote healthy lifestyle choices and to ensure good quality in parks and green spaces.

Community Strategy Objectives: promote healthy lifestyles, promote the contribution of the environment to health and support communities in protecting and valuing open spaces and historic sites.

5.2 Open space and recreational land can make an important contribution to the character and attractiveness of places and have an important role to play in improving quality of life, health and well-being and contributing towards sustainable development. Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 sets out the importance of providing adequate open space and requires local authorities to carry out an audit of existing open space, sports and recreational land and an assessment of existing and future need.

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

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

Issue 24

The need to protect open space within settlements and outdoor recreation facilities and allotments.

5 Healthy living

Option 25

Policies will protect open space and recreation land.

Reasonable alternatives?

5.5 The approach taken to safeguarding land of recreational value is required by national and regional guidance. There are two approaches which could be used to identify open space and recreation land that should be protected. A criteria based policy could be to assess whether spaces should be protected or these spaces could be identified on the Proposals Map. Identifying these sites on the Proposals Map would give certainty about the areas covered by the policy. However, it would be difficult to do this in a sufficiently exhaustive and consistent manner across the whole district, given Huntingdonshire's size and the variety of spaces involved. As a result, spaces that 'missed' being designated would come under inappropriate pressure for development. The use of a criteria based approach avoids this risk, and means that the character of spaces will need to be given full and careful consideration if their development is proposed.

Question 23

Would you prefer a criteria based policy to be used to protect open space or would you prefer all open spaces to be identified and designated?

6 Access to services and transport

Statement 32

Community Strategy Outcome: Easy and affordable access to services and facilities.

6.1 Detailed research and consultation in the preparation of *Growing Success* and *Huntingdonshire Community Strategy* has highlighted a number of issues which were raised by people who live and work in Huntingdonshire. Issues that were raised include the lack of an adequate range of services in many rural areas, in particular public transport, congestion on the A14 and around market towns on local roads at peak times. The following chapter looks at how we can provide easy and affordable access to services and facilities; it covers issues and options relating to the retention of key local services and facilities, car and cycle parking, rights of way and other public routes.

Retention of key local services and facilities

Statement 33

Corporate Plan Objective: to make town centres and key settlements accessible.

Community Strategy Objective: improve access to and the provision of services in rural areas.

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

6.3 In Key Service Centres, proposals that would result in a significant loss of facilities (even though this may not involve the last shop or service of a particular type), could also have a serious impact upon the vitality and viability of that centre. This is due to the role that these centres play in providing a range of facilities for the surrounding area – a role which could be undermined should significant losses occur. It is important to use safeguards to prevent the premature loss of such uses where a demand for them still exists, in order to maintain the availability of important local facilities wherever possible.

Issue 25

The need to prevent the loss of local services and facilities in villages and Key Service Centres.

Option 26

Policies will require development proposals which result in the loss of a last remaining key facility to demonstrate that the facility is no longer needed as there is not public support for its retention.

6 Access to services and transport

Huntingdonshire District Council | Development Control Policies Development Plan Document - Issues and Options

Reasonable alternatives?

6.4 National guidance (PPS7) requires local planning authorities to have policies for supporting the retention of key village facilities. The policy could be extended to cover the loss of any facility of this type in a village or Key Service Centre regardless of whether it is the last remaining. However, this would not be reasonable where several facilities of a particular type exist; the underlying purpose is to ensure that people living in rural areas do not suffer the unnecessary loss of key facilities.

Car and cycle parking

Statement 34

Corporate Plan Objectives: to support more opportunities for residents to walk, cycle and use public transport and to make town centres and key settlements accessible.

Community Strategy Objective: improve travel routes for pedestrians, cyclists and those with mobility difficulties.

6.5 The availability of car and cycle parking can have a significant impact on people's choice of transport. Limiting car parking spaces in new developments, alongside encouraging the use of more sustainable transport modes, can help to reduce car use and associated fuel consumption, pollution and congestion. Car parking can occupy a great deal of space, affecting both the appearance and the density of new development. Local authorities should develop residential parking policies which taking account of expected levels of car ownership, the importance of good design and the need to use land efficiently. The one exception to the use of maximum standards is the provision of spaces for people with disabilities, for whom adequate parking in convenient locations is essential.

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

6.7 Encouraging the shared use of car parking spaces, particularly in town centres, by taking advantage of activities where the peak demands do not coincide, can help reduce the overall number of spaces required and hence the amount of land-take involved. However the proximity of public car parking in town centres should not result in the relaxation of the parking standard for new residential development where this would result in public spaces not being available for their intended purpose.

Issue 26

The need to promote appropriate levels of car parking and to encourage cycling through the provision of bicycle parking.

Option 27

Policies will set out that development proposals should limit car parking and provide cycle parking and disabled parking to levels set out in the Council's parking standards.

Reasonable alternatives?

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

Question 24

Car parking and cycle parking standards will be produced using the interim standards that accompany the Huntingdonshire Local Plan and benchmarking with other local authority standards. Do you agree this is an appropriate approach?

Rights of way and other public routes

Statement 35

Corporate Plan Objective: to support more opportunities for residents to walk, cycle and use public transport.

Community Strategy Objective: improve travel routes for pedestrians, cyclists and those with mobility difficulties.

6.9 Rights of way and other routes with established public access such as permissive paths and the national cycle network are key assets, linking residential areas to services, facilities and places of employment, and providing many informal recreation opportunities. There is considerable scope for their use to increase. A 10 year vision for the public path network in the county is set out in the Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Within Huntingdonshire, 72% of all trips are fewer than five miles in length, and 50% fewer than two miles in length, suggesting that car-borne trips could be reduced if the quality and convenience of routes is improved, particularly in conjunction with improvements to associated facilities such as secure cycle parking. In addition, the growing interest in healthier lifestyles and outdoor pursuits places increasing demands upon the existing network, especially in popular parts of the countryside.

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

Issue 27

The need to maintain and enhance rights of way and other routes.

Option 28

Policies will indicate that development proposals should maintain, and where possible, enhance the network of rights of way and other routes.

Reasonable alternatives?

6 Access to services and transport

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

7 A strong, diverse economy

Statement 36

Community Strategy Outcomes:

- **A sustainable, buoyant and balanced local economy**
- **Improved and sustainable infrastructure for communities**

7.1 Detailed research and consultation in the preparation of *Growing Success* and *Huntingdonshire Community Strategy* has highlighted a number of issues which were raised by people who live and work in Huntingdonshire. The district is generally a prosperous area with high levels of economic growth. However, the Council recognises that this general picture does not apply to all individuals and all communities. Rural areas in particular, often rely on employment opportunities characterised by lower wage opportunities. A particular issue that the district faces is people commuting out of the district to work. The following chapter looks at how we can help promote a sustainable, buoyant and balanced local economy and improved and sustainable infrastructure for communities. It covers issues and options relating to the location of office, industrial and warehouse development, redevelopment of office, industrial and warehouse sites, the location of tourist facilities, farm diversification, town centres, primary shopping areas and primary frontage, the location of retail and leisure development and telecommunications.

Location of office development

Statement 37

Corporate Plan Objectives: to encourage the provision of a wide range of jobs appropriate for existing and future residents, to support town centres to be economically viable and vibrant, to promote development opportunities in and around the market towns and to support more opportunities for residents to walk, cycle and use public transport.

Community Strategy Objectives: develop and promote the market towns and ensure an appropriate provision of land for business.

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

7.3 Small office schemes do not need to follow the sequential approach, as it is recognised that modest employment-generating uses can help to provide jobs in rural areas, and do not have the same potential impact as larger schemes in terms of trip generation. Nonetheless, it will be important to ensure that any increase in traffic that may be generated does not have an adverse impact upon the rural road network.

7 A strong, diverse economy

Issue 28

The need to ensure office development is located to reduce the need to travel by the private car.

Option 29

Policies will set out a sequential test for large office developments, smaller office developments will not be subject to this sequential test.

Reasonable alternatives?

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

7.5 A threshold needs to be set to assess what constitutes a large office development to which the sequential test applies. This could be 1ha or 1000m², in line with the DCLG definition for major development, or a lower threshold of 0.5ha or 500m² which may be more appropriate in the local context given the need to steer high-density forms of employment towards the most sustainable locations.

Question 25

What size threshold should be used to determine large scale office development?

Location of industrial and warehouse development

Statement 38

Corporate Plan Objectives: to encourage a strong business community which supports new enterprise, to encourage the provision of a wide range of jobs appropriate for existing and future residents and to support more opportunities for residents to walk, cycle and use public transport.

Community Strategy Objective: ensure an appropriate provision of land for business.

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

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

Issue 29

The need to ensure industrial and warehouse development takes place in appropriate locations.

Option 30

Policies will set out locations for large scale industrial and warehouse development in sustainable locations, and will allow small scale industrial and warehouse development in a wider range of locations.

Reasonable alternatives?

7.8 None. National and strategic guidance indicates the importance of focusing such schemes on urban areas and previously-developed sites, and taking account of access by non-car modes

7.9 A threshold needs to be set to assess what constitutes large scale industrial and warehouse development. This could be 1ha or 1000m², in line with the DCLG definition of major development but this would limit it to only the very large proposals. A more local threshold of 0.5ha or 500m² may be more appropriate as developments above this threshold are more likely to harm the character of rural areas.

Question 26

What size threshold should be used to determine large scale industrial and warehouse development?

Redevelopment of office, industrial and warehouse sites

Statement 39

Corporate Plan Objectives: to encourage a strong business community which supports new enterprise, to encourage the provision of a wide range of jobs appropriate for existing and future residents and to support more opportunities for residents to walk, cycle and use public transport.

Community Strategy Objectives: maintain business confidence to increase investment which creates opportunities to work locally and reduces out commuting and develop further opportunities for local people to improve or gain work related skills.

7.10 Government guidance encourages the re-use of industrial and commercial land for housing and mixed-use development, in circumstances where an oversupply of land for business purposes exists, or sites are no longer appropriate for business use. At the same time, the priority given to previously-developed land within larger

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settlements in finding sites for housing can lead to pressure for re-using industrial and commercial sites even when they are in active use. The unacceptable loss of business land can harm local firms (who may find it difficult to find suitable replacement sites), lead to a loss of local employment, create pressure for development at the edge of settlements, and increase the need to travel to work. The availability of local employment that is suited to the skills of the local workforce is particularly important given high levels of net out-commuting from Huntingdonshire.

7.11 It is important to balance the Government's emphasis on re-use of previously developed land before greenfield land with the need to ensure that housing, jobs, leisure and retail are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. The Council would like to retain a compatible mix of uses and keep a balance between residential, employment and other uses ensuring that sustainable communities are retained by putting reasonable checks in place to ensure that industrial and commercial sites are not lost prematurely.

Issue 30

The need to ensure employment sites are not lost prematurely.

Option 31

Policies will set out criteria to ensure that development proposals do not result in the premature loss of employment sites.

Reasonable alternatives?

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

Question 27

Do you agree that policies should be included to prevent the premature loss of employment sites?

7.13 A size threshold would need to be included in policies to set out which sites will be protected. A 1ha or 1,000m² threshold, in line with the DCLG definition of major development, could be used. However a lower threshold of 0.5ha or 500m² would increase the extent to which the need for employment sites' retention could be checked prior to their conversion to other uses.

Question 28

What size threshold should we use for protecting employment sites?

Location of tourist facilities

Statement 40

Corporate Plan Objective: to support more opportunities for residents to walk, cycle and use public transport.

Community Strategy Objectives: develop the tourist product and develop existing and new opportunities for cultural and leisure activities.

7.14 Tourism and leisure are important contributors to the local economy, although there is further scope for growth of the sector, drawing particularly upon the district's environmental assets. It is important that tourism-related development takes place in a sustainable manner, and in particular to conserve the countryside and promote schemes in locations accessible by non-car modes. Directing most tourist-related development to the Market Towns and Key Service Centres will help to achieve these ends.

7.15 Policies should apply both to accommodation for visitors and to attractions and should recognise that benefits can accrue from allowing existing facilities to expand, or through the conversion or re-development of existing buildings. Greater flexibility is also appropriate for small developments, which can help provide jobs in rural areas; as well as enabling such schemes within Smaller Settlements. Limited development in the countryside is allowed if associated with farm diversification, strategic green space enhancement projects or waterways (these last two categories offering particular scope for broadening visits to Huntingdonshire).

Issue 31

The need to ensure tourism development is sustainable, conserves the countryside and is accessible by non-car modes of travel.

Option 32

Policies will set out where proposals for major and minor tourist facilities and touring caravan and camp sites can be located to ensure development is sustainable. They will also include criteria to ensure development is accessible by a choice of means of transport and to limit occupation to holiday and seasonal occupation.

Reasonable alternatives?

7.16 None in relation to the overall approach to locating tourist facilities in the most sustainable locations, limiting the impact on the countryside and promoting accessibility by non-car modes as this is required by national and strategic guidance.

7.17 A threshold needs to be set to assess what constitutes major and minor tourists facilities. This could be 1ha or 1000m², in line with the DCLG definition of major development but this would limit it to only the very large proposals. A more local threshold of 0.5ha or 500m² may be more appropriate as developments above this threshold are more likely to harm the character of rural areas.

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Question 29

What size threshold should be used to determine major and minor tourist facilities?

Farm diversification

Statement 41

Community Strategy Objective: develop the rural economy, especially the Ramsey area.

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

7.19 Diversification will in most cases involve changing the use of land and/or re-using (or redeveloping) existing buildings. Development on new sites will be discouraged unless it enables the clearance and replacement of a badly-sited or inappropriate structure.

Issue 32

The need to facilitate the appropriate diversification of farm-based operations to support agricultural businesses and sustain the rural economy.

Option 33

Criteria based policy to set out the circumstances in which developments forming part of a rural diversification scheme would be allowed including the criteria which need to be met if the proposed development is on previously developed land.

Reasonable alternatives?

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

Question 30

Do you agree that development on previously undeveloped land in association with farm diversification should be allowed in limited circumstances?

Town centres, primary shopping areas and primary frontages

Statement 42

Corporate Plan Objectives: to support town centres to be economically viable and vibrant and to promote development opportunities in and around the market towns.

Community Strategy Objective: develop and promote the market towns.

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

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

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

Issue 33

The need to retain uses within primary shopping areas.

Option 34

Policies will define town centres, primary shopping areas and primary shopping frontages and will limit the percentage of non-retail uses within primary shopping frontages.

Reasonable alternatives?

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7.24 The identification of town centres is required by national and strategic guidance, and it is appropriate to draw their boundaries so as to reflect the role that they perform.

7.25 There could be no attempt to designate primary shopping frontages, allowing instead greater diversity of employment, services and facilities to be located throughout the town centres without distinguishing any particular locality where retail uses should predominate. However, this could reduce the concentration of A1(shop) uses within the core shopping areas, thereby having a detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of both these areas and the town centres as a whole.

Question 31

Do you agree that policies should define primary shopping frontages and limit the amount of non-retail development within these?

Location of retail and leisure development

Statement 43

Corporate Plan Objectives: to support town centres to be economically viable and vibrant, to make town centres and key settlements accessible and to support opportunities for residents to walk, cycle and use public transport.

Community Strategy Objective: develop and promote the market towns.

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

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

Issue 34

The need to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres.

Option 35

Criteria based policy to set out a sequential approach to the location of large and minor retail and leisure development and to maximise accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport.

Reasonable alternatives?

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

Telecommunications

Statement 44

Corporate Plan Objective: to work to ensure that communities are inclusive.

Community Strategy Objective: improve access to and the provision of services in rural areas.

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

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

Issue 35

The need to ensure the environmental impact of telecommunications equipment is minimised.

Option 36

A criteria based policy will ensure that impact of telecommunications development is minimised and that redundant equipment is removed.

Reasonable alternatives?

7.31 None. This approach is required by national guidance.

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8 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

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.

8 Glossary

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.

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.

8 Glossary

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.