

***A Sustainable Community Strategy for
Huntingdonshire
Draft***

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1. Introduction

Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council have a duty to work with partner organisations to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy, a plan which sets out how local organisations and agencies will work together to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of an area.

The Strategy sets out a shared vision for Huntingdonshire for the next 20 years (2007-2027) and shows how we will build a better future for Huntingdonshire.

The Strategy has been developed through the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership. It is based on a collective understanding of the current and future needs of Huntingdonshire, public consultation and the aspirations and priorities of those who live and work in the district.

The Strategy is organised under six strategic themes:

- Growth and Infrastructure
- Health and Wellbeing
- Inclusive, Safe and Cohesive Communities
- Economic Prosperity
- Environment
- Children and Young People

For each theme, a series of outcomes (What we want to achieve) and objectives (how we will go about achieving the outcomes) have been identified; will enable the partnership to address common priorities, set clear goals and share responsibility.

Each of the strategic themes, has a five year action or delivery plan which will detail how the outcomes and objectives will be achieved. The action or delivery plans will have annual targets that will be reviewed each year.

Huntingdonshire Today

Huntingdonshire is still a large district characterised by four market towns which act as service centres for surrounding villages. The District's towns, villages and countryside offer diverse and attractive environments in which to live and work, each having their own distinctive character.

The population is currently around 166,000 people, with approximately half living in the four market towns of Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey and the remainder in almost 100 villages. A number of large villages – key settlements - act as local service centres for surrounding areas, and there are also numerous smaller villages and hamlets.

The southern part of the District, including the towns of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives fall within the Cambridge Sub-Region and looks to Cambridge for many of the higher order services, while the northern part of the District is influenced by Peterborough.

The District has experienced considerable pressures for growth. Since the 1960's there has been a rapid and extensive new house building. While the local economy has developed successfully the number of jobs has not matched population growth associated with new houses. As a result there is a net out-commuting pattern. Similarly the development of facilities, services and local infrastructure has been outstripped by population growth.

The District lies within the London/Stansted/Cambridge/Peterborough Growth Area within the East of England Region. New development will generate additional demands on the district's physical and social infrastructure. A key challenge will be timely provision of adequate and appropriate new infrastructure to meet these demands. This is essential to create a balanced, sustainable community.

2. Sustainable Communities in Huntingdonshire

What is a Sustainable Community?

Sustainable communities are places where people **want to live, work and spend time**, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, and provide a good quality of life.

Eight key components of a sustainable community are:

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Well run
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well designed and built
- Well connected
- Thriving
- Well served
- Fair for everyone

The extent to which Huntingdonshire meets these key components is shown in the diagrams below

Sustainable Communities in Huntingdonshire

<p>Active, inclusive and safe <i>Fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities</i></p>	<p>Perceptions of community identity and belonging in Huntingdonshire are generally high. However, perceptions of strong community identity and belonging tend to be higher in communities where there are good access to facilities and services. Rural areas and the more deprived communities are more likely to feel a lower sense of identity and belonging.</p> <p>Huntingdonshire is generally a safe place with a low level of crime. However, there are some communities where crime and anti-social behaviour is relatively high.</p>
<p>Well run <i>With effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership</i></p>	<p>There are some well established consultation and participation activities across Huntingdonshire, both general perception views and service specific. However, there is not always a consistent approach and there is a need to establish effective feedback mechanisms. Working closely with the three tiers of local government, and engaging communities and neighbourhoods and listening and communicating with local residents will involve them in decision making and ensure that their views are used to improve services and inform the development of policies.</p>
<p>Environmentally sensitive <i>Providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment</i></p>	<p>Huntingdonshire is striving to achieve, maintain and enhance a good environment. There is a real sense of enthusiasm to tackle climate change and the high levels of recycling across Huntingdonshire is just one example of this. The environmental impact of growth is a key issue for Huntingdonshire. Flooding and appropriate provision and use of green and open space are specific issues.</p>

<p>Well designed and built <i>Featuring quality built and natural environment</i></p>	<p>Huntingdonshire has a good built environment with a good mix of quality historic and modern building. There is a need for adapting of buildings. In particular there is a lack of affordable housing and a mismatch between jobs and growth.</p>
<p>Well connected <i>With good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services</i></p>	<p>Access to Market towns and other service centres has relied on a high dependency on cars throughout Huntingdonshire's communities which in turn has contributed to congested main roads at peak times. The need for improvements in transport services communication, and access to services has been accepted.</p>
<p>Thriving <i>With a flourishing diverse local economy</i></p>	<p>Huntingdonshire has a strong and diverse local economy. To maintain this, jobs need to match the level of growth and skills for the future particularly in key sectors, need to be achieved. The vibrancy of our town centres needs to be match demand of growth</p>
<p>Well served <i>With public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all</i></p>	<p>Huntingdonshire has an extensive range of community and voluntary organisations providing valued and essential services in many communities. Local residents have high perceptions of local services (<i>supporting evidence to be inserted</i>)</p>
<p>Fair for Everyone <i>now and in the future</i></p>	<p>Fairness is a characteristic of Huntingdonshire but partners recognise that this is not always consistent and there is a need to provide leadership to ensure fairness for all.</p>

3. A Vision for Huntingdonshire

The Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership is working together to achieve a long term vision for Huntingdonshire as a place where current and future generations have a good quality of life and can –

- make the most of opportunities that come from living in a growing and developing district;**
- enjoy the benefits of continued economic success;**
- access suitable homes, jobs, services, shops, and things to do;**
- realise their full potential; and**
- live in an environment that maintains the special character of our market towns, villages and countryside and the effects of climate change.**

Strategic Themes

The sustainable Community Strategy identifies six strategic themes to support this vision. Each theme, has a series of outcomes and objectives.

4. Outcomes and Objectives

Growth & Infrastructure

New development will place additional demands on the district's physical and social infrastructure. Dealing positively with this growth will help to deliver sustainable communities. It is essential that growth is appropriately directed and opportunities are maximised. A key challenge for Huntingdonshire will be to ensure that the infrastructure, transport network and community/leisure facilities in new or expanded communities meet demand and that the growth in jobs matches new housing and addresses previous imbalances. In order to deliver sustainable communities it is also important that growth in housing maximises the opportunities for affordable homes

Outcomes:

- An effective transport network that meets demand
- Appropriate community & leisure facilities for new & existing communities
- Appropriate access to health facilities
- Appropriate access to facilities
- Housing that meets local needs
- Improved business infrastructure
- Appropriate public transport

Outcome: An effective transport network that meets demand

Objectives:

- Promote the upgrading of A14 and ensuring that the new routes maximise opportunities for Huntingdonshire
- Promote the dualling of the A428 from A1 to Caxton Gibbet
- Ensure that car parking strategies are implemented to achieve an appropriate level of car parking
- Ensure the physical integration of bus/train/taxi/cycle/pedestrian services (including provision for people with mobility issues)
- Increase cycle and footway networks (particularly to key services in towns and villages)

Outcome: Appropriate community & leisure facilities (for new & existing communities)

Objectives:

- Enhance general community Infrastructure
- Provide adequate local green and open space
- Provide adequate strategic green and open space

Outcome: Appropriate access to Health facilities

Objectives:

- Improve the health infrastructure

Outcome: Appropriate access to Education facilities

Objectives:

- Develop Huntingdonshire Regional College including the St Neots Annexe.
- *Schools for the future*

- *Extended schools*
 - *Children's centres*
 - *New/improved primary schools*
- Note: to be agreed ant the C&YP mtg on 1/10*

Outcome: Housing that meets local needs

Objectives:

- Ensure an appropriate supply of new housing – land allocation/planning permissions
- Achieve a low level of homelessness
- Provide sufficient affordable housing (including key worker) well maintained housing stock
- Consider the need to provide sites for gypsies and travellers
-

Outcome: Improved business infrastructure

Objectives:

- Improve Public transport (to get to work)
- Improve transport network for business

- Ensure Land & Premises for economic growth
- Improve ICT (broadband/capacity)
- Improve the environment in town centres

Outcome: Appropriate public transport Objectives:

- Develop Market Town Transport Strategies
- Develop (fund) Bus priority measures
- Develop rural Transport Plans

Outcome: Reduced Carbon emissions Objectives:

- Ensure the building of new homes and commercial/public premises comply to zero carbon standards by 2016
- Improve energy efficiency of existing homes, commercial and public buildings
- Develop capacity for renewable energy

Health & Wellbeing

Promoting health and wellbeing, protecting health and intervening to improve health and high quality health care are key to maintaining sustainable communities. To achieve this, the partnership will need to address health inequalities, intervene to alter situations with negative health impacts, promote healthy lifestyles, ensure well maintained (decent) homes and provide/promote opportunities for active leisure and cultural activities

Outcomes:

- **Appropriate culture and leisure opportunities**
- **Reduced health inequalities**
- **Individuals choose healthy lifestyles**
- **Reduced accidents**
- **Vulnerable people live independently**

Outcome: Appropriate culture and leisure opportunities

Objectives:

- Fund Culture & Leisure
- Provide accessible opportunities - things to do, particularly Children and Young People and those with disabilities
- Address play needs as identified in the Play Strategy
- Address culture needs as identified in the Cultural Strategy
- Promote awareness of active leisure activities
- Improve access to the countryside and green space
- Provide arts and entertainment including performance exhibition spaces
- Enhance access to heritage
- Provide good quality and quantity of leisure services including modernisation
- Ensure sufficient quality and quantity of indoor and outdoor sporting infrastructure

Outcome: Reduced health inequalities

Objectives:

- Narrow the gap between areas in the district

- Enable vulnerable people to lead active lives via improved participation in physical leisure activities

- Ensure Health Services in the community are accessible to all

Outcome: Individuals choose healthy lifestyles

Objectives:

- Reduce smoking
- Tackle obesity – improve nutrition and physical exercise in children and adults
- Promote active lifestyles
- Promote active and healthy lifestyles
- Reduce alcohol misuse
- Improve sexual health
- Promote mental health well being
- Reduce teenage pregnancies

Outcome: Reduced accidents

Objectives:

- Prevent falls by older people
- Reduce Road Traffic Accidents

Outcome: Vulnerable people live independently

Objectives:

- Prompt and efficient disabled facilities grants/adaptations
- Promote the independence of older people

- Increase provision for homeless and young people
- Support the housing needs of other vulnerable groups where appropriate

Outcome: Older people – aging well/active lifestyles

Objectives:

- Address the needs of older people as identified in Ageing well in Huntingdonshire and the County's older persons strategy

Inclusive, Safer and Cohesive Communities

Huntingdonshire has relatively low levels of deprivation. However, there are some small pockets of deprivation/social decline that need to be addressed. Huntingdonshire also experiences relatively low levels of crime, but in order to make our communities 'safe', we need to reduce crimes such as burglary, violence against the person and acquisitive crime and address anti-social behaviour and reassurance. In order to create successful cohesive communities it is important to promote active communities with opportunities for cultural, leisure, community and volunteering activities. It is vital that we ensure the delivery of good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, health facilities and other services and that we ensure the availability of information, advice and guidance.

Outcomes:

- Accessible services for all
- Appropriate community transport
- Vibrant and cohesive communities
- Reduced anti social behaviour
- Reduced crime
- Good opportunities for life long learning
- Effective neighbourhood management in appropriate communities

Outcome: Accessible services for all

Objectives:

- Locate new development in market towns and sustainable locations
- Ensure access to primary health care
- Increase access to services for young and older people and in rural areas.
- Promote different ways of providing services in communities
- Ensure access to information, advice and guidance.

Outcome: Appropriate community transport

Objectives:

- Expand concessionary fares – Access for all, need to explore expansion for benefit by job seekers and young people

- Increase availability of community transport

Outcome: Vibrant and cohesive communities

Objectives:

- Promote community based/run activities
- Promote community involvement
- Address the needs of migrant workers and non settled communities including gypsies and travellers
- Address the needs of existing communities where a change in population occurs.
- Promote the inter-generational approach

Outcome: Reduced anti social behaviour

Objectives:

- Target problem individuals
- Implement acceptable behaviour contracts/anti social behaviour

- Reduce alcohol related anti social behaviour
- Reduce criminal damage

Outcome: Reduced crime

Objectives:

Reduce.....

- dwelling burglary
- shop theft in Market towns
- violence against the person including hate crime
- acquisitive crime

Outcome: Good opportunities for life long learning

Objectives:

- Support and increase the capacity of learning communities and facilities for out-reach learning
- Increase access to formal and informal learning opportunities
- Provide opportunities for family learning

- Address the lack of Basic Skills (Leitch report)
- Promote opportunities for local people to improve or gain skills through cultural, leisure and volunteer activities
- Promote learning activities and events
- Promote understanding of local heritage and history

Outcome: Effective neighbourhood management in appropriate communities

Objectives:

- Implement neighbourhood management in Ramsey, Oxmoor and Eynesbury
- Investigate neighbourhood management in other communities
- Promote the engagement of communities in the provision and running of services.

Children and Young People

Note the C&YP Area Partnership meet on 1st October 2007 to discuss the following objectives or issues identified following consultation with children and young people, parents/carers and partner organisations. The meeting will look at whether the objectives should sit under this theme or are more appropriately linked to other themes/objectives.

Objectives

- Community Safety
- Things to do/Accessing things to do
- Support for parents
- Support services for children and young people
- Rural Areas
- Involvement of children and young people in the design and delivery of services

Possible objectives

Training and employment opportunities

Housing for young people

Young people in care

Top issues identified by Children and Young People

Objective: Community Safety ISSUES

- Dark areas and lack of street lighting leading to fear of or avoidance of some areas
- Fear of other people – young people and adults
- Traffic – particularly preventing younger children accessing parks etc
- Drug and alcohol use by other people leading to fear of or avoidance of some places

Objective: Accessing things to do ISSUES

- Cost – want more low cost or free activities
- Fear of people who might be there
- Traffic – especially busy roads
- Want places to meet friends rather than structured activities – eg put benches and seats in parks
- Town centres are not attractive to young people
- Negative attitudes to young people using facilities

Top issues identified by parents/carers and professionals:

Objective: Support for parents ISSUES

- Access to information on services
- Co-ordinated approaches to services
- Provision of early years and childcare
- Support for parents in crisis
- Support for young parents

Objective: Support services for children and young people
ISSUES

- Mental health for young people including drug and alcohol counselling
- Support for children and young people with a parent using mental health services
- Support for children of immigrant/migrant families
- Young people with learning difficulties integrated into CAMH services

Objective: Rural Areas
ISSUES

- Improve access to services
 - To reduce teenage pregnancy and improve sexual health of young people
 - Flexible approaches to delivery of health and care services
 - Accessibility of diversionary activities for cyp
 - After school provision for primary schools

Objective: Things to do
ISSUES

- Integration of cyp with disabilities within mainstream facilities
- Increase the provision and accessibility of things to do

Objective: Involvement of children and young people in the design and delivery of services:

Partners and young people's view was that they would like to be involved in this but only if something happened as a result. This approach should be integral to any objectives/action plans identified

Possible Gaps:

Objective: Training and employment opportunities – we have little info about this at present but these do link to some issues raised eg opportunities for yp likely to become NEET and developing personal skills of young people likely to become disaffected

Objective: Housing for young people – mentioned but not necessarily applicable to most of those involved in survey

Objective: Young people in care – Hunts has a high number of young people in care, whilst information has not been segregated – an opportunity to have a say was provided at a young carers and young people in care event - feedback related to accessing things to do and comments about town centres.

Economic Prosperity

To maintain a flourishing and diverse local economy, it is vital that we increase investment in our local economy. Dynamic job and business creation will benefit the local community and provide a wide range of employment opportunities. It is important that we maintain a high level of business support, promote the development of key growth sectors, maintain the economic viability and vibrancy of our town centres and ensure that skill levels support economic prosperity.

Outcomes:

- Well developed key growth sectors
- A high level of Business Support
- The economic viability and vibrancy of town centres
- Increased investment in the local economy
- Skill levels that support economic prosperity

Outcome: Well developed key growth sectors

Objectives:

- Promote High Tech, high value manufacturing
- Promote environmental technologies
- Promote High Tech Industries (eg telecommunications)
- Promote creative industries

Outcome: A high level of Business Support

Objectives:

- Ensure the availability of advice and support for new start ups
- Ensure the availability of general business advice
- Ensure specific business advice, for key growth sectors, rural businesses, young people, migrant workers and businesses looking to re-locate here
- Enable the growth of small and medium sized businesses
- Ensure appropriate (de) regulation
- Promote strong business to business networks
- Ensure appropriate service and support for business, specifically leisure, financial and retail

Outcome: The economic viability and vibrancy of town centres

Objectives:

- Increase the number of people using town centres
- Improve the mix of attractions, facilities and leisure opportunities
- Increase the retail offer and mix

Outcome: Increased investment in the local economy

Objectives:

- Encourage local people to visit town centres and local attractions
- Encourage local buying
- Encourage business visitors
- Encourage tourism, specifically overnight stays
- Market Huntingdonshire to prospective businesses
- Maximise grant and financial investment

Outcome: To ensure that skill levels support economic prosperity

Objectives:

- Meet skill shortages
- Address skills for the future, particularly in key growth sectors
- Maximise opportunities for workplace learning and training
- Promote learning and training opportunities for people in deprived

communities and those who are long term workless.

- Seek investment opportunities for learning and skills development
- Increase retention of young people in learning and training
- Promote vocational opportunities for young people
- Ensure the readiness and transition of young People to work

Environment

Providing places for people to live, work and visit that are considerable of the environment underpins the delivery of a sustainable community. Climate change must be tackled through energy efficiency and the use of renewables. Waste is a major environmental challenge and partners have a crucial role in reducing waste. Green space contributes to the quality of life for those living, working and visiting Huntingdonshire and it is important this is enhanced.

Outcomes:

- **Appropriate provision and use of green space**
- **Reduced carbon emissions**
- **Efficient use of resources**
- **A protected and improved environment**

Outcome: Appropriate provision and use of green space

Objectives:

- Ensure adequate provision and management of strategic green space
- Ensure adequate provision of local parks/green/open space
- Ensure appropriate use and management of green space and strategic open space

Outcome: Reduced carbon emissions

Objectives:

Tackle climate change through

- Increase energy efficiency
- Increase the use of renewable energy
- Encourage sustainable travel
- Adapt to climate change

Outcome: Efficient use of resources

Objectives:

- Reduce the amount of waste going to landfill
- Increase water efficiency
- Encourage sustainable purchasing
- Make the best use of land
- Enhance landscape diversity

Outcome: A protected and improved environment

Objectives:

- Improve air quality in Huntingdonshire
- Minimise harm from contaminated polluted land
- Protect and enhance biodiversity
- Increase access to green space
- Maintain the cleanliness of Huntingdonshire
- Address Flooding

5. Implementing and Reviewing the Sustainable Community Strategy

Each of the strategic themes, has a five year action or delivery plan which will detail how the outcomes and objectives will be achieved. The action or delivery plans will have annual targets that will be reviewed each year.

Evidence

Evidence
<i>'Getting it Right' Countywide needs assessment for Children and Young Peoples Plan 2006</i>
<i>2001 Census, Office for National Statistics</i>
<i>2006 income data, CACI</i>
<i>Aging well in Huntingdonshire</i>
<i>Annual Report of the Director of Public Health</i>
<i>Assessment of Local Skill requirements</i>
<i>Business Breakfast Forums</i>
<i>Cambridgeshire Health Inequalities report</i>
<i>Cambs Horizons Quality of Life Strategy (green infrastructure, arts and major sports facilities)</i>
<i>Cambridgeshire Police Neighbourhood Profiles</i>
<i>Cambridge sub region Housing Market Assessment (expected December 2007)</i>
<i>Community Questionnaire, Make a Difference Campaign, Business Survey (Ramsey Area Partnership)</i>
<i>Community Safety Strategy</i>
<i>Consultation with Business Community</i>
<i>Crime and anti-social behaviour incidents, Cambridgeshire Police</i>
<i>Crime and Disorder Audit</i>
<i>Employment land Review</i>
<i>Empty Homes Strategy</i>
<i>HDC Sports Club Survey</i>
<i>Healthcheck Strategy and Action Plan, Ramsey Area Partnership</i>
<i>Homelessness Strategy</i>
<i>Housing Strategy 2006-11</i>
<i>Huntingdonshire from a learning and skills perspective, Maggie Magennis, Oct 2006</i>
<i>Huntingdonshire Today</i>
<i>Hunts Area Children and Young People's Plan</i>
<i>Indices of Deprivation 2004, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister</i>
<i>LDF Core Strategy</i>
<i>Leisure Development Consultation</i>
<i>Local Plan Review</i>
<i>Neighbourhood Management, HDC Cabinet Report, 28 September 2006</i>
<i>Open Space audit</i>
<i>Oxmoor Opportunities Partnership Evaluation 2007, Trevor Baker</i>
<i>Planning for Real – Ramsey</i>
<i>Public Consultation Event</i>
<i>Public Consultation recent and planned</i>
<i>Quality of Life Survey</i>
<i>Quality of Life survey</i>
<i>Quarterly Crime Reports</i>
<i>Ramsey Snapshot, statistical information mainly from 2001 Census</i>

<i>Reading the Housing Market</i>
<i>Regional and Sub-regional economic strategies</i>
<i>Residents surveys</i>
<i>Review of Active Leisure</i>
<i>Roger Tym Report</i>
<i>Taking Forward Neighbourhood Management, CCC Cabinet Report, 11 June 2007 and update paper on neighbourhood management, Dan Smith, HDC</i>
<i>The Health Related Behaviour Survey – completed by year 8 and 10 students in all Hunts Secondary Schools. July 2006</i>
<i>Various other smaller consultations carried out by services at HDC, OCYPS and Young Lives</i>
<i>Young People IT survey</i>
<i>Young Persons Housing Strategy</i>

Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework – Evidence Base

Huntingdonshire Housing Needs Survey (2003)
 Huntingdonshire Housing Needs Assessment (2006)
 Huntingdonshire New Homes Survey (2003)
 Huntingdonshire Community Strategy
 Growing Success 2007-
 Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy 2006-11
 Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2004)
 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003)
 East of England Plan (proposed changes 2007)
 Regional Economic Strategy (2004)
 Huntingdonshire Local Economy Strategy 2002-07
 Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study (2005)
 Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study update (2007)
 50 year Wildlife Vision for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (2002)
 Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (2007)
 Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2007)
 Housing Land Availability Assessment (draft) (2007)
 Employment Land Review (forthcoming) (composite version unavailable as yet)
 Village Facilities Comparison (2006)